

Faculty of Health
Department of Psychology
PSYC 3280 3.0 Section : ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR
Wednesdays 2:30-5:30 pm, TBD
Winter 2025

Lectures will be a combination of in person and pre-recorded lectures. All exams will be in-person.

Instructor and T.A. Information

Instructor: Ezekiel Gading

Office Hours: *By Appointment*

Email: efgading@yorku.ca

T.A.	Nicky Sztohrync	
Email	nickys17@my.yorku.ca	
Office Hours	<i>By appointment</i>	

Course Prerequisite(s):

- **HH/PSYC 1010 6.00 (Introduction to Psychology).**
- **Completed at least 54 earned credits**

Course Credit Exclusions

Please refer to [York Courses Website](#) for a listing of any course credit exclusions.

Course website: [eClass](#)

All course materials will be available on the course eClass site. The site will be your central access point for course materials.

Course Description

An introduction to the study of animal behaviour. Perspectives in evolution, ethology, sociobiology, and psychology are covered. Topics include natural selection, sexual selection, mating, kinship, cooperation, foraging, antipredator behaviour, communication, habitat selection, territoriality, and migration, aggression, play, animal welfare, and, animal personalities.

Program Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of animal behaviour.
2. Articulate trends in the psychology of animal behaviour.

3. Express psychological knowledge of animal behaviour in written form.
4. Describe and explain limits to generalizability of research findings on animal behaviour.
5. Demonstrate ability to relate information on the psychology of animal behaviour to own and others' life experiences.

Specific Learning Objectives

- Distinguish between proximate and ultimate questions that may be asked about animal behaviour, and formulate hypotheses of each type to explain a given behaviour
- Explain the principles involved in the evolution of behaviour, including natural selection and sexual selection
- Understand and explain the concept of biodiversity, be able to list the main animal taxa and understand and explain the evolutionary relationships between different taxa
- Understand some of the mechanisms involved in the production of a behavioural sequence by an animal in a range of contexts
- Describe behavioural sequences without reference to mental states.
- Scientifically critique popular portrayal of animal behaviour and provide alternative scientific explanations for such behaviours
- Generate testable hypotheses and subsequent study design regarding using concepts discussed in class

Required Text

- Principles of Animal Behavior (4th edition, 2020) by Lee Alan Dugatkin (Note: Photo of elephants on the front).
- Note: An e-book is also available through Vital Source Canada or directly from the publisher (UChicago Press).

Course Requirements and Assessment:

Assessment	Date of Evaluation (if known)	Weighting
Midterm 1	12 February 2025	35%
Assignment 1	7 March 2025	10%
Assignment 2	4 April 2025	20%
Final exam	TBD- Exam period	35%
Total		100%

Description of Assignments

Midterm (35% each): The midterm will be held *in person, in the classroom, and during class time*. They will cover materials in lecture, videos, and required textbook chapters for the first half of the course only. The exam will take 90 minutes to complete but you are free to use the full class time.

Assignment 1: Deadline: 7 March 2025. You will choose a video of an animal performing a behaviour from popular social media sites. You will first describe the behaviour, scientifically critique the given in the explanations in the video, and put forth your own scientific explanation of the behaviour using concepts you have learnt in the course. This assignment provides you with the experience to think about behaviour critically and scientifically engage with popular media representations of animal behaviour. A Skill this assignment will develop is non-anthropomorphic description of behaviour. *Details will be discussed early in the semester.*

Assignment 2: Deadline 4 April 2025. You will propose a simple study to test your explanation against the explanation given in the video in assignment 1. You will generate a hypothesis and simulate your own expected plots if your hypothesis is confirmed. Skills this assignment will develop include: hypothesis generation, study design, data simulation. *Details will be discussed early in the semester.*

Final exam: The final exam will cover the latter half of the required chapters, lectures, and videos; it will therefore be *non-cumulative*. The final exam will be multiple choice and students will be given 3 hours to sit the test. The date and venue is TBD. Please await the announcement on the University Registrar's website. It is the responsibility of the student to be available during the exam period. A single make-up date will be set during/ right after the exam period. A missed make-up exam will earn a grade of zero.

Class Format and Attendance Policy

Most lectures will be delivered in-person. In-person classes will be recorded and will be posted to eclass within the week of the class. There will be pre-recorded lectures during midterm1 and on the week of 24 March 2025. Because a majority of the classes are in-person, there will be plenty of opportunity to interact with students and the instructor in this course. Attendance will not be recorded but opportunities to earn bonus marks will be given during some in person classes.

Grading as per Senate Policy

The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests* will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 89, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.)

For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [Grading Scheme for 2024-25](#)

Missed Tests/Midterm Exams/Late Assignment

For any missed quiz or late assignment, students MUST complete the following online form which will be received and reviewed in the Psychology undergraduate office. At this time, due to COVID-19 an Attending Physician's Statement (APS) is not required, however, a reason for missing an evaluated component in the course must be provided.

[HH PSYC: Missed Tests/Exams Form](#). Failure to complete the form within 48 hours of the original deadline will result in a grade of zero for the missed quiz or late assignment.

Missed exams (Midterm/Final) are subject to the university's missed test policy, and thus you will be required to fill out a form if you missed either one. You may request for accommodation from the course director if you have missed the midterm exam after filling out the required documentation. Only students with documented reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., will be allowed to sit the make-up exam. A single make-up exam date will be set accordingly. It is the student's responsibility to be available on this make-up exam date. A missed make-up will earn a grade of zero.

Assignments 1 and 2 may be submitted at any point until the midnight of 4 April 2025 *without penalty*. However ***NO assignments will be accepted after the midnight of 4 April 2025.***

Add/Drop Deadlines

For a list of all important dates please refer to [Undergraduate Fall/Winter 2024-2025 Important Dates](#)

	Fall (Term F)	Year (Term Y)	Winter (Term W)
Last date to add a course without permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	September 18	September 18	January 20
Last date to add a course with permission of instructor (also see Financial Deadlines)	October 2	October 16	January 31
Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (also see Financial Deadlines)	November 8	February 7	March 14
Course Withdrawal Period (withdraw from a course and receive a grade of "W" on transcript – see note below)	November 9 – December 3	February 8- April 4	March 15- April 4

Add and Drop Deadline Information

There are deadlines for adding and dropping courses, both academic and financial. Since, for the most part, the dates are **different**, be sure to read the information carefully so that you understand the differences between the sessional dates below and the [Refund Tables](#).

You are strongly advised to pay close attention to the "Last date to enrol without permission of course instructor" deadlines. These deadlines represent the last date students have unrestricted access to the registration and enrolment system.

After that date, you must contact the professor/department offering the course to arrange permission.

You can drop courses using the registration and enrolment system up until the last date to drop a course without receiving a grade (drop deadline).

You may [withdraw from a course](#) using the registration and enrolment system after the drop deadline until the last day of class for the term associated with the course. When you withdraw

from a course, the course remains on your transcript without a grade and is notated as 'W'. The withdrawal will not affect your grade point average or count towards the credits required for your degree.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

The assignments will come from your own observation of the behaviour supported by concepts you have learnt in class as well as the relevant scientific literature. You are expected to properly cite (APA 7) information that you found through research.

Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices (e.g., tablets, laptops) are permitted during class time for lecture-related purposes. The use of electronic devices (e.g., tablets, laptops, smart watches, ear phones, mobile phones) are not allowed during exams. **You are NOT permitted to use generative AI on your assignment.**

Academic Integrity for Students

York University takes academic integrity very seriously; please familiarize yourself with [Information about the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#).

It is recommended that you review Academic Integrity by completing the [Academic Integrity Tutorial](#) and [Academic Honesty Quiz](#)

Test Banks

The offering for sale of, buying of, and attempting to sell or buy test banks (banks of test questions and/or answers), or any course specific test questions/answers is not permitted in the Faculty of Health. Any student found to be doing this may be considered to have breached the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty. In particular, buying and attempting to sell banks of test questions and/or answers may be considered as “Cheating in an attempt to gain an improper advantage in an academic evaluation” (article 2.1.1 from the Senate Policy) and/or “encouraging, enabling or causing others” (article 2.1.10 from the Senate Policy) to cheat.

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

While all individuals are expected to satisfy the requirements of their program of study and to aspire to do so at a level of excellence, the university recognizes that persons with disabilities may require reasonable accommodation to enable them to do so. The university encourages students with disabilities to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to discuss their accommodation needs as early as possible in the term to establish the recommended academic accommodations that will be communicated to Course Directors as necessary. Please let me know as early as possible in the term if you anticipate requiring academic accommodation so that we can discuss how to consider your accommodation needs within the context of this course.

<https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/>

Excerpt from Senate Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.

All students are expected to satisfy the essential learning outcomes of courses. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. For further information please refer to: [York University Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

Course Materials Copyright Information

These course materials are designed for use as part of the PSYC 3280 course at York University and are the property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a violation of Copyright law. [Intellectual Property Rights Statement](#).

Course Schedule

8 January: Introduction and Principles of Animal Behaviour (Chapter 1)

15 January: The Evolution of Behaviour (Chapter 2), **ASSIGNMENTS**

22 January: Sexual Selection (Chapter 7) and Mating Systems (Chapter 8)

29 January: Kinship(Chapter 9) and Cooperation (Chapter 10)

5 February: Foraging (Chapter 11); Exam Revision

12 February: **MIDTERM 1 (Chapters 1,2, 7, 8, 9,10, 11); Online lecture: Learning (Chapter 5)**

19 February: Reading Week

26 February: Anti-Predator Behaviour (Chapter 12)

5 March: Communication (Chapter 13); **ASSIGNMENT 1 Deadline (7 March)**

12 March: Habitat Selection, Territoriality, and Migration (Chapter 14)

19 March: Aggression (Chapter 15)

26 March: **Online lecture: Play (Chapter 16) and Animal Personalities (Chapter 17)**

2 April: Animal Welfare Research (No Assigned Reading); Course Wrap-up; **ASSIGNMENT 12 Deadline (4 April)**

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Final exam (TBD)- (Chapters 5, 12, 13, 14, 15,16, 17, Welfare)