UNSW Course Outline

BIOS3011 Animal Behaviour - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : BIOS3011
Year : 2024
Term : Term 2
Teaching Period : T2
Is a multi-term course? : No
Faculty : Faculty of Science
Academic Unit : School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences
Delivery Mode : Online
Delivery Format : Standard
Delivery Location : Kensington
Campus : Sydney
Study Level : Undergraduate
Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

Handbook Class Timetable

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

Animal Behaviour provides one of the most fascinating and rewarding fields of biological study. In this course, the study of animal behaviour and the levels at which it can be studied are introduced, including areas often referred to as 'ethology' or 'behavioural ecology'. The observation and description of behaviour along with the development, function and evolution of

behaviour in an ecological context are examined as important elements in the analysis of behaviour, particularly social behaviour. Topics include sensory control systems, foraging behaviour, communication, home range, territorial behaviour, aggression and dominance, sexual behaviour, mate choice, mating systems, play and social organisation. The critical relevance of the study and understanding of animal behaviour for conservation and wildlife management is emphasized alongside applied skills in these areas and science communication. This is a level three course (3rd year), although advanced level two students (in their 2nd year) can do well in this course. The course is exclusively online and has largely asynchronous delivery. The course has won multiple awards for teaching excellence and student experience and is one of the most popular courses offered at UNSW. Assumed knowledge: BIOS2011 Evolutionary and Physiological Ecology.

Course Aims

The aim of this course is to illustrate the adaptive evolution of animal behaviour and how such behaviour is shaped by ecological processes. To this end, the course has been substantially restructured to provide a strong focus on current research on animal behaviour, an active and dynamic field of study. The course will demonstrate through practical skills how understanding and monitoring of wildlife behaviour can inform conservation and management programs. The course also emphasizes how an adaptive perspective can provide important new insights into the origins of human behaviour.

Relationship to Other Courses

BIOS2011 is assumed knowledge

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Apply skills in monitoring and interpreting wildlife behaviour for conservation and management practices.
CLO2 : Critique the media depiction of animal behaviour to the general public and generate improved strategies for science communication.
CLO3 : Critically review and interpret high-quality research articles and scientific texts on animal behaviour.
CLO4 : Recognise the importance of primary research in student learning by examining and reporting on case studies presented by practicing scientists.
CLO5 : Apply a deep-understanding of the neurological, physiological, ecological and evolutionary basis of animal behaviour, including that of humans.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Apply skills in monitoring and interpreting wildlife behaviour for conservation and management practices.	
CLO2 : Critique the media depiction of animal behaviour to the general public and generate improved strategies for science communication.	• Book review • Science Behind The Documentary
CLO3 : Critically review and interpret high-quality research articles and scientific texts on animal behaviour.	• Lecture Q&A Forum • Animal Behaviour in Practice • Science Behind The Documentary
CLO4 : Recognise the importance of primary research in student learning by examining and reporting on case studies presented by practicing scientists.	• Animal Behaviour in Practice
CLO5 : Apply a deep-understanding of the neurological, physiological, ecological and evolutionary basis of animal behaviour, including that of humans.	• Lecture Q&A Forum • Book review • Animal Behaviour in Practice • Science Behind The Documentary

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Blackboard Collaborate | YouTube LIVE

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Lecture Q&A Forum Assessment Format: Individual	32%	
Book review Assessment Format: Individual Short Extension: Yes (7 days)	20%	
Animal Behaviour in Practice Assessment Format: Individual	18%	
Science Behind The Documentary Assessment Format: Individual Short Extension: Yes (7 days)	30%	

Assessment Details

Lecture Q&A Forum

Assessment Overview

You will be randomly assigned to a forum 'study group' and remain in that group for the duration of the course. Lectures are grouped into 4 modules. The Q&A Forum associated with each module will remain open for a fixed period of 2-3 weeks. During that period, and for each of the four lecture modules, you should:

• Post at least 2 questions related to the content of the lectures within that module. Each question is worth 2 marks (total of 4 marks per module).

• Post at least 2 answers to questions posted by other students in the group. Each answer is worth 2 marks (total of 4 marks per module).

The course educators monitor the Q&A Forums and will provide feedback where guidance and clarifications are required.

There are several objectives to this forum:

• It is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their grasp of the lecture content, both through the type of questions posted and answers provided.

• It builds a collaborative learning environment that has been shown to improve the learning experience for individual students as well as their comprehension, retention and extrapolation of concepts taught.

• It increases student engagement, not only with the learning materials, but also with a student's peer-group, which is so often lacking in an online learning environment.

• It provides educators with a way of identifying concepts that students are struggling with and a means of providing further instruction or clarification on those concepts through directed feedback.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO3 : Critically review and interpret high-quality research articles and scientific texts on animal behaviour.
- CLO5 : Apply a deep-understanding of the neurological, physiological, ecological and evolutionary basis of animal behaviour, including that of humans.

Book review

Assessment Overview

You will be tasked with reading at least 1 recent popular science book that has some relevance to Animal Behaviour. This is designed to stimulate general reading and broad thinking about the

relevance of animal behaviour to society, other aspects of biology, and the human condition. You need to submit at least one review at any time several weeks before the end of the course. Detailed instructions on the duration and marking criteria for this task will be provided online. Please ensure you read this carefully before attempting this task.

Feedback is provided within 2 weeks of the submission of the task.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO2 : Critique the media depiction of animal behaviour to the general public and generate improved strategies for science communication.
- CLO5 : Apply a deep-understanding of the neurological, physiological, ecological and evolutionary basis of animal behaviour, including that of humans.

Animal Behaviour in Practice

Assessment Overview

There are two parts:

Part A: Case Studies *[8 marks]*:

We have solicited a series of Case Studies from world experts on various aspects of animal behaviour. Each case study is released weekly, starting Week 2.

Pick at least one case study and submit an individually written review of a published research article. The review should be no more than 400 words and submitted 7 days after the release of the case study. Course educators will provide written feedback on areas of improvement and you will have the opportunity to submit a second review to improve your mark if you wish.

Part B: Video “Lectures From The Field” *[10 marks]*:

A series of “Lectures From The Field” videos will be released at fortnightly intervals to coincide with a related topic being presented during the regular lecture series. Videos end with a multiple-choice quiz question. You will have two opportunities to answer this quiz correctly. Each question is worth 2 marks.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO3 : Critically review and interpret high-quality research articles and scientific texts on animal behaviour.
- CLO4 : Recognise the importance of primary research in student learning by examining and reporting on case studies presented by practicing scientists.
- CLO5 : Apply a deep-understanding of the neurological, physiological, ecological and evolutionary basis of animal behaviour, including that of humans.

Science Behind The Documentary

Assessment Overview

In this assignment, you will leverage your skills of observation to identify animal behaviour in a popular nature documentary. You will then review the scientific research behind an aspect of the behaviour shown and evaluate how that scientific knowledge has been used to present the behaviour seen in the documentary.
You have a choice from 10 highly-rated documentaries.

The assignment is in two parts:
Part 1: Audit behaviour in a popular nature documentary *[4 marks]* and identify the associated concepts being depicted *[4 marks]*. This part is due towards the middle of the course. Course educators will provide written feedback to help direct your efforts in Part 2.
Part 2: Review the published research behind one of those concepts *[15 marks]* and re-evaluate its presentation in the documentary through a layperson translation of that science *[7 marks]*. This final part is due at the completion of the course. Feedback will be provided by the course educators on request.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO2 : Critique the media depiction of animal behaviour to the general public and generate improved strategies for science communication.
- CLO3 : Critically review and interpret high-quality research articles and scientific texts on animal behaviour.
- CLO5 : Apply a deep-understanding of the neurological, physiological, ecological and evolutionary basis of animal behaviour, including that of humans.

General Assessment Information

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

A total of at least 50% across all assessments

Course Schedule

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
	Terry Ord					No	Yes

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Upon your enrolment at UNSW, you share responsibility with us for maintaining a safe, harmonious and tolerant University environment.

You are required to:

- Comply with the University's conditions of enrolment.
- Act responsibly, ethically, safely and with integrity.
- Observe standards of equity and respect in dealing with every member of the UNSW community.
- Engage in lawful behaviour.
- Use and care for University resources in a responsible and appropriate manner.
- Maintain the University's reputation and good standing.

For more information, visit the UNSW Student Code of Conduct Website.

Academic Honesty and Plagarism

Referencing is a way of acknowledging the sources of information that you use to research your assignments. You need to provide a reference whenever you draw on someone else's words, ideas or research. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism.
Further information about referencing styles can be located at https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing

Academic integrity is fundamental to success at university. Academic integrity can be defined as a commitment to six fundamental values in academic pursuits: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. At UNSW, this means that your work must be your own, and others' ideas should be appropriately acknowledged. If you don't follow these rules, plagiarism may be detected in your work.
Further information about academic integrity, plagiarism and the use of AI in assessments can

be located at:

- The Current Students site,
- The ELISE training site, and
- The Use of AI for assessments site.

The Student Conduct and Integrity Unit provides further resources to assist you to understand your conduct obligations as a student: https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Penalty for Late Submissions

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Any variations to the above will be explicitly stated in the Course Outline for a given course or assessment task.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request extensions as early as possible before the deadline.

Special Consideration

If circumstances prevent you from attending/completing an assessment task, you must officially apply for special consideration, usually within 3 days of the sitting date/due date. You can apply by logging onto myUNSW and following the link in the My Student Profile Tab. Medical documentation or other documentation explaining your absence must be submitted with your application. Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address to be advised of the official outcome and any actions that need to be taken from there. For more information about special consideration, please visit: https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

Important note: UNSW has a "fit to sit/submit" rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination

or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

Faculty-specific Information

Additional support for students

- The Current Students Gateway
- Student Support
- Academic Skills and Support
- Student Wellbeing, Health and Safety
- Equitable Learning Services
- UNSW IT Service Centre
- Science EDI Student Initiatives, Offerings and Guidelines