

Animal Behavior (ZOO 4513-0M01)
Spring 2024
Monday/Wednesday: 12:00-1:20 pm in HS1-112



Instructor: Dr. Christa Diercksen



Communication

- **Email:** christa.diercksen@ucf.edu
 - E-mail is the fastest and preferred way to communicate with Dr. Diercksen. Please do NOT use Webcourses messages!
 - *Note: Faculty can only communicate with students via their official UCF email address.*
 - Please **identify yourself as an Animal Behavior student by section (M/W)** and sign off the email with your **full name** and **UCF ID#**.
 - Emails should be written in a professional and respectful manner. *Note: Florida has a very broad open records law (F.S. 119) so all emails sent to UCF email may be subject to public disclosure.*
 - **Office hours:** Wednesdays, 10:00-11:30 am (BIO 201A) or by appointment (in-person or via Zoom).
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Course Description

- *Credit hours:* 3
 - *Course Prerequisites:* Ecology (PCB 3044)
 - *Purpose of the course:* ZOO 4513 is an upper-division elective Biology course that explores the topics of Animal Behavior with a comparative and integrative approach linking evolutionary mechanisms with ecological and environmental factors that influence how animals behave. This course can satisfy Biology majors' upper division restricted elective requirements, with particular value for zoology, pre-veterinary and other pre-health students.
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General Course Objectives & Topics

Objectives:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the fundamental questions of animal behavior.
- Demonstrate understanding of evolutionary processes that produce behavior in animals.
- Demonstrate how genetics, physiology and neurobiology influence behavior.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the basic techniques for studying behavior.
- Demonstrate proficiency interpreting figures and graphs.
- Communicate and critique concepts of behavior orally and through written text.

Course Topics:

- Modern techniques of studying animal behavior
 - Genetic, neural and physiological basis of behavior
 - Predation avoidance and foraging behavior
 - Territoriality and migratory behavior
 - Communication behavior
 - Mating systems, reproductive and parental care behavior
 - Social evolution and behavior
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Course Materials



- “*Animal Behavior, 12th Edition*” by Dustin R. Rubenstein; ISBN: 978-0197564912
 - E-text is available for purchase within our Webcourses using First Day access (**Opt in deadline: 1/14/24**).
 - Students are expected to read the chapter for a given week prior to lecture.
 - Other readings or background information and/or links will be provided in Webcourses.
 - Students should bring a Wi-Fi enabled digital device to access course materials during lectures when necessary.
 - We may occasionally use **Kahoot!** in class to check content knowledge. Students can download the free app for iOS or Android here: [Kahoot! Mobile App](#)
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Academic Activity Assignment

- **Academic Activity Assignment: 3-Words Reflection: Due: Fri, 1/12 at 5:00 pm**
 - To document you began this course, complete the “**3-Words Reflection**” in Webcourses; failure to do so could result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.
 - This assignment is **worth 5 points** (for everyone, even non-financial aid students) and will be scored *for completion only*.
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Attendance Policy & Class Structure

- The class will meet **in-person** during our scheduled course days and time (**M/W from 12:00-1:20 pm**) unless indicated in the course schedule, conditions warrant a university approved change in course format or Dr. Diercksen is unable to attend lecture due to illness or other obligations.
 - This course is designated as a **Mixed Mode (M)** course as there will be occasional required online content to prepare for classroom activities, some recorded lectures and some assessments conducted online.
 - **Group work will be required** for the various case studies during the lecture period when case studies are scheduled. Groups will be randomly assigned by the second week of class.
 - There are some lecture days (e.g. Ethogram presentation) when attendance will be part of the assignment grade. To receive associated attendance points for those days, students must provide documentation for their absence.
 - Regardless if you are in attendance or not, students will be expected to be fully aware of any information given in class.
 - Pdf versions of Powerpoint slides used lecture will be provided in Webcourses.
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Make-up Exams & Assignments

- Per university policy, students are allowed to submit make-up work (or an equivalent, alternate assignment) for authorized university-sponsored activities, religious observances, or legal obligations (such as jury duty).
 - All potential make-up work (assignments or assessments such as exams) will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Dr. Diercksen within 48 hours if you are unable to complete an assignment or assessment for any reason.
 - Documentation (e.g. Doctor's note) will typically be required for make-ups and must be approved at Dr. Diercksen's discretion.
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Quick Links to Resources



407-823-5555



[Student Handbook](#)



[Accessibilities](#)



[Academic Resources](#)



[UCF Cares](#)

- There many offices and programs at UCF for dealing with different student issues. It can be confusing and overwhelming to know where to turn sometimes.
- UCF has an umbrella website, UCFCARES.com which provides students with information for help and support for ALL aspects of student lives.
- If you are dealing with any issues such as health concerns, coping with tragedy or crisis in your personal or family life, having trouble finding stable and safe housing, eating disorders or hunger issues, hazing and discrimination, sexual abuse or assault, in need of alcohol or drug treatment or ANYTHING that is affecting your health or well-being—your first step is to visit www.UCFCARES.com, 407-823-5607.
- You will be put in touch with the right resource for your needs in a caring, discreet manner.

When in doubt or trouble, please reach out to your UCF community & UCF resources!

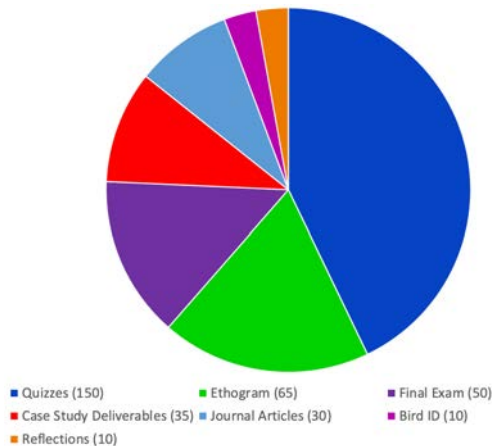


Grading

- Grades are earned by a “point system”, and individual grade categories are not weighted, e.g. one point from a quiz counts the same as one point from a reflection.
- Grades will be posted in Webcourses as available but are NOT considered official grades at any given moment.
- No grades will be given over the phone or by email according to Federal law (FERPA regulations).
- Grades will not be routinely curved unless warranted by Dr. Diercksen’s discretion.
- **Extra Credit:** Extra credit is not routinely available although opportunities *may* arise throughout the semester.
- **Make-up work:** Make-ups for missed quizzes or other due dates must be approved at the discretion of Dr. Diercksen and *will require documentation*.
- The final course grade will be awarded using the scale seen below by calculating the percentage of your total earned points during the semester out of **350 possible points**.
- No minus grades, e.g. “A-”, are given in this class.
- Final grade percentages will be rounded up from 0.5 to the next highest whole number, e.g. An 89.6% would round to 90% and the letter grade would be an “A”. An 89.4% would round to an 89% and the letter grade will be a “B+”. There are NO exceptions to this rounding scheme.
- **Biology majors:** A grade of “C” or higher is required to advance in your Biology coursework. For other majors, please check with your major’s department for more information.
- **Withdrawal Date: March 29, 2024 at 11:59 pm**
 - Please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for detailed information about the implications of the withdrawal date.
 - Students must initiate withdrawal themselves. Dr. Diercksen will not automatically withdraw any student from the course.
 - Late/medical withdrawals and incompletes are granted for only very compelling and documented reasons.
- **Grade Forgiveness Date: April 22, 2024 at 11:59 pm.**
 - Please refer to the Undergraduate Catalog for detailed information about the Grade Forgiveness process.
 - Students must apply for grade forgiveness if they are taking the course the 2nd time. The 2nd grade will not be awarded automatically without applying for Grade Forgiveness.

Grade Details

350 Total Semester Points



Grading Scale

A	90-100%
B+	87-89%
B	80-86%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	<60%



Assignments

Details for all assignments can be found in the appropriate area in Webcourses' Assignment section.

3-Words Reflection (Academic Activity) (5 pts.)

- **Due: Friday, January 11 at 5:00 pm**
- As described above, this reflection will serve as the **Academic Activity** and will be scored *for completion only*.
- It is very important for Financial Aid students to complete this assignment in order to have their financial funds distributed properly.

Case Study Deliverables (5 pts. each; 35 pts. total; 2 lowest deliverables dropped)

- Nine (9) case studies exploring course content in more “real-life” applications will be discussed throughout the semester.
- Some case studies may have assigned pre-class reading/videos (available in Webcourses) with additional content provided during the lecture period the case study is discussed.
- Students will **work in groups on the case studies in class**. Groups will be assigned randomly at the beginning of the semester.
 - If needed, groups may need to be re-balanced if students drop the course and any given group loses more than 2 students. Pairs of students will be allowed to continue as a group.
- There will be an identified “deliverable” per each group at the end of each case study day which earns **everyone in the group that is in attendance a maximum of 5 points**.
- **Students must be present** during case study days to receive any points for the deliverable and attendance will be taken.
 - Students who falsify attendance for themselves or another student will be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct!
- If a student misses a case study day, they must provide appropriate documentation to Dr. Diercksen within 1 week for *possible* exemption/makeup (similar to missing a quiz).
- Students can miss up to two case study days with no penalty (2 lowest scores are dropped and a missed, *unexcused* day will score a “0” for that student.).
- **Important: There will be individually assessed questions about the case studies on the lecture quizzes therefore students are responsible for all of the content of any missed case study.**

Bird Identification by Song (10 pts.)

- **Due: 1/26 at 11:59 pm**
 - No late submissions will be accepted unless documentation is approved by Dr. Diercksen.
- More information is in the assignment in Webcourses but in general, students will record and identify a local songbird by its song.
- The recordings will be submitted in Webcourses.

Journal Articles: (15 pts. each; 30 pts. total)

- **Due: Journal Article #1 on 2/9; Journal Article #2 on 3/15**
 - No late submissions will be accepted unless approved by Dr. Diercksen.
- More details for this assignment will be in the individual assignment's instructions but overall, students will be asked to read two (2) current peer reviewed journal articles concerning animal behavior and take a short online assessment about the articles.
- We will use some lecture time to discuss the articles.

Ethogram (65 pts. total)

- Due: Part 1 Ethogram Animal Selection (10 pts.): 2/2 at 11:59 pm
- Due: Part 2 Ethogram Initial Observations (5 pts.): 3/1 at 11:59 pm
- Due: Part 3 Ethogram (15 pts.) 3/29 at 11:59 pm
- Due: Final Ethogram Submission (35 pts.): 4/19 at 11:59 pm
- No late submissions will be accepted unless documentation is approved by Dr. Diercksen.
- Detailed information and grading rubric is in Webcourses, but, in general, this assignment will ask students to observe an animal of their choice, recording and analyzing their behavior.
- During the last week of the semester (4/17), students will share a one page “poster” of their ethogram.

Final Reflection (5 pts.)

- **Due: 4/19 at 11:59 pm**
- This reflection will ask students to think about the course as the semester is ending.
- The reflection will be scored *for completion only*.



Quizzes

Lecture Quizzes (6 quizzes with lowest quiz grade dropped, 30 pts. each, 150 total pts.)

- **Due dates:** Please see the course schedule for individual quiz dates.
 - Makeup quizzes may be allowed with approved documentation submitted to Dr. Diercksen within 48 hours of missing the quiz due date.
 - If Dr. Diercksen allows a late submission for an *unexcused* reason, a -10% penalty will be taken from the quiz grade.
- Quizzes will be **open beginning at 12:01 am on Friday mornings** and will be **available until the following Tuesday at 11:59 pm**.
- Quizzes have an **80-minute time limit** once a student begins. Only **one attempt** will be allowed per quiz.
- These quizzes are considered open notes, but students are expected to complete them on their own with no assistance from other individuals.
- Students do not need to use a Webcam while taking the quiz or any special browser.
- Quizzes will consist mostly of multiple-choice questions but may have some short response questions.
- Specific content for each quiz will be announced in lecture and Webcourses’ announcements but, in general, they will cover content of the previous 2 weeks plus any case studies that were covered in that time frame.

Final Exam (50 pts.):

- **Due: 4/24, 11:59 pm (open at 12:01 am on 4/25 & due at 11:59 pm)**
- A makeup Final Exam may be allowed with approved documentation submitted to Dr. Diercksen within 48 hours of missing the Final Exam due date. If Dr. Diercksen allows a late submission for an *unexcused* reason, a -10% penalty will be taken from the quiz grade.
- The Final Exam will cover general, “big picture” content from the whole semester.



Information for Online Assessments

- Students will need reliable access to, *at the very least*, a smart phone or tablet although a computer (PC running Windows or Mac OS) is preferred.
 - Students will need the ability to access the internet on a regular and reliable manner.
 - Avoid using public WiFi (e.g. Starbucks) which may prevent you from accessing Webcourses.
 - It is recommended you access Webcourses through the Google Chrome browser.
 - Student do not need a Webcam for quizzes nor a special browser.
 - Select a location where you will not be interrupted when taking online assessments.
 - Be sure you have allotted sufficient time to complete the assessment.
 - Do not submit your quiz/exam until ready. Quizzes & exams will have **only 1 attempt**.
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Spring 2024 Course Schedule

- Use the course schedule below for important due dates and to know which course topics are covered each week. These due dates are also reflected in the Webcourses' Calendar.
 - It is the student's responsibility to know when things are due!
 - Dr. Diercksen reserves the right to make changes if necessary to the course schedule, updating when needed and will notify students of any significant changes.
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Key



Reading



Case Study



Assignment



Quiz/Exam

Note: All due date times are 11:59 pm unless otherwise noted.



Week 1: January 8 & 10



Chapter 1: Introduction to Animal Behavior



3-Word Reflection (Academic Activity): **Due 1/12 at 5:00 pm**



Week 2: January 15 & 17

NOTE: No in-person class on 1/15 due to MLK Day. Lecture will be recorded via Zoom!



Chapter 2: Integrative Study of Behavior



Deadly Passion Case Study (1/17)



Week 3: January 22 & 24



Chapter 3: Developmental & Molecular Bases of Behavior



Bird ID by Song: Due 1/26



Quiz #1: Open 1/26



Week 4: January 29 & 31



Chapter 4: Neural Basis of Behavior



Hawaiian Crickets Case Study (1/31)



Quiz #1: Due 1/30



Part 1 Ethogram Animal Selection: Due 2/2



Week 5: February 5 & 7



Chapter 5: Physiological & Endocrine Bases of Behavior



The Case of the Sexually Arrested Orangutans (2/7)



Journal Article #1 Quiz: Due 2/9

Quiz #2: Open 2/9



Week 6: February 12 & 14



Chapter 6: Avoiding Predators & Finding Food



Quiz #2: Due 2/13



Game Theory Case Study (2/14)



Week 7: February 19 & 21



Chapter 7: Territoriality & Movement



Quiz #3: Open 2/23



Week 8: February 26 & 28



Chapter 8: Principles of Communication



How Animals Use Sound to Communicate Case Study (2/28)



Quiz #3: Due 2/27



Part 2 Ethogram Initial Observations: Due 3/1



Week 9: March 4 & 6



Chapter 9: Reproductive Behavior



Exaggerated Traits and Breeding Success in Widowbirds: A Case of Sexual Selection and Evolution (3/6)



Quiz #4: Open 3/8



Week 10: March 11 & 13



Chapter 10: Mating Systems



Quiz #4: Due 3/12

Journal Article #2 Quiz: Due 3/15



Spring Break: March 18-22



Week 11: March 25 & 27



Chapter 11: Parental Care



Mom Always Liked You Best Case Study (3/27)



Part 3 Ethogram: Due 3/29



Quiz #5: Open 3/29



Week 12: April 1 & 3



Chapter 12: Principles of Social Evolution



The Waiting Game: A Case Study on the Behavioral Ecology of Long-Tailed Manakins (4/3)



Quiz #5: Due 4/2



Week 13: April 8 & 10



Chapter 13: Social Behavior & Sociality



My Brother's Keeper Case Study (4/10)



Quiz #6: Open 4/12



Week 14: April 15 & 17



Quiz #6: Due 4/16



Final Ethogram "Poster": Presentation in lecture on 4/18; Submission in Webcourses; Due 4/19
Final Reflection: Due 4/19



Final Exam: Open 4/24 at 12:01 am; Closes at 11:59 pm.

UCF Official Policy Statements

Code of Conduct:

- Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:
- *Unauthorized assistance*: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.
- *Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means*: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.
- *Commercial Use of Academic Material*: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.
- *Falsifying or misrepresenting* the student's own academic work.
- *Plagiarism*: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.
- *Multiple Submissions*: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.
- *Helping another violate* academic behavior standards.
- For more information about Academic Integrity, students may consult The Center for Academic Integrity.
- For more information about plagiarism and misuse of sources, see "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices".

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating:

- Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, The Golden Rule. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary, respond to academic misconduct. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade>.

Course Accessibility Statement

- The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <<http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/>> (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Title IX Policy:

- Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at www.shield.ucf.edu and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

- This course may contain copyright protected materials such as audio or video clips, images, text materials, etc. These items are being used with regard to the Fair Use doctrine in order to enhance the learning environment. Please do not copy, duplicate, download or distribute these items. The use of these materials is strictly reserved for this online classroom environment and your use only. All copyright materials are credited to the copyright holder.
- During this course you might have the opportunity to use public online services and/or software applications sometimes called third-party software such as a blog or wiki. While some of these could be required assignments, you need not make any personally identifying information on a public site. Do not post or provide any private information about yourself or your classmates. Where appropriate you may use a pseudonym or nickname. Some written assignments posted publicly may require personal reflection/comments, but the assignments will not require you to disclose any personally identity-sensitive information. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your instructor.

Campus Safety Statement:

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at <<https://centralflorida-prod.modolabs.net/student/safety/index>>.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see <<https://ehs.ucf.edu/automated-external-defibrillator-aed-locations>>.
- To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <www.getrave.com/login/ucf> and logging in. On the "My Account" tab, fill out the information, including e-mail address and cell phone number.
- Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video (<<https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk>>).

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

- Students who are deployed active-duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Make-Up Assignments for Authorized University Events or Co-curricular Activities

- Students who represent the university in an authorized event or activity (for example, student-athletes) and who are unable to meet a course deadline due to a conflict with that event must provide the instructor with documentation in advance to arrange a make-up. No penalty will be applied. For more information, see the UCF policy at <<https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-401.pdf>>

Religious Observance:

- Students must notify their instructor in advance if they intend to miss class for a religious observance.

AI Tools:

- The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, via website, app, or any other access, is not permitted in this class. Representing work created by AI as your own is plagiarism, and will be prosecuted as such.
- OR:

- This class will make use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in various ways. You are permitted to use AI only in the manner and means described in the assignments. Any attempt to represent AI output inappropriately as your own work will be treated as plagiarism.

In-class Recording:

- Students may, without prior notice, record video or audio of a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled for their own personal educational use.
- A class lecture is defined as a formal or methodical oral presentation as part of a university course intended to present information or teach enrolled students about a particular subject.
- Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab sessions, student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussion (except when incidental to and incorporated within a class lecture), clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations, field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member, and invited guest speakers is prohibited.
- Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of the University's Student Code of Conduct as described in the Golden Rule.