This project is an exploration of turnout preferences for horses both in the St. Lawrence University riding program, and boarding at the school’s barn. The facility all of the horses were located at and all of the data was gathered at is the Elsa Gunnison Appleton Riding Hall, in Canton, NY. The horses were turned out in rotations based on where they had previously done well outside. They were then observed in 30-minute intervals and various behaviors were recorded.

Some variables of interest in the study were:

* Time\_of\_day
* Age
* Personality
* Date
* Flymask
* Flysheet
* Group
* Type\_of\_turnout
* Frequency\_of\_trail\_swishes
* Minutes\_grazing
* Dialated\_nostrils
* Rigid\_body\_posture
* minutes\_spent\_pacing
* number\_whinnies
* number\_positive\_interactions\_w/friends
* number\_negative\_interactions\_w/friends
* time\_layingdown

Upon further research, it was confirmed that there are four different personality types and each type can be grouped into either passive or aggressive (Barteau). Barteau wrote an article published in *Dressage Today* in 2007. She is a U.S. national champion dressage rider, and discusses the four types of horse personalities that are seen in domestic horses. The types are; social, fearful, challenging, and aloof. She goes into detail with the characteristics of each type and the “1-10” scale of those personalities. She also states that there is a passive to aggressive scale that applies to each type, with examples of a passive and aggressive version of each personality. Finally, the article goes into how to determine a specific horse’s type and which behaviors and reactions can help you identify the type of personality you are looking at. Barteau goes on in the article to give examples of how to determine which personality type specific horses are, which was utilized in this study.

An article by Foster also identifies horse personalities, the same four types as Barteau. The main focus of Foster’s article is the way horses express discomfort with minimal movement. She identifies that the eyes and other facial indicators are the most informative signals and that changes in body posture and natural movement are other signals to how a horse feels in turnout (2019). She also discusses that certain horses have different baselines, and these behaviors are universally signals of discomfort.

I used Foster’s article heavily as a way to determine what I should take into account when observing horses. There were certain accommodations made for the fact that there was a single researcher doing all of the observations, accounting for the times of day and the scale for the number of tail swishes. The outside research completed by others, as well as personal experience, weighed into the way the numerical scales were done. There was more emphasis on if a horse was grazing or calmy moving around the space, than on how many times something alerted them. The overall way they behave in turnout better indicates the contentedness of the horse than small moments of spooking or alarm. This is a consistent school of thought, across both sources referenced here (Foster, Barteau).