

## Psychology 306A – Principles of Animal Behaviour 2025/2026 Winter Term 1

**When:** MWF, 9:00 - 9:50 am  
**Where:** Buchanan A201

**Instructor:** Kiran K. Soma, Ph.D.  
Professor, Department of Psychology  
Office: Zoom personal meeting room (see link below)  
Office hour: Fri 2:00 - 3:00 pm, or by appointment  
Email: [ksoma@psych.ubc.ca](mailto:ksoma@psych.ubc.ca)

**If you have questions, I would like to help you “in person.” I will only use email to schedule Zoom meetings, not to answer content questions.**  
<https://ubc.zoom.us/j/7131648219?pwd=R3NNbWtIL3d4VnNQY0xtNHV0Mk81UT09>

**TA:** Jérôme Plumier  
Office: Zoom personal meeting room (see link below)  
Office hour: Wed 1:00 - 2 pm, or by appointment  
Email: [jplumier@student.ubc.ca](mailto:jplumier@student.ubc.ca)

**If you have questions, please see the TA “in person.” The TA will only use email to schedule Zoom meetings, not to answer content questions.**  
<https://ubc.zoom.us/j/63602330367?pwd=0h5rag3E02qRtrKMi5bcvb17zIOhmx.1>

### Course description:

This course covers the scientific study of behavior. Topics will include: development/genetics of behavior, evolution of behavior, and neural/endocrine basis of behavior. This course is also designed to encourage critical and independent thinking, as well as improve written and oral communication. Questions and discussion are encouraged throughout the lectures.

**Required Textbook:** *Animal Behavior*, Dustin Rubenstein, 2022, 12th edition. Please get the 12<sup>th</sup> edition. Can buy at the UBC Bookstore or Amazon etc. The eBook is also fine.

**Lectures:** Lecture slides will be available on Canvas before the lecture. Download or print the slides (double-sided, 4 or 6 slides per page), so you can take notes on them during lecture (use a large 3-ring binder to store the notes). The slides will be missing important information. Missing information will be provided during lectures, so attend the lectures.

**All phones must be put away during lectures. No exceptions.**

**Lectures will not be live-streamed or recorded.**

**Please arrive to lectures on time. Late arrivals are disruptive.**

**Disconnect laptops and tablets from WiFi/internet to avoid distractions.**

**Take notes on printouts or PDFs of the slides.**

**Come to lectures to listen, think, and actively participate.**

- **Do not come to class if you are sick.** If you're sick, then stay home – no matter what you might be sick with (e.g., Covid, flu). The following will reduce your chances of getting sick:
  - getting vaccinated
  - wearing a mask
  - washing your hands with soap
  - using hand sanitizer
- Medical-grade masks that cover nose and mouth are useful to reduce infection. You are welcome to wear a mask in lecture, if you wish.
- If you miss a lecture because of illness:
  - Make a connection early in the term with another student or a group of students in the class. You can help each other by sharing notes. If you don't know anyone in the class, post on the discussion forum on Canvas to connect with other students.
  - Consult resources on Canvas. I will post slides for each lecture.
  - Read the relevant pages in the textbook.
  - Come to office hours with the TA, or my office hours.
- If you miss a midterm exam because of illness:
  - You **must email me within 24 hours after the midterm.**
  - If you show up for an exam and are clearly ill, then I will ask you to go home.
- If you miss the final exam because of illness:
  - Apply for **standing deferred** (academic concession) within 24 hours after the final exam. Students who are granted SD write the final exam at a later date.
- If I am ill, then I will not come to class. If that happens, here's what you can expect:
  - Another professor or the TA will substitute.
  - If I am well enough to teach, but taking precautions to avoid infecting others, we may have an online lecture (via Zoom). If this happens, you will receive an email or announcement in Canvas telling you how to join the class. This might be a last-minute email. Our classroom will still be available for you to sit and attend an online session.
- In-person, on-campus activities may need to be cancelled due to issues such as weather conditions (e.g., snow). The UBC Provost determines when in-person, on-campus learning activities are cancelled. The UBC Associate Vice President determines when in-person final exams are cancelled. **Instructors do not have advance information and cannot make these decisions, so do not email them about weather cancellations.**
- **If in-person activities are cancelled due to weather or other environmental conditions, class will be held online.** The Zoom link will be posted on Canvas. For those unable to participate in an online class on short notice, I will provide a lecture recording on Canvas.

- **If weather impacts a midterm, we will reschedule.** Please see Canvas for rescheduling notifications. It is likely the midterm will take place at the next class session.

- **Do not email the instructor and ask them to cancel class or midterms or final exam because of weather.** These decisions are made by the Provost and Associate Vice President.

**If for some reason we are required to transition to online instruction in the middle of the term, then lectures will be via Zoom, and I will provide further information at that time.**

**\*\*\* Do the readings before the lectures. This will help you follow the lectures.**

	Topic	12 <sup>th</sup> ed. (e-book)
W Sep 3	How do scientists study behavior?	pp. 3-21 (ch. 1)
F Sep 5	Proximate and ultimate causes, part 1	pp. 23-36 (ch. 2.1, 2.2)
M Sep 8	Proximate and ultimate causes, part 2	pp. 36-52 (ch. 2.3, 2.4)
W Sep 10	Development of behavior, part 1	pp. 55-67 (ch. 3.1)
F Sep 12	Development of behavior, part 2	pp. 68-74 (ch. 3.2)
M Sep 15	Development of behavior, part 3	pp. 74-87 (ch. 3.3)
W Sep 17	Neural mechanisms, part 1	pp. 89-101 (ch. 4.1)
F Sep 19	Neural mechanisms, part 2	pp. 101-107 (ch. 4.2)
M Sep 22	Neural mechanisms, part 3	pp. 108-120 (ch. 4.3)
W Sep 24	Neurons and hormones, part 1	pp. 123-132 (ch. 5.1)
F Sep 26	Neurons and hormones, part 2	pp. 132-142 (ch. 5.2)
M Sep 29	Neurons and hormones, part 3	pp. 142-156 (ch. 5.3)
W Oct 1	Review for Midterm 1	
F Oct 3	<b>Midterm 1</b>	
M Oct 6	Predators and foraging, part 1	pp. 159-164, 14-20 (ch. 6.1, 1)
W Oct 8	Predators and foraging, part 2	pp. 164-177 (ch. 6.1)
F Oct 10	Predators and foraging, part 3	pp. 178-193, 236 (ch. 6.2, 8.1)
M Oct 13	<b>No class (Thanksgiving)</b>	
W Oct 15	Territoriality and migration, part 1	pp. 195-209 (ch. 7.1)
F Oct 17	Territoriality and migration, part 2	pp. 210-230 (ch. 7.2)
M Oct 20	Communication, part 1	pp. 233-250 (ch. 8.1, 8.2)
W Oct 22	Communication, part 2	pp. 250-268 (ch. 8.3)
F Oct 24	Reproductive behavior, part 1	pp. 271-282 (ch. 9.1)
M Oct 27	Reproductive behavior, part 2	pp. 282-291 (ch. 9.2)
W Oct 29	Reproductive behavior, part 3	pp. 292-311 (ch. 9.3, 9.4)
F Oct 31	Review for Midterm 2	
M Nov 3	<b>Midterm 2</b>	
W Nov 5	Mating systems, part 1	pp. 313-321 (ch. 10.1)
F Nov 7	Mating systems, part 2	pp. 322-338 (ch. 10.2)
M Nov 10	<b>No class (Midterm Break)</b>	
W Nov 12	<b>No class (Reading Break)</b>	
F Nov 14	Mating systems, part 3	pp. 338-352 (ch. 10.3)
M Nov 17	Parental care, part 1	pp. 357-381 (ch. 11.1, 11.2)
W Nov 19	Parental care, part 2	pp. 381-394 (ch. 11.3)
F Nov 21	Social behavior, part 1	pp. 397-421 (ch. 12.1, 12.2)
M Nov 24	Social behavior, part 2	pp. 429-454 (ch. 13.1, 13.2)
W Nov 26	Human behavior, part 1	pp. 465-476 (ch. 14.1)
F Nov 28	Human behavior, part 2	pp. 476-495 (ch. 14.2)
M Dec 1	Review for Final Exam	
W Dec 3	Review for Final Exam	
F Dec 5	Conclusions	

## Evaluation:

- Midterm 1 30%
- Midterm 2 30%
- Final exam 40%

• All psychology courses are required to comply with departmental norms regarding grade distributions, in order to reduce grade inflation and maintain equity across multiple course sections. The average grade in 100- and 200-level Psychology classes may range from 68 for a weak class, to 70 for an average class, and to 72 for an exceptionally strong class, with a standard deviation of 14. The corresponding figures for 300- and 400-level classes will be 71, 73, and 75, with a standard deviation of 13. Scaling may be used in order to comply with these norms; grades may be scaled up or down as necessary by the professor or department. Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record.

## Exams:

- Material from both the lectures and readings will be on the exams.
- Midterm 2 will not be cumulative.
- The final exam will be cumulative, but with an emphasis on the last third of the course.
- Exams will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions.
- Short answer questions: emphasis on critical thinking, analysis of experimental design, interpretation of data, and proposing new experiments
- Students can view their marked exams with the TA or professor. The exams are the property of the university.
- **Regrade requests must be made in writing. The professor reserves the right to regrade the entire exam (not just a particular question), which means that your grade could go down.**

## Policy on missed exams:

- **If you miss an exam, you must email the professor – within 24 hours after the exam.**
- **NOTE: make-up exams will consist of an oral exam in front of the professor and the TA – within 7 days after the exam.**

## Special accommodations:

The University accommodates students that have registered with the Centre for Accessibility.

Students who plan to be absent for athletics, family obligations, etc usually **cannot** be accommodated. In these cases, you must ask your instructor **during the first week of class.**

## Psychology Department's position on academic misconduct:

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. First, the Department has implemented **software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams** by analyzing

the patterns of students' responses. Second, the Department subscribes to TurnItIn, a service designed to detect plagiarism. All materials that students submit will be scanned and compared to over 5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn's databases. **Google and Google Scholar can also readily detect plagiarism.**

In all cases of suspected academic misconduct, the parties involved will be pursued to the fullest extent dictated by the guidelines of the University. Strong evidence of cheating or plagiarism may result in a zero credit for the work in question. The President of UBC has the right to impose harsher penalties including (but not limited to) a failing grade for the course, suspension from the University, cancellation of scholarships, or a notation added to a student's transcript.

**A final note:**

Information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates, and credits can be found in the Academic Calendar. If you need information about studying, note taking, or time management, then free workshops and advice are available from student advising centres on campus.