

FIU – Department of Psychology – CBH5256 – U01
Advanced Animal Cognition

PREREQUISITE

Graduate standing or permission of instructor.

CLASS MEETINGS

Tuesdays 11:00 – 1:45 pm GC 272

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Eliza Nelson

Office Hours: By appointment (DM 276)

Email: elnelson@fiu.edu

NOTE: For a timely reply, email me directly. Do not send me a message via Blackboard. Please let me know whenever possible if you will miss class. Under special circumstances, extensions on assignments may be given for excused absences (i.e., illness, death in the family).

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING GOALS

Throughout this course, we will try to answer the question *what makes humans unique?* We will explore similarities and differences between humans and other animals for a variety of cognitive abilities such as perception, attention, learning, memory, reasoning, tool use, and language using primary scientific evidence and an evolutionary framework.

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Describe and explain basic and complex processes in cognition
- Critically compare and contrast cognitive abilities in animals
- Apply comparative research methods to design an original study

REQUIRED READINGS

- *Cognition, Evolution, and Behavior*, Sara J. Shettleworth (2010)
- Other recommended readings will be posted on Blackboard

GRADING

Reading Responses	~10%	Take-Home Exam 1	20%
Project Proposal	20%	Take-Home Exam 2	20%
Project Presentation	10%	Take-Home Exam 3	20%

Each reading response is worth 4 points when submitted on time. Late responses are given half credit (2 points). Exam questions are scored on a 1-5 system and the average is converted to a number out of 100. The project proposal is 100 points and the final presentation is 50 points. Scoring project proposal talks is worth 2 points. **The grand possible total is 500 points.**

To determine your final letter grade, use the conversion chart below:

LETTER GRADE CONVERSION

A: 94-100%	A-: 90-93%	B+: 87-89%	B: 83-86%	B-: 80-82%	
C+: 77-79%	C: 73-76%	C-: 70-72%	D+: 67-69%	D: 60-66	F: 59 & below

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any instance of academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, collusion, academic dishonesty) will be reported to the University for further action. Please refer to your graduate student handbook, or ask me if you are unsure about what constitutes misconduct. Additional details are available at this website: <http://gradschool.fiu.edu/academic-misconduct.shtml>

For undergraduate students enrolled in this course, FIU policies can be found at this website: https://ugrad.fiu.edu/academic_misconduct/

This course uses Turnitin to check for plagiarism on the final project proposal assignment.

READING RESPONSES

Short reactions (1-2 paragraphs) to the assigned readings are due by **noon** via email the day before class. Your responses should be thoughtful and include discussion questions. There is no reading response due for Ch. 1 & 2. You are responsible for 12 reading responses in total.

On-time responses are credited 4 points. Late responses are credited 2 points.

TAKE-HOME EXAMS

You will have 24 hours to complete the exam once the questions have been distributed. The exam will be essay format with a choice of questions. Please see the separate handout available on Blackboard for the format of the take-home exams and the grading system.

PROJECT PROPSAL PRESENTATION

You will present a short overview of your project proposal during the final class meeting. Please see the separate handout available on Blackboard for presentation guidelines. Talks should be 8 minutes in length with 2 minutes for questions. You will be asked to grade your peers, and these scores will be part of the grade. Please use comments you receive to revise your paper.

Presentations will take place in class on December 2nd.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

You will conduct a mini review on any topic related to animal cognition and propose an original study with methods and analyses. The proposal is due finals week (10-15 pages). The class voted on October 7th to have the project proposal due on **Monday December 8th at midnight**.

Please see the additional handout on the project proposal. You are required to upload your final written document to Turnitin via Blackboard.

KEY DATES

Exam 1	Distributed 09/25 @ 5 pm	Due 09/26 @ 5 pm
Exam 2	Distributed 10/23 @ 5 pm	Due 10/24 @ 5 pm
Exam 3	Distributed 11/25 @ 5 pm	Due 11/26 @ Midnight
NO CLASS	11/11 {Veterans Day}	
NO CLASS	11/27 {Thanksgiving Day}	
Presentations	12/02 {Last class}	8 minutes with 2 minutes for Q&A
Project Proposal	12/08 by midnight	10-15 pages double-spaced

LECTURE SCHEDULE

 Subject to change. All readings are due on the date indicated.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading Due</u>
<i>Fundamentals</i>		
Week 1: Introduction	08/26	No response due (Read Ch. 1 & 2)
Week 2: Perception and Attention	09/02	Ch. 3
Week 3: Learning	09/09	Ch. 4
Week 4: Categories and Concepts	09/16	Ch. 6
Week 5: Memory	09/23	Ch. 7
Take-Home Exam 1		
<i>Physical Cognition</i>		
Week 6: Spatial Cognition	09/30	Ch. 8
Week 7: Timing	10/07	Ch. 9
Week 8: Number	10/14	Ch. 10
Week 9: Foraging, Planning, and Tool Use	10/21	Ch. 11
Take-Home Exam 2		
<i>Social Cognition</i>		
Week 10: Social Intelligence	10/28	Ch. 12
Week 11: Social Learning	11/04	Ch. 13
Week 12: No Class	11/11	University Closed: Veterans Day
Week 13: Communication and Language	11/18	Ch. 14
Week 14: Conclusions	11/25	Ch. 15
Take-Home Exam 3		
Thanksgiving Break		
Week 15: Presentations	12/02	
Finals Week: Project Proposal Due	12/08	