



UNSW Course Outline

PSYC1030 Quokkas, Crows and Clever Hans: An Introduction to Comparative Psychology - 2024

Published on the 30 Aug 2024

General Course Information

Course Code : PSYC1030

Year : 2024

Term : Term 3

Teaching Period : T3

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : Faculty of Science

Academic Unit : School of Psychology

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

How do animals think and experience the world around them? How do scientists measure

“animal intelligence”? Do dolphins or chimpanzees have language? Can birds plan and problem-solve?

This course will analyse and critique scientific research in the domain of comparative psychology – the science of understanding how and why animals, including humans, process information and respond to the world in the way they do. Each week, students will explore a new question related to key concepts in the discipline (e.g., memory, navigation, communication, tool-use), as well as general scientific concepts such as scientific validity, falsifiability and issues surrounding anthropomorphism.

The course is delivered asynchronously online (pre-recorded lectures that students can access at a time most convenient to them). All assessments will be undertaken/submitted online.

Course Aims

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to the science of comparative psychology. There will be a focus on students developing an understanding of the scientific method and concepts that are common to all scientific disciplines such as objectivity, validity and falsifiability. Students will learn to explain phenomena using a multidisciplinary approach that addresses evolutionary, developmental, behavioural and biological mechanisms. Students will develop critical thinking skills to critique the methodology and conclusions of research and evaluate alternative explanations for phenomena.

Course Learning Outcomes

| Course Learning Outcomes |
|---|
| CLO1 : Identify scientific concepts in research descriptions, examples, and vignettes from comparative psychology. |
| CLO2 : Evaluate research methods in comparative psychology to analyse how central questions in comparative psychology are investigated. |
| CLO3 : Critique scientific literature to differentiate empirical evidence from speculation. |
| CLO4 : Collaborate in a team to communicate about a concept in comparative psychology using multimedia. |

| Course Learning Outcomes | Assessment Item |
|---|---|
| CLO1 : Identify scientific concepts in research descriptions, examples, and vignettes from comparative psychology. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic quizzes• Written assignment• Group video project• Final exam |
| CLO2 : Evaluate research methods in comparative psychology to analyse how central questions in comparative psychology are investigated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topic quizzes• Written assignment• Group video project• Final exam |
| CLO3 : Critique scientific literature to differentiate empirical evidence from speculation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written assignment• Group video project |
| CLO4 : Collaborate in a team to communicate about a concept in comparative psychology using multimedia. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group video project |

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System

Additional Course Information

Psychology Student Guide: The [School of Psychology Student Guide](#) contains School policies and procedures relevant for all students enrolled in undergraduate or Masters psychology courses, such as:

- Attendance requirements
- Assignment submissions and returns
- Assessments
- Special consideration
- Student code of conduct

- Student complaints and grievances
- Equitable Learning Services
- Health and safety

It is expected that students familiarise themselves with the information contained in this guide

Assessments

Assessment Structure

| Assessment Item | Weight | Relevant Dates |
|---|--------|---|
| Topic quizzes Assessment Format: Individual | 20% | Start Date: Monday 9am (weekly) Due Date: Sunday 11:59pm (weekly) |
| Written assignment Assessment Format: Individual Short Extension: Yes (1 day) | 15% | Start Date: Instructions released Week 1 Due Date: 11:59pm Sunday Week 7 |
| Group video project Assessment Format: Group | 25% | Start Date: Instructions released Week 1 Due Date: 11:59pm Sunday Week 9 |
| Final exam Assessment Format: Individual | 40% | |

Assessment Details

Topic quizzes

Assessment Overview

There are 8 weekly quizzes you must complete between weeks 1-5, 7-9 inclusive. These are intended to provide feedback for the learning outcomes associated with each topic. Individual quizzes assess the material presented in lecture and tutorial classes during the previous week. Each weekly quiz consists of 5 multiple choice questions and contributes 2.5% to the total course mark. Each quiz will be made available online via Moodle from Monday 9am – Sunday 1:59pm each week (Sydney time). You will be able to take each quiz once and will receive written feedback on your answers after the quiz has closed. Each quiz will go for 5 mins. The short time limit on this quiz means that the exam should not be attempted “open book” with reference material nearby, as there is not enough time to consult any reference material to answer these questions. The time limit will provide ample opportunity for you to read and answer all the questions.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify scientific concepts in research descriptions, examples, and vignettes from comparative psychology.
- CL02 : Evaluate research methods in comparative psychology to analyse how central

questions in comparative psychology are investigated.

Detailed Assessment Description

NB The quizzes will test your knowledge of the lectures and readings. There are no tutorials for this course.

Assessment Length

5 MCQ/ week

Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

Written assignment

Assessment Overview

You will write a 1-page summary of a recent peer-reviewed article relating to your video project topic. The focus of the assessment will be to explain how empirical evidence illustrates or challenges a theoretical principle. This assessment will be undertaken individually and is due in week 7. Feedback will be given in the form of marks and comments from academic staff within 10 working days.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify scientific concepts in research descriptions, examples, and vignettes from comparative psychology.
- CL02 : Evaluate research methods in comparative psychology to analyse how central questions in comparative psychology are investigated.
- CL03 : Critique scientific literature to differentiate empirical evidence from speculation.

Assessment Length

1 page (12pt; double-spaced, 1" margins)

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity

reports.

Generative AI Permission Level

Assistance with Attribution

This assessment requires you to write/create a first iteration of your submission yourself. You are then permitted to use generative AI tools, software or services to improve your submission in the ways set out below.

Any output of generative AI tools, software or services that is used within your assessment must be attributed with full referencing.

If outputs of generative AI tools, software or services form part of your submission and are not appropriately attributed, your Convenor will determine whether the omission is significant. If so, you may be asked to explain your submission. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

Group video project

Assessment Overview

You will work in groups of three to produce a 5-minute video explaining the mechanisms responsible for an interesting phenomenon in comparative psychology. The video should critique the conclusions of published research and offer alternative explanations where relevant. The video assessment is due in Week 9. Feedback will be provided by recorded verbal comments and a completed rubric within 10 working days. Further details will be released in the assessment guidelines in week 1.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify scientific concepts in research descriptions, examples, and vignettes from comparative psychology.
- CL02 : Evaluate research methods in comparative psychology to analyse how central questions in comparative psychology are investigated.
- CL03 : Critique scientific literature to differentiate empirical evidence from speculation.
- CL04 : Collaborate in a team to communicate about a concept in comparative psychology using multimedia.

Assessment Length

5 minutes max

Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

Generative AI Permission Level

Assistance with Attribution

This assessment requires you to write/create a first iteration of your submission yourself. You are then permitted to use generative AI tools, software or services to improve your submission in the ways set out below.

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For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

Final exam

Assessment Overview

The Final Exam will contain 80 MCQs taken from *all topics* in the course and will be worth 40% of the total course mark (i.e., 0.5% per question, equally weighted). The exam will be conducted online during the official exam period for the term. Feedback is available through inquiry with the course convenor.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify scientific concepts in research descriptions, examples, and vignettes from comparative psychology.
- CL02 : Evaluate research methods in comparative psychology to analyse how central questions in comparative psychology are investigated.

Assessment Length

80 multiple-choice questions

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

General Assessment Information

Special Consideration: Students who experience circumstances outside of their control that prevent them from completing an assessment task by the assigned due date due can apply for Special Consideration. Special Consideration applications should include a medical certificate or other documentation and be submitted via myUNSW within 3 days of the sitting/due date.

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.

Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address and advised of the official outcome. If the special consideration application is approved, you may be given an extended due date, or an alternative assessment/supplementary examination may be set. For more information about special consideration, please visit: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>.

Alternative assessments: will be subject to approval and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Implementation Procedure and Psychology Student Guide.

Supplementary examinations: will be made available for students with approved special consideration application and implemented in accordance with UNSW Assessment Policy and Psychology Student Guide.

All course assessments have been designed and implemented in accordance with [UNSW Assessment Policy](#).

The APA (7th edition) referencing style is to be adopted in this course. Students should consult the publication manual itself (rather than third party interpretations of it) in order to properly

adhere to APA style conventions. Students do not need to purchase a copy of the manual, it is available in the library or online. This resource is used by assessment markers and should be the only resource used by students to ensure they adopt this style appropriately.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

Achieve a composite mark of at least 50 out of 100.

Course Schedule

| Teaching Week/Module | Activity Type | Content |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Week 1 : 9 September - 15 September | Topic | How do we study animal minds and why do we bother? |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Introduction to comparative psychology Lecture 2 - Scientific and evolutionary principles Lecture 3 - Proximate and ultimate causes of behaviour Lecture 4 - The problem of mentalism |
| | Reading | Stevens, J.R. (2010) The challenges of understanding animal minds. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> . 1, 1-3 |
| | Assessment | Week 1 Topic Quiz |
| Week 2 : 16 September - 22 September | Topic | Nature and nurture Part 1: Attention, perception and behaviour |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Stimulus filtering: Knowing what's important Lecture 2 - Sign stimuli: Why herring gulls love polka-dots Lecture 3 - Birds in hats: Sensory bias and supernormal stimuli |
| | Reading | Ellis, Y., Daniels, W. and Jauregui, A. (2010). The effect of multitasking on the grade performance of business students. <i>Research in Higher Education Journal</i> , 8 |
| | Assessment | Week 2 Topic Quiz |
| Week 3 : 23 September - 29 September | Topic | Nature and nurture Part 2: Associative and non-associative learning |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Sensational sea slugs: Habituation and sensitisation Lecture 2 - Classical conditioning and quirky quokkas Lecture 3 - How to train your dragon: Instrumental conditioning Lecture 4 - Morgan's canon: habit, goal-directed or planned? |
| | Reading | Rogers, N, Killcross, S & Curnoe, D (2016) Hunting for evidence of cognitive planning: Archaeological signatures versus psychological realities, <i>Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports</i> 5, 225-239 |
| | Assessment | Week 3 Topic Quiz |
| Week 4 : 30 September - 6 October | Topic | What stuff do animals remember? |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Procedural memory: Knowing how to do stuff Lecture 2 - Working memory: Thinking about stuff Lecture 3 - Spatial memory: Where did you put your stuff? Lecture 4 - Episodic memory: Remembering the stuff you did Lecture 5 - Prospective memory: Remembering stuff you need to do |
| | Reading | Inoue, S. & Matsuzawa, T. (2007) Working memory of numerals in chimpanzees. <i>Current Biology</i> , 17, 1004-1005 |
| | Assessment | Week 4 Topic Quiz |
| Week 5 : 7 October - 13 October | Topic | How do animals navigate? |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Navigation, orientation and the cognitive maps debate Lecture 2 - Caching: why scrub jays don't lose their car keys Lecture 3 - Migration and the mystery of the monarch butterfly |
| | Reading | Utton, T. Pigeons navigate 'by following roads' (2004, February 5) <i>Daily Mail</i> https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-207421/Pigeons-navigate-following-roads.html |
| | Assessment | Week 5 Topic Quiz |
| Week 6 : 14 October - 20 October | Topic | Flex Week |
| Week 7 : 21 October - 27 October | Topic | Do animals have culture? |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Tool-use in hominins and nonhuman animals Lecture 2 - Emulation, imitation and mirror-neurons Lecture 3 - Animals in the lab: what can they do and why do we care? |
| | Reading | Chance, M. R. A. (1960) Köhler's chimps – How did they perform? <i>Man</i> . 60, 130-135 |
| | Assessment | Week 7 Topic Quiz |
| | Assessment | Written assignment due 11:59pm Sunday |
| Week 8 : 28 October - 3 November | Topic | Can animals lie? |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Self-awareness and self-recognition Lecture 2 - Theory of mind Lecture 3 - Deception |
| | Reading | Heyes, C. M. (1998) Theory of mind in nonhuman primates, <i>Behavioural and Brain Sciences</i> 21,101–148 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|---|
| | Assessment | Week 8 Topic Quiz |
| Week 9 : 4 November - 10 November | Topic | Do animals have language? |
| | Lecture | Lecture 1 - Similarities and differences in human and animal communication Lecture 2 - Sounding the alarm: referential communication Lecture 3 - When Broca's area breaks |
| | Reading | Fitch, W. T. (2017) Empirical approaches to the study of language evolution. Psychonomic Bulletin & Review 24, 3–33 |
| | Assessment | Week 9 Topic Quiz |
| | Assessment | Group video project due 11:59pm Sunday |
| Week 10 : 11 November - 17 November | Topic | Revision week and mini conference In our final week together, we will meet online as a class to watch and celebrate everyone's group videos |

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 |
|----------|----------------|-------|----------|-------|--------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Natalie Rogers | | | | | 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 Plagiarism

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](#)