

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Name: Principles of Animal Behaviour

Course Code: PSYC 306 003

Class Time and Place: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 – 12:30 in BUCH A101.

I want to acknowledge that UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

TEACHING TEAM

Instructor

Dr. Camila Cavalli (she/her)

camila.cavalli@ubc.ca - I aim to respond within 2 business days. For urgent inquiries, please indicate it in the subject line. When you email me, please include the course you are enrolled in.

Office hours: Tuesdays 1-2pm & Wednesdays 10:30-11:30am in Kenny 3502 or by appointment



Hi, I am Camila, and I am excited to be your instructor for this course!

My research interests include learning, human-animal interactions, and animal welfare. Before being a Lecturer in the Psychology department, I was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Animal Welfare Program at UBC, working in the Human Animal Interaction lab on general dog cognition research as well as exploring ways to maximize therapy dog welfare during sessions with children.

Teaching Assistants

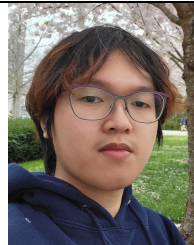


Stefanie Todesco
todescos@student.ubc.ca

Office hours: booked
through appointment

- PhD Candidate, UBC Neuroscience
- Behavioural Reward Affect + Impulsivity Neuroscience Lab (B.R.A.I.N Lab)

My current research examines the neural basis of craving experience in e-cigarette users using fMRI. Previously, I worked with concurrent disorder inpatients (Red Fish Healing Centre), assessing the relation of cognition to treatment outcomes.



Genesis Qiu
genesis.qiu@ubc.ca

Office hours: booked
through appointment

- Directed study student currently working in the UBC Floresco Lab

Studying the role of dopamine regulation in risk/reward assessment and decision-making.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

I intend to create an inclusive learning environment in my classroom. As a teacher I aim to promote autonomy and encouraging lifelong learning, which I do through mutual trust and respect. I approach teaching this course with the firm belief that all students can learn well and succeed, and my focus is on providing you with the materials, activities, and supports needed for you to do so.

Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated, please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of this course and/or make it more accessible to you.

Please see below for wellness resources including mental health support.

WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?

“What a bizarre animal we are that the only question we can ask in relation to our place in nature is ‘Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the smartest of them all?’”

Frans de Waal (2016)

Welcome to PSYC 306!

This course focuses on how and why animals behave in the way they do. Drawing from the fields of Animal Behaviour, Philosophy and Psychology, we will compare species in diverse areas to explore how behaviour develops, evolves, and is shaped by neural and endocrine systems.

Some of the topics include perception, antipredator behaviour, aggression, foraging, territoriality and migration, communication, sexual selection, mating systems, parental care; and complex social behaviours including kinship, cooperation and play.

Students will learn how scientists study behaviour through observation, experimentation, and comparative approaches, and will develop critical thinking skills to interpret and evaluate behavioural research.

While the study of animal behaviour has often taken humans as the standard for comparison, in this course we will reflect on this approach and adopt a perspective that allows us to embrace the uniqueness of each species.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Describe key concepts and themes in the study of animal behaviour.
- Reflect on the adaptive value of the behaviour of different species.
- Critically compare and contrast the behaviour of different species.

- Identify and explain conceptual and methodological limitations in animal behaviour research.
- Challenge the notion of anthropocentrism.

COURSE FORMAT/ STRUCTURE

This course meets in-person in BUCH A101 ([See details and map](#)) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11 to 12:30 pm.

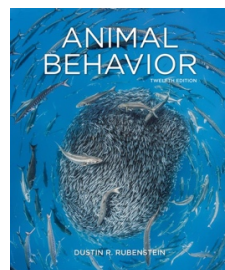
Please come to class prepared to participate in your learning, as active engagement is valued and highly encouraged to ensure your success in this course.

I will provide the slides before each class, but **I recommend you take your own notes**. The class period will be devoted to interactive lectures as well as discussions with your peers in pairs and groups, which will be based on the textbook, scientific papers, and/or watching videos related to the topic.

Lectures will be recorded. Keep in mind that, although the recording is focused on me and the slides, you may appear or be heard in the recordings. To maintain peer and instructor confidentiality please do not share these recordings with anybody who is not part of this class. Note that recordings can be helpful if you miss a lecture or want to hear a specific part again, but these are not a substitution for attendance, and **you should plan to come to class in-person**.

LEARNING MATERIALS

Required textbook:



Rubenstein, D. R. (2022). *Animal behavior* (12th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Available at UBC Bookstore ([link to Bookstore](#), \$87.99 digital).

(Earlier editions are ok too).

Recommended – but optional – readings:

- De Waal, F. (2016). *Are we smart enough to know how smart animals are?* WW Norton & Company.
- Dugatkin, L. A. (2020). *Principles of animal behavior*. University of Chicago Press.
- Wynne, C. D., & Udell, M. A. (2020). *Animal cognition: Evolution, behavior and cognition*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Yong, E. (2022). *An immense world: How animal senses reveal the hidden realms around us*. Knopf Canada.

Canvas: [[link to course website](#)]

- Lecture slides and any additional materials will be available on Canvas.
- I will also use Canvas to make announcements about the course (make sure you set up your announcement alerts so you do not miss important messages! – [Guide on how to do this](#)).

LEARNING APPRAISALS

Appraisal	Dates	Percent of Total Grade
Midterm 1	Feb 5	33
Midterm 2	Mar 24	33
Final Exam	During the Final Exam Period (April 14 - 25, date TBD)	34
Total		100%
Extra credit: REC participation	By last day of classes	3%

Note: See end of the syllabus for detailed course schedule.

EXAM POLICIES

- Exams will cover materials from the textbook and the lectures. Unless otherwise stated, everything in the assigned chapters as well as all lecture materials are examinable.
- May include multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blanks and short answer questions.
- Pen-and-paper and closed book.
- Midterms will be held in our classroom during regular class time, time and location of final TBD.
- You must bring your student ID to each exam.
- Exam grades will be posted on Canvas.

2 Midterms	1 Final exam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm 1 covers chapters 1-5. • Midterm 2 covers chapters 6-11. 	Final covers chapters 12-14 and is <u>cumulative</u>
Held during our regular class times. The exam is designed to take approximately 50 minutes, but you will have the full class period to complete it.	Held during the Final Exam Period. The specific date and time will be scheduled by the University. <u>Please do not book any travel until you know the date of the exam!</u>

- **Reviewing exams.**
 - Exams will be available to review with your TAs after they are graded.
 - If there is a grading dispute that cannot be resolved with the TA, I will regrade that component of your exam. Note that this can result in the same grade, an increase, or a decrease according to my judgement.

- Any grading disputes must be brought to the Teaching Team within 2 weeks of exam grades being released.
- **What if I miss a midterm?**
 - See [Arts department academic concession](#) for details on concessions.
 - If you miss **one midterm** (see [Arts department academic concession](#) for details on reasons for concessions) you must contact me as soon as possible and within 48 hours of the missed exam. Please include a [Student Self Declaration Form](#). I want to be mindful of your privacy, so please do not share any other medical/personal documentation with me.
 - **You will be asked to write a make-up exam with the TAs which will take place approximately 10 days after the missed exam.**
 - **If you are unable to attend the make-up date, the weight of the missed exam will shift to the final exam.**
 - If you miss **both midterms**, contact me first, but note that I may ask you to reach out to your Faculty's Advising Office (i.e., Arts Advising, Science Advising) if I feel ill-equipped to judge the nature of your ongoing hardship. Advising will evaluate your case and may suggest concessions to be put in place or recommend a late withdrawal depending on the specific situation.
 - If you expect to be absent for a midterm due to planned reasons (e.g., work responsibility, sports, family obligations, etc.) you cannot assume your absence will be accommodated. Please discuss any prior commitments with me by September 15 to be considered for accommodation.
- **What if I miss the final exam?** If you miss the final exam, you should contact me as soon as possible, and you will typically need to **Apply for Standing Deferred Status with the Faculty of Arts** (or your Faculty's Advising Office). Remember to avoid booking any travel until you know the date of the final exam, as pre-booked travel will not be accepted as a valid reason to miss the exam. Note that granting of deferred standing is up to the faculty advising office, I have no control over the granting of concessions. If your deferred status is granted, you will be allowed to take the deferred exam in Summer 2026 at a date scheduled by the Registrar.

EXTRA CREDIT: RESEARCH EXPERIENCE COMPONENT (HUMAN SUBJECT POOL)

As part of this course, you are invited to earn **up to 3% extra credit** in one of the following ways:

2.1 Participate in the Psychology Department Human Subjects Pool: Most students will choose to earn their research experience component by **participating in psychology studies (worth 1% point for each hour)** through the Department of Psychology's Human Subject Pool (HSP) system. You can locate, create an account, and sign up for studies by going to <https://ubc-psych.sona-systems.com/>. Please register in the system by the end of the first month of classes to have the opportunity to earn your first ½ hour credit with a brief online survey that will increase your eligibility for more studies. Once registered in the system, you will be able to browse through and select which studies you wish to participate in, sign up for an available timeslot, and confirm your accumulated credits afterward. At the end of the last day of class for the term, the subject

pool is closed. At that point, you will no longer be able to receive credits. I strongly urge you to participate and earn your credits long before the last week of class. Further instruction on HSP can be found at <https://psych.ubc.ca/undergraduate/opportunities/human-subject-pool/>

2.2 Alternative assignment: The Library Option: As an alternative to participation in psychology subject pool experiments, you may complete a library-writing project. Such projects consist of reading and summarizing 1) the research question, 2) the methods and 3) the results (in written form) of a research article from the peer reviewed journal Psychological Science. You will receive one (1) research participation credit for each article summary that meets the following requirements. Requirements:

- The article must have been published in the journal titled “Psychological Science”
- The article must have a publication date from the year 2000 to present (i.e., papers from 2001 are acceptable; those from 1999 or earlier are not).
- The article must be a research article; it cannot be a review article, a news item, a notice, or a letter to the editor, for example.
- The summary should be approximately 500 words in length.
- You must include your name, student number, course, section, instructor and email address on each summary.
- You must log on to the Human Subject Pool system (<https://ubc-psych.sona-systems.com/>) and create an account before submitting your article summaries. Your credit is assigned using the online system.
- For each course, you may obtain the same number of extra credits via the library option as specified in the course syllabus (i.e., the same number of credits available for students who participate in research).

You must submit your article and summary to turnitin.com. **For submission information, see <https://psych.ubc.ca/undergraduate/opportunities/human-subject-pool/>, click on HSP**

Participant Information, and read the section on the Library Option. See turnitin.com for more information. Any evidence of plagiarism may result in lack of credit, and instructors will be notified. Further action may be taken by the department or university. Any student who is suspected of plagiarism will, at a minimum, not be granted credit, and their course instructor will be notified. Further action may be taken at a departmental or university level.

COURSE POLICIES

Classroom conduct

I want everyone to feel welcome, safe, and respected in our classroom. I expect you to treat all your classmates, your instructors and yourself with respect both in face-to-face and online interactions. This includes being considerate when asking questions or making comments, not monopolizing discussions, and minimizing potential distractions for other students.

In case of instructor illness/personal emergency

If I am unable to come to class, I will communicate plans as soon as possible using the Announcements feature in Canvas. If I am well enough to teach, class will be moved online (our

classroom will still be available for you to sit in). If I am not, I will do my best to find a colleague that can substitute me or provide a recorded lecture as soon as I am able.

Accommodations - Centre for Accessibility

UBC is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students and so are we. The Centre for Accessibility facilitates disability-related accommodations designed to remove barriers for students with disabilities and ongoing medical conditions. If you have a need for accommodation, please contact UBC's Centre for Accessibility (604.822.5844, info.accessibility@ubc.ca).

Grading and Scaling

The Psychology department employs department-wide grading standards to promote equitable alignment, supporting students and course instructors as they learn and teach across many diverse courses and sections.

For each Course Section, instructors should aim for a grade average in the following Target Ranges (before any bonus HSP points are added, but including any mandatory HSP points): B- (68-71%), in Introductory 100-level and 200-level courses; **B (72-75%), in Intermediate 300-level courses;** B+ (76-79%), for Advanced 400-level courses and Selective-Entry lower-level courses (e.g., PSYC 277, 278, 312, 370, 371, 349, 359, 365). Ranges are intended to provide some flexibility to instructors and account for differences that can occur between classes. Ranges increase across year levels to account for improvements in student learning, and students' ability to self-select into more specialized courses.

During the course, instructors may choose to adjust grades and/or difficulty of the assessments, to align with the Target Range. **At the end of the course, if the average falls outside the Target Range (either direction), instructors will typically be expected to use a linear transformation to adjust final grades** (i.e., add or subtract the same number of points to all students' marks, while ensuring no student fails the course due to this transformation).

If a course mean falls in within one +/- letter grade band above the Target Range (e.g., in the B+ range for Intermediate courses), and the instructor believes these grades to be justified, the instructor may submit a justification request using the departmental approval final grades submission form, and the grades may stand. This Upper Range is intended to inspire further excellence in learning and teaching, and allow for the possibility that some classes select for higher performing students. Courses with means exceeding the Upper Range will be expected to provide justification as well as use a linear transformation to fall within the Upper Range.

Grades are not official until they appear on a student's academic record. You will receive both a percent and a letter grade for this course. At UBC, they convert according to the following key: A+: 90-100, A: 85-89, A-: 80-84, B+: 76-79, B: 72-75, B-: 68-71, C+: 64-67, C: 60-63, C-: 55-59, D: 50-54, F: 0-49.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a commitment to upholding the values of respect, integrity, and accountability in academic work. It means being an honest, diligent, and responsible scholar. **This**

includes taking exams without cheating and completing assignments independently or acknowledging collaboration when appropriate.

Psychology Department's Position on Academic Misconduct

Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct are very serious concerns of the University, and the Department of Psychology has taken steps to alleviate them. In the first place, the Department has implemented software that can reliably detect cheating on multiple-choice exams by analyzing the patterns of students' responses. In addition, the Department subscribes to TurnItIn – a service designed to detect and deter plagiarism. All materials (term papers, lab reports, etc.) that students submit for grading will be scanned and compared to over 4.5 billion pages of content located on the Internet or in TurnItIn's own proprietary databases. The results of these comparisons are compiled into customized "Originality Reports" containing several sensitive measures of plagiarism; instructors receive copies of these reports for every student in their class. 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. According to the University Act (section 61), 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. All graded work in this course, unless otherwise specified, is to be original work done independently by individuals. If you have any questions as to whether or not what you are doing is even a borderline case of academic misconduct, please consult your instructor. For details on pertinent University policies and procedures, please see Chapter 5 in the UBC Calendar (<http://students.ubc.ca/calendar>) and read the University's Policy 69.

Note on the use of Generative AI tools: You are permitted to use artificial intelligence tools, including generative AI, to gather information and review concepts in this course. This means you may use ChatGPT or similar tools to help you brainstorm and study (but be mindful of potentially inaccurate information!). The use of Generative AI tools is not permitted during examinations or other for-grade activities (such as the Library option of the REC). For guidelines on the use of generative AI, see the Generative AI Tools FAQ.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website.

HELPFUL RESOURCES

Academic support

- **Chapman Learning Commons:** Academic resources, tutoring information and studying tools. <https://learningcommons.ubc.ca>

- **UBC Academic Learning Resources:** <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources>
- **UBC Library Resources:** <https://guides.library.ubc.ca/psychology>

IT support

- **UBC IT helpdesk:** <https://it.ubc.ca/got-question-about-it-products-and-support>
- **Textbook support:** <https://bookstore.ubc.ca/course-materials-support/>

Health & Wellness

- **Early Alert:** The Early Alert program provides proactive support and intervention for students to address challenges they may be facing before these become overwhelming.
- **Campus Lightbox:** Campus Lightbox centralizes information about mental health and wellbeing resources on campus, and how students can best access them.
- **Health and Wellness:** The Faculty of Arts has compiled a list of health and wellness support options available to students.
- **Other resources:**
 - **UBC wellness centre** – resource hub with information to improve wellbeing: <https://students.ubc.ca/support>
 - **The kaleidoscope:** peer support group <http://the-kaleidoscope.com/>
 - **UBC Mental Health Awareness Club:** <http://blogs.ubc.ca/ubcmhac/>
 - **AMS Student Services:** <https://www.ams.ubc.ca/support-services/student-services/>
 - **UBC Psychology Clinic:** <https://clinic.psych.ubc.ca/>
 - **Student Health Service:** <https://students.ubc.ca/health/student-health-service>

BC Crisis Centre: <https://crisiscentre.bc.ca/> 9.8.8 (call or text), 310.6789 (call). Crisis line available 24/7.

Acknowledgements: This syllabus has been informed and adapted from syllabi from similar courses designed by Drs. Luke Clark, Jill Dosso, Patrick Dubois, Veronica Dudarev, Jay Hosking, Mark Lam, Simon Lolliot, Catherine Rawn, Grace Truong, and Eva Zysk. As well as the UBC Learner Centered Syllabus Toolkit 2023 written by Simon Bates, John Cheng, Will Engle, Christina Hendricks, Rie Namba and Ainsley Rouse. The toolkit is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike 4.0.

SCHEDULE

Please check our Canvas website for the most updated version of the schedule. I will use Announcements to notify you of any changes.

Course withdrawal: If you wish to withdraw without any record of this course on your transcript, you must do so by January 16. If you wish to withdraw with a “W” on your transcript, you must do so by March 6.

Week	Date	N ^o	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Jan 6	1	Welcome / Approaches to the study of behaviour	Syllabus Ch 1
	Jan 8	2	Proximate and ultimate causes	Ch 2
Week 2	Jan 13	3	Development	Ch 3
	Jan 15	4	Development	Ch 3
Week 3	Jan 20	5	Neural bases	Ch 4
	Jan 22	6	Neural bases	Ch 4
Week 4	Jan 27	7	Physiological and endocrine bases	Ch 5
	Jan 29	8	Physiological and endocrine bases	Ch 5
Week 5	Feb 3	9	Umwelt / Perception Reflection on research methods Midterm Review	Bolhuis, J. J., & Wynne, C. D. (2009). Can evolution explain how minds work? <i>Nature</i> , 458(7240), 832-833. de Waal, F. B. (2009). Darwin's last laugh. <i>Nature</i> , 460(7252), 175-175.
	Feb 5	10	Midterm 1	
Week 6	Feb 10	11	Antipredator behaviour	Ch 6
	Feb 12	12	Foraging behaviour	Ch 6
Week 7	Feb 17		Reading break	
	Feb 19		Reading break	
Week 8	Feb 24	13	Territoriality and migration	Ch 7
	Feb 26	14	Communication	Ch 8
Week 9	Mar 3	15	Reproductive behaviour	Ch 9
	Mar 5	16	Reproductive behaviour	Ch 9
Week 10	Mar 10	17	Mating Systems	Ch 10
	Mar 12	18	Mating Systems	Ch 10
Week 11	Mar 17	19	Parental Care	Ch 11
	Mar 19	20	Midterm Review	
Week 12	Mar 24	21	Midterm 2	
	Mar 26	22	Social behaviour	Ch 12
Week 13	Mar 31	23	Social behaviour	Ch 12
	Apr 2	24	Social behaviour	Ch 13
Week 14	Apr 7	25	Human behaviour	Ch 14
	Apr 9	26	Wrap up / Review	
Final exam: Date TBD between April 14 and April 25				