

ANTHROPOLOGY 2265F-650

Primate Behaviour

COURSE OUTLINE

Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Ian Colquhoun (he/him)

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Office Hours: To be announced on the course OWL site; note – office time will be held via Zoom.

Teaching Assistant: Victoria Lavalley: vlavall@uwo.ca

Credit value: 0.5 credit

Mode of delivery: For 2020/2021 this course will be conducted online. It is *asynchronous*, meaning that students will be provided with a variety of lesson materials and activities that can be done throughout the week, although there may be tasks that must be completed by specific times.

Calendar Course Description: This course considers the behavioral patterns, and diversity, exhibited across species of the Order Primates. Critical examination of theoretical models developed to explain primate behavior is emphasized. Topics covered, using species comparisons, include socioecological contexts of primate behavior, reproduction, growth and development, kinship and dominance, communication and cognition.

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisites: Any Arts and Humanities or Social Science 0.5 or 1.0 Essay course.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Syllabus:

The Order Primates is composed of over 500 species... and counting. The total number of species, however, currently remains unknown -- primate species that are "new" to science are still being "discovered"! The objective of this course is to introduce you to both the behavioural patterns and the remarkable behavioural diversity across the major recognized taxonomic groups of primate species (i.e., genera and families), within the Order Primates. As a starting point, we will consider just how we biologically define what it is we recognize as a primate. Some of the methodologies employed in primate field studies will also be considered. Other topics introductory to the course will include an overview and brief survey of the taxonomy of the Order Primates.

Because it is not feasible to attempt a species-by-species survey of behaviour of all 500+ primate species, we will instead utilize a thematic approach to examining primate behaviour. Throughout the various topic areas in primate behavioural ecology we will cover (e.g., ecological and social contexts of behaviour, reproduction, growth and development, kinship and dominance,

communication and cognition), a comparative perspective across species will be employed. Our entire inspection of primate behaviour will be rooted in contemporary evolutionary theory, with a particular stressing of socioecological approaches to the analysis, understanding, and explanation of primate behaviour; the conservation of nonhuman primate populations will constitute an underlying theme to the course.

NOTE: A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL site before the first day of class.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of Anthropology 2265F-650 - "Primate Behavior", students will:

- Be able to identify broad patterns in the behavioural ecology of species across the Order Primates.
- Be conversant in the broad patterns of the fossil record of primate evolutionary history.
- Appreciate the ways in which Life History Theory applies to the growth, development, and reproduction of nonhuman primate species as it also does to other K-selected (i.e., larger-bodied) mammal species.
- Recognize the key importance of sociality as an adaptation in the behavioural ecology of nonhuman primates, and major ways in which patterns of primate behavioural ecology vary across primate species.
- Be familiar with how one can take the key ecological variables of activity pattern, feeding ecology, social group structure and composition, and dispersal patterns, and combine these to characterize the broad patterns of behavioural ecology across major taxonomic groups (i.e., taxonomic Families and Genera) within the Order Primates.
- Comprehend why, and the ways in which, an understanding of primate behavioural ecology is an essential aspect to efforts for the conservation of nonhuman primate species.

Course Materials:

The required text is the electronic (e-book) version of:

Strier, Karen B. 2016. *Primate Behavioral Ecology* (5th ed.). Routledge, London and New York.

Registered students will be able to access information about additional supplemental course materials through the course's on-line OWL site before the first day of class.

In addition to students completing weekly readings from Strier's text (basically proceeding at the rate of a chapter per week), I will also present weekly "Primer Notes" summary overviews to highlight key material in each chapter assigned and/or "unpack" Strier's presentation of the material to provide additional context or examples. These "Primer Notes" can also be doubly used as study aids ahead of the mid-term test and final exam (i.e., I think you will find that the "Primer Notes" will provide you convenient summaries of important course material to serve as a baseline for reviewing and studying key course material).

Evaluation:

Midterm Test, week of November 9th – 35%

3 written assignments – 30% (10% each)

Assignment 2 – x%

Research essay – x%

Final exam – x%

Midterm Test– 35%

Week of November 9th, 2020 – see below for course policy concerning the procedures for administering of “take-home” exams. The questions will be structured for the answers to be in short essay format.

Written Assignments– 30%

Three short summary and critical commentary assignments (**10% each**, for a total of 30% of final grade; assignment submission periods: i) week of Sept. 28th-Oct. 2nd; ii) week of Oct. 26th-30th; and, iii) week of Nov. 30th-Dec. 4th).

The first two written assignments will be brief, 750-1000 word **summary and critical commentary pieces** that each focus on a recently published (i.e., since 2010) primate behaviour study in a peer-reviewed academic journal (the source does not necessarily have to be a primatological journal, as primatological research is also frequently published in academic journals that focus on biological anthropology, biology, or ecology). Possible topics span the range of material covered in this course – the diversity of field studies in the literature provides a broad range of socioecological information on many species, including research such as, for example: allo-mothering in colobine monkeys; vigilance and predator avoidance behaviours in marmosets and tamarins; extractive foraging behaviour and cognitive abilities in orangutans. Note that because this course is focussed on **the behavioural ecology of wild primate populations**, and our understanding of it, you should focus your summary and critical commentary pieces on **field primatology research**, rather than captive studies in zoo or lab settings. For an excellent example of how to combine both summary and critical commentary perspectives in a short composition, see: Dunbar, R. I. M. (2001). ["Evolutionary biology: What's in a baboon's behind?"](#) *Nature* 410 (6825): 158.

The third assignment will be a prospective (i.e., forward-looking) annotated itemization in which you draw on the material we have covered in the course, and the material that you have read, to produce a listing of what you propose, looking ahead, to be the **“Top 5 Big Questions in Primatology”** (further details on the written assignments will be made available to students on the course OWL site).

Assignments that are not submitted on the due dates will be assessed a late penalty of 5% of the assignment grade per day (to a maximum of 20%); assignments that are more than 4 days late will not be accepted.

Final Exam – 35%

The final exam will take place during the designated exam period for this course and will only be on material covered *since* the mid-term test (i.e., it is not a cumulative final exam).

Note – Both the mid-term test and final exam will be structured as *take-home examinations*:

For the purposes of this procedure, a take-home examination is normally considered to be an assessment that could reasonably be completed by a well-prepared student in 6 hours or less. As

a guideline, for long-answer and essay-based take-home examinations, the expectation is that completion of the assessment will require 2000 words or less.

Students will be provided online access to the examination at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the examination slot assigned by the Office of the Registrar. Papers will be due by the end of the assigned examination slot.

Course Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

Because Anthropology 2265F is considered an "essay course", **you must complete and submit the three written assignments in order to earn academic credit for this course.** So, to avoid grade penalizations on your summary and critical commentary assignments, avoid submitting them late! However, submitting a late assignment is certainly better than not submitting one at all!

Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations:

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Academic Integrity - Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students will have up to two (2) opportunities during the regular academic year to use an on-line portal to self-report an absence during the term, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students are expected to contact their instructors within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence, unless noted on the syllabus. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- for exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- if a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students are encouraged to contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

Please note that in cases of medical accommodation, Provincial privacy regulations mean that course instructors should not, and are not permitted to, receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for Academic Accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All medical documentation required to account for absences that are not covered by the SRA (Self-Reported Absence) policy **must be submitted to the Academic Counselling Office of a student's Home Faculty.**

For Western University policy on Consideration for Student Absence, see: [Policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs](#)

[Student Medical Certificate \(SMC\)](#)

Should the Academic Counselling Office, in conjunction with other Faculties, revise policy recommendations related to this, you will be updated by an Announcement on the course OWL site.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

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