

Lecture: 9 – 9:50 AM, M-W-F, BSC 1025

Lab: Tuesdays 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM, BC 2073

Instructor: Jim Loughry

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Office Hours: 10:00 - 11:00 AM, M, W, F or any other time by appointment

TEXT: *Animal Behavior* by M. D. Breed and J. Moore, Academic Press, 2012.

COURSE GOALS: This course deals with animals and what they do (or don't do), how one goes about studying behavior, and the kinds of conceptual problems that arise from such study.

Educational outcomes associated with this course include numbers 1, 2 and 5 as specified by the VSU Biology Department and numbers 3, 4, 5 and 7 of the general outcomes specified by the University.

EXAMS: There will be 3 exams in this course. The exams will each cover 1/3 of the lecture and reading material. Exams will be essay, and each will be worth 100 points. In addition, there will be an optional 100 point final exam. If you take the final I will drop the lowest of your four exam scores in calculating your final grade. Thus, you wind up with 400 potential points from the exams, but only 300 points will count. So, if you have a bad day and bomb an exam, remember it's not the end of the world and that score can be dropped.

MAKE-UPS:

toward your final grade. Essays are available from the course web site and are due every two weeks, starting today.

PROJECTS/PAPERS: Finally, you have the option of choosing (1) to write a term paper on some theoretical aspect of behavior (e.g., the functional significance of play, the evolution of mate choice, etc--the essay questions may give you some ideas about potential topics). Note that taxonomic descriptions, such as cataloging the behavior of whales or some other species, have no theoretical foundation and will NOT make acceptable paper topics (although they can be incorporated to illustrate aspects of theoretical issues); or (2) performing an independent project in which you choose some animal (no pets, please) and some aspect of its behavior to study (the labs may give you some ideas about what to try). For the independent projects you will need to turn in a written summary of your project (in much the same style as the lab reports mentioned above). These term papers/projects are worth 100 points. **PROJECTS AND TOPICS MUST BE APPROVED BY ME** and you must come in and get that approval by **MIDTERM (Thursday, March 1)**. If you don't have something approved by midterm, I will begin taking off points at the rate of 1 per day (including weekends) from the possible total for your paper. Papers/projects are due at **9 AM, Friday, April 27**.

NOTE: Late submissions of any papers are penalized at the rate of 10% per day. Thus, for each day that an essay is late you lose 1 point, for each day a lab report is late you lose 3 or 5 points, and for each day your term paper is late you lose 10 points.

* Can be used as lab report write-up. Please be aware that due to vagaries of weather and animal activity, the schedule above is extremely tentative and subject to substantial re-arrangement. You will be given as much advance notice as possible about any changes.