

FIU – Department of Psychology  
PSB4250 – U01 – Animal Cognition

CLASS MEETINGS

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Tuesday/Thursday 5:00 – 6:15 pm (OE 134)

INSTRUCTOR

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Dr. Eliza Nelson

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00 – 12:00 pm or by appointment (DM 201A)

Email: [elnelson@fiu.edu](mailto:elnelson@fiu.edu)

GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT

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Dea Garic

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00 – 2:00 pm (DM 248F)

Email: [dgari004@fiu.edu](mailto:dgari004@fiu.edu)

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

EMAIL POLICY

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

CLASSROOM POLICIES

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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.

COURSE GOALS

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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
- Understand comparative research methods and interpret original data

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**REQUIRED READINGS**


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- *Animal Cognition, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*, Clive D.L. Wynne and Monique A.R. Udell (2013)
- Other assigned readings will be posted on Blackboard

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**GRADING**


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Pop Quizzes	15%	5 x 15 = 75 pts	Unannounced throughout semester
Exam 1 = Feb 2 <sup>nd</sup>	20%	100 pts	Material from 1/14 – 1/28
Exam 2 = Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup>	20%	100 pts	Material from 2/04 – 2/18
Exam 3 = Mar 31 <sup>st</sup>	20%	100 pts	Material from 2/25 – 3/29
Exam 4 = Apr 26 <sup>th</sup>	20%	100 pts	Material from 4/05 – 4/21
Essay = Apr 28 <sup>th</sup>	5%	25 pts	Due last day of class at 5 pm

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**LETTER GRADE CONVERSION**


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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

Divide your total by 500 to convert your points to a letter grade. **Keep in mind you can improve your grade by 5% (25 points) if you submit the max extra credit assignments.**

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**POP QUIZZES**


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There are 15 unannounced pop quizzes worth 5 points each throughout the semester based on the assigned readings. Quizzes will take place at the start of class. You cannot complete the quiz if you arrive late. Quizzes are worth 15% of your total grade. Therefore, you will not do well in this course if you do not attend class meetings. There will be a quiz 75% of non-video days.

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**NON-CUMMULATIVE EXAMS**


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There are 4 in-class exams (100 points each) throughout the semester. *Any material covered during the dates for each exam is fair game including, but not limited to, readings, slides, videos, and guest lectures.* The format for exams may include multiple choice, matching, true or false, short answer, or interpreting data (i.e., figures and tables). The number of questions where you can “guess” decreases with each exam, while the amount of writing increases. **Fair warning: I test material covered only in class. I also test material from videos shown in class using student-submitted questions. I post an outline for lecture notes, but do not post slides.**

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**TAKE-HOME ESSAY FOR EXAM 4**


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For the last exam, there will be a take-home essay. The essay is worth 5% of your total grade. You may use any materials you wish for the essay, but you must cite your sources and provide a reference list. The essay must be at least 1,000 words. *You are required to type your essay and provide a word count.* Failure to meet one or both of these requirements will result in a deduction. The essay is due in hard copy form at **5 pm** on the last day of class. You must also upload a copy to TurnItIn, which will check for plagiarism. No electronic copies will be accepted. You will be penalized if the essay is late. **The penalty for plagiarism is an automatic “0”.**

## DISABILITY ACCOMODATIONS

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

## MAKE-UP POLICIES

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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. Weather is not an excused absence. 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.

## EXTRA-CREDIT

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Should you miss a quiz or receive a lower grade than you'd like on an exam, you can earn extra-credit points by reading and summarizing scientific articles. Each article summary is graded for content and worth up to 5 points. There is a maximum of 5% (25 points) that you can earn towards your final grade. All extra credit is due via email only (to [elnelson@fiu.edu](mailto:elnelson@fiu.edu)) by **5 pm** the last day of class, but you can turn in assignments any time during the semester.

Instructions: Search for an interesting article in the journal *Animal Cognition* that was published in the past 5 years (2011 – 2016, including Online First). Write a 500-word press release for the article. Your newspaper-worthy summary should be written for a popular audience, aka assume your reader has absolutely no scientific training. The press release should cover who, what, where, when, why, and how for the study you are summarizing. End your article with an APA citation for the original paper. Don't forget a catchy title! **You can turn in extra credit at any time during the semester. No assignments are accepted after 5 pm on the last day of class.**

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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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/](https://ugrad.fiu.edu/academic_misconduct/)

**This class uses Turnitin to check for plagiarism. The policy for the course is an automatic "0" on any plagiarized assignment. If you have a previous plagiarism charge on your record, your case will be immediately escalated to student court and the penalty may be more severe.**

## LECTURE SCHEDULE

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Subject to change. All readings are due on the date indicated and are quiz material. **PowerPoint presentations are not posted.** An outline for taking notes will be posted before class. If you miss class, you must make an appointment with the Graduate TA to obtain the notes.

## Animal Cognition Spring 2016 Schedule

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W = Wynne text      B = Reading on Blackboard

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Due</u>
01/12: Welcome	
01/14: Introduction	<b>W1</b>
01/19: Perception and Attention	<b>W2</b>
01/21: Learning	<b>W5</b>
01/26: Categories and Concepts	<b>W3</b>
01/28: Spatial Cognition	<b>W7</b>
<b>02/02: EXAM 1</b>	
02/04: Memory	<b>W10</b>
02/09: Timing	<b>W4 (pp. 65-74)</b>
02/11: <b>NO CLASS – DR. NELSON EMERGENCY</b>	
02/16: Number and Reasoning	<b>W4 (pp. 74-85) and W6 (pp. 121-139)</b>
02/18: Planning and Foraging	<b>B1</b>
<b>02/23: EXAM 2</b>	
02/25: <b>GUEST LECTURE – DR. FRANCYS SUBIAUL</b>	<b>Reading Posted to Bb – EXTRA CREDIT</b>
03/01: (FILM) “So Human, So Chimp”	
03/03: Theory of Mind	<b>W8</b>
03/08: (FILM) “Becoming Us”	
03/10: Tool Use	<b>W6 (pp. 117-121)</b>
<b>03/15: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>03/17: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</b>	
03/22: Tool Use	<b>B2</b>
03/24: Social Learning	<b>W9 (pp. 201-209; 223-228)</b>
03/29: Imitation	<b>W9 (pp. 209-223)</b>
<b>03/31: EXAM 3</b>	
04/05: (FILM) “Brain Matters”	
04/07: Cooperation	<b>B3</b>
04/12: Culture	<b>B4</b>
04/14: Communication and Language	<b>W11</b>
04/19: Communication and Language	<b>W12, B5</b>
04/21: Conclusions	<b>W13</b>
<b>04/26: EXAM 4</b>	
<b>04/28: TAKE-HOME ESSAY and EXTRA CREDIT DUE @ 5 pm sharp (Do not be late to class)</b>	

PLEASE DETACH THIS PAGE AND RETURN TO DR. NELSON

A contract made between \_\_\_\_\_ (PID \_\_\_\_\_) and Dr. Nelson for the duration of Spring 2016 for the class “Animal Cognition” PSB4250-U01.

Please read and initial the following statements.

I understand what is expected of me in this course. \_\_\_\_\_

I know that all readings are subject to pop quizzes worth 15% of my grade. \_\_\_\_\_

I know that I must take 4 in-class exams for 80% of my grade. \_\_\_\_\_

I know that I must turn in a take-home essay at the last class for 5% of my grade. \_\_\_\_\_

I 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 know that Dr. Nelson provides an outline for notes, and no slides are posted. \_\_\_\_\_

I understand the consequences of academic misconduct. \_\_\_\_\_

I understand how Turnitin works. \_\_\_\_\_

I understand the penalty for plagiarism is an automatic “0” on the assignment. \_\_\_\_\_

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 Animal: \_\_\_\_\_