

FIU – Department of Psychology – PSY4931 – U07
Senior Seminar: “Measuring Animal Behavior”

PREREQUISITES

I prefer that you have already taken Research Methods (PSY3213) and Statistics (STA3123). You will be unprepared for the style of this course if you do not have at least junior status.

CLASS MEETINGS

Thursdays 5:00 – 6:50 pm (Chem & Physics 101)

Note: This class meets once a week. By this math, when you miss class, you miss a lot. Attendance is highly recommended. Students who miss class tend not to like their final grade.

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Eliza Nelson
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 am – 12:30 pm (DM 276)
Email: elnelson@fiu.edu

Note: You do not need an appointment to come to office hours. I am available in my office during the posted time and see students on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you cannot make it on Wednesdays, then email me for an appointment. Be sure to include 2-3 half hour slots that you are available in your request to save time in scheduling.

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT

Emily Boeving
Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00 – 4:00 pm (DM 269A)
Email: eboev001@fiu.edu

Note: You do not need an appointment to come to Emily’s office hours either. She is always available during the posted time. If you cannot make it on Thursdays, send her an email to make an appointment. Do not wait until it’s too late to come to one of us for help.

EMAIL POLICY

Please address your email “Dear Dr. Nelson” or “Dear Emily” and sign your name at the bottom. We reserve the right not to respond to ‘hey you’ emails. Do not send a message via Blackboard. Typically, we will respond to email within 1 day and often sooner.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Please be respectful of class time and of your peers. Kindly refrain from talking, texting, or using technology for non-class related activities. If you are disruptive, we reserve the right to ask you to leave. Arriving late and leaving early is distracting for everyone; please don’t do it. We work hard to get to know each of our students personally. We want you to succeed. You can assume that when we know your name, we know when you’re not present or engaged in class.

MAKE-UP POLICIES

Make-up work is only permitted for excused absences with documentation. This includes, but is not limited to, doctor's excuses (for yourself or immediate relatives), athletic events, FIU-related scholarly events (e.g., conference), death in the family, religious observances, or auto accident (not a traffic jam). Work-related excuses will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Approved work-related excuses are one-time absences, not regular occurrences. Vacation is not a one-time occurrence. Please do not take this class if it conflicts with your work schedule. Also, keep in mind that documentation must be dated for the material or assignment that you missed. As soon as you are able, contact Dr. Nelson directly by email to discuss your situation. We will do our best to accommodate you.

Note: There is no class on Thursday 11/13. Dr. Nelson will be away at a conference. If you think you'll need a personal day or a long weekend during the semester, here's your chance.

DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS:

Disability students must submit DRC paperwork in the first week of class for accommodations: drc.fiu.edu/students

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any instance of academic misconduct (e.g., plagiarism, cheating, collusion, dishonesty) will be reported to the University and Department of Psychology for further action. Please refer to your student handbook, or ask me if you are unsure about what constitutes misconduct. Details can also be found at this website: https://ugrad.fiu.edu/academic_misconduct/

Note: This class uses Turnitin to check for plagiarism. Papers are uploaded via Blackboard to this service, which compares your work against a database of prior student papers as well as to journal articles and websites. Without fail, there is a case of plagiarism each semester. If charges are brought against you and you do not have a prior record, you will be required to attend a meeting with Dr. Nelson and the Associate Chair of Psychology. At this meeting, you will be asked to sign paperwork accepting an academic penalty. It will not appear on your record as a first time offender. However, if you have already had one charge of misconduct, your situation will be escalated, you will appear in student court, and the charge will be listed on your transcript. In both scenarios, it is highly probable that you will also fail the class. Moral of the story: Do your own work. Don't plagiarize.

COURSE GOALS

In this course, we will learn how to measure animal behavior with an emphasis on nonhuman primates. We will cover themes that you may have encountered in your prior coursework. The main goal is to highlight the value of animal models in psychological research and let you see how such data is collected and interpreted. Measurement topics include research ethics, basic and advanced experimental techniques, and field methods. We will cover many aspects of the research process including the literature search, study design, preparing a research proposal, and the peer review process. We will also spend time working on professional development and preparing job or graduate school materials for 'life after FIU'.

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

- Describe and apply basic research principles in animal behavior
- Critically read and analyze empirical research
- Disseminate research findings for scientific and non-scientific audiences
- Prepare a job or graduate school application

Note: This course is reading and writing intense. Be prepared to put in effort every week. There are no exams in this course. Your grade is based on in-class activities (participation), take-home assignments, a final paper, and a presentation in the end-of-semester paper blitz.

ASSIGNED READINGS

All assigned readings are posted on Blackboard as PDFs. The cost of printing these materials (and assignments) takes the place of buying a textbook. To be clear: there is no textbook for this course. However, I urge you to save trees whenever possible and go electronic on your smartphone, tablet, or laptop for course readings. It is expected that you will have read any assigned readings before you come to class.

IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (PARTICIPATION GRADE)

Throughout the semester, there will be activities in class to help you engage with the material. These activities could include anything from tweeting about a topic, one-minute papers, or working in pairs or small groups. In-class assignments are graded on effort. If you're in class and you do the work, you get full credit. There are 10 unannounced opportunities for participation.

Note: You can miss 1 in-class assignment without penalty. You do not need documentation. However, this is not a free pass to skip class. If you use your free miss, any further absence will require dated documentation in order to be allowed to make-up the work. We know that sometimes the unexpected happens that you can't document (e.g., babysitter doesn't show, illness where you didn't go to the doctor). This is what the free miss is intended to cover.

TAKE-HOME ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to in-class activities, there will also be assignments to be completed outside of class. There are 6 of these assignments. They differ in length, and detailed instructions will be given with each one. Assignments are posted on Blackboard after class the day they are assigned and are due the following week at the start of class, or they are considered late. All take-home assignments must be typewritten in Arial 12-point font. Do not include a title page. Please put your name and PID in the header of your assignment so that your identifying information appears on every page. Failure to follow formatting guidelines will result in a 1-point penalty.

Note: No assignments are accepted via email. You must turn in a hard copy to receive credit. There is 1-point penalty every day that your assignment is late without an approved excuse. It is better to turn in an assignment late than to take a 0. If your absence is excused, a new due date will be negotiated with Dr. Nelson and you will not be penalized.

FINAL PAPER

The final paper required in this course has three components: (1) rough draft (2 copies due in class on 11/20 and handed in with your final paper); (2) cover letter to Dr. Nelson describing the edits made as a result of the peer review (occurs in class on 11/20); and (3) final paper. Both the rough draft and the final paper are uploaded to Turnitin. You will be warned for plagiarism detected in the rough draft, and penalized accordingly for plagiarism detected in the final copy. You will be asked to grade your own paper using Dr. Nelson's rubric before turning it in. You will have the rubric in advance; we recommend using it as a checklist during the writing process.

The content of the paper should be a mini-review on any psychological topic that interests you, and must contain at least 20 empirical nonhuman animal references. An empirical study is one that collects original data from observations or an experiment. There is no maximum number of references that you can use. Review papers or papers using human data do not count in your 20, but may be used to supplement your paper. You may not use any web source, newspapers, or popular magazine articles. Your topic should be a conceptual one, not a lengthy description of a particular animal. For example, you might choose a cognitive topic that poses a question such as 'do monkeys do math?' or 'do chimpanzees possess a language system?'. You should avoid topics such as 'the life and times of the giant panda' or 'why I think dolphins are cool'. You'll know if your topic is a dud if you can't find enough references to write about.

Note: The final paper should be double-spaced in Arial 12-point font with 1" margins. The length must be at least 2500 words and no more than 3000 words. You will be asked to provide a word count with your final paper. You will be penalized on paper length and formatting if you fail to meet the requirements. A separate handout will be provided.

END-OF-SEMESTER PAPER BLITZ

During the last class meeting (and the final exam period, if needed) we will have a paper blitz. What this means is that each person will get 1 PowerPoint slide and < 5 minutes to present the highlights of their review paper. It will be challenging to condense your paper into this format. It is easy to go on *ad nauseam* about a topic that you like, and it's much tougher to come up with the 'big picture' or 'take-home message' that you want to communicate to your audience. You might consider covering why the topic is important and what we know so far, or what we still need to learn going forward. Treat your slide like a poster and be mindful of how you organize the information so that your audience can see it. There will be a separate rubric given out for the paper blitz. Your grade will include being attentive to other students' presentations.

GRADING

In-Class Assignments	45 points	9 @ 5 points each; Unannounced
Take-Home Assignments	150 points	6 @ 25 points each; See calendar for due dates
Final Paper	250 points	See rubric for breakdown of points
Paper Blitz Presentation	55 points	Last Class/Final Exam period <i>You must attend all presentation days for full credit</i>

Total Points Possible = 500

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

To calculate your grade, divide your total by 500. You must earn a 'C' or better for the major.

EXTRA CREDIT

There are two ways to earn extra credit in this course. The first way is guaranteed, but takes effort and the second way is more fun, but relies on chance. You can earn up to 20 points towards your final point total for the class by completing a research journal. Your journal can be completed in either Excel (highly recommended) or Word. Each entry in your journal will be a summary of an article that you read for your final paper. The summary should contain 3 parts: (1) why the study was conducted (2 sentences), (2) how the study was conducted (1 sentence), and (3) what the authors found (2 sentences). Each entry is worth 1 point, meaning that if you do summaries for the 20 references required in your final paper, you can earn 20 points. The added benefit is that you will be better prepared to write your paper if you do the journal. The second way to earn points is by winning games or being selected for top contributions to class activities. Like the research journal, bonuses count towards your total number of class points.

Note: Because there are two ways to earn extra credit in this course, kindly do not come to us at the end of the semester pleading for a grade adjustment. It is not fair to bend the rules for one student, and not every student. Stay on top of your workload this semester and come to one of us as soon as you start to have trouble. The deadline for the journal is the last class.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Due</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Aug. 28	Introduction	None	None
Sep. 4	Literature Search	None	Assignment #1
Sep. 11	Reading Articles	Reading #1	Assignment #2
Sep. 18	Identifying Subjects	None	Assignment #3
Sep. 25	Professional Workshop #1	None	Assignment #4
Oct. 2	Professional Workshop #2	None	Assignment #5
Oct. 9	Observing Behavior #1	Reading #2	None
Oct. 16	Observing Behavior #2	Reading #3	None
Oct. 23	Field Experiments	Reading #4	None
Oct. 30	Captive Experiments #1	Reading #5	None
Nov. 6	Captive Experiments #2	Reading #6	Assignment #6
Nov. 13	No Class: Dr. Nelson Away	None	None
Nov. 20	Peer Review	None	Rough draft (2x copies)
Nov. 27	No Class: Thanksgiving	None	None
Dec. 4 th	Paper Blitz	None	Final paper/Presentation
Dec. 11 th	Paper Blitz (continued during final exam period 5:00-7:00 pm if needed)		

PLEASE DETACH THIS PAGE AND RETURN TO DR. NELSON

A contract made between _____ (PID _____) and Dr. Nelson for the duration of Fall 2014 for the class “Measuring Animal Behavior” PSY4931-U07.

Please read and initial the following statements.

I have read and understand what is expected of me in this course. _____

I know that I am expected to download readings because there is no textbook. _____

I know that I must complete 9 of 10 in-class assignments for 9% of my grade. _____

I know that I must complete 6 take-home assignments for 30% of my grade. _____

I know that the final paper for this course is worth 50% of my grade. _____

I know that the paper blitz presentation is worth 11% of my grade. _____

I have read and understand the policies of this course. _____

I agree to abide by the classroom policies outline in the syllabus. _____

I agree to abide by the email policies outlined in the syllabus. _____

I understand I can make an appointment if I have a conflict with office hours. _____

I understand the difference between an excused and unexcused absence. _____

I understand the consequences of academic misconduct. _____

I understand the extra credit opportunities that are available to me in this course. _____

I understand that I am expected to check my FIU email regularly for course news. _____

I understand Dr. Nelson may ask to meet with me if I fall behind in the course. _____

Signed: _____

Major: _____ Year: _____ Grade Expected in Course: _____

Birthdate: _____ Favorite Candy: _____ Favorite TV Show: _____

Potential Topics for Final Paper: _____