



PSYC 2333-001 | Introduction to Comparative Psychology

Course Catalog Description: *Animal* and human behavior from a comparative point of view. Includes the study of methodology, and classification of behavior patterns, as well as the origin of these patterns. **Credit Hours:** (3). **Prerequisite(s):** PSYC 1101 with a grade of C or above.

*The course engages diverse scholarly perspectives to develop critical thinking, analysis, and debate; and inclusion of a reading, video, or assignment on the material does not imply endorsement.

Course Objectives

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

- Evaluate and compare research methods used in comparative psychology, including observational, experimental, and comparative approaches to studying behavior.
- Classify major patterns of animal and human behavior and compare how different species solve similar adaptive challenges.
- Use evolutionary theory, including the mechanisms of genes, natural selection, and sexual selection, to explain behavior.
- Analyze the adaptive value of behavioral traits, especially by employing the Cost-Benefit approach.
- Employ a multilevel analysis and integrative approach to link behavior to genetic, neural, physiological, ecological, and social environments across proximate and / or ultimate causes.
- Show how the examination of animal behavior gives insight into human behavior; and how the examination of human behavior gives insight into animal behavior.

Instructor & TA Information

Instructor: *Professor* Marviene W. Fulton, M.A.

- **Zoom Office Hours:** Wed 10:30am – 11:30am, link on Canvas Homepage

Undergraduate TAs: Students have multiple TAs available. See Canvas for details.

Required Materials

1. The course **etextbook** is included as part of the Niner Course Pack program. However, no access codes are needed; a used physical book will work.

Title: Animal Behavior

Author: Dustin R. Rubenstein
 Publisher: Sinauer Associates is an imprint of Oxford University
 Edition: 12th
 Copyright: 2022
 ISBN: 978-0197559086

- Students are required to acquire, set up, maintain, and troubleshoot their own **laptop** in order to take the exams online in class using LockDown Browser with screen-recording. They will need to ensure the software and hardware is running properly on their own before the exams. Exams cannot be taken on tablets or outside of class.
- Students are required to acquire, set up, maintain, and troubleshoot their own **internet or Wi-Fi capable device**, such as a smartphone, tablet, or laptop, in order to access geo-fenced Poll Everywhere or other online platform during lecture while using their assigned @charlotte.edu email address. Call IT to troubleshoot.

Grading Scale & Assignment Breakdown

This course is on a standard grading scale: A = 100% to 90.0%, B = 89.9% to 80.0%, C = 79.9% to 70.0%, D = 69.9% to 60.0%, F = 59.9% to 0.0%.

Because the course includes dropped grades and extra credit opportunities, individual assignment and final course grades are not rounded.

Fall 2026 – Intro to Comparative Psychology	Total #	After Drop	Points per	Total Points	% of Course
Lecture Attendance & Engagement (Start week 3; 2 dropped)	22	20	4	80	8.0%
Module Practice Questions (1 dropped)	16	15	6	90	9.0%
Documentary Assignment	1	1	50	50	5.0%
Animal Observation 1 - Domesticated Animal	1	1	80	80	8.0%
Animal Observation 2 - Wild Animal	1	1	100	100	10.0%
Exam 1 - Modules 1 to 5 (In Class)	1	1	200	200	20.0%
Exam 2 - Modules 6 to 10 (In Class)	1	1	200	200	20.0%
Exam 3 - Modules 11 to 16 (In Class)	1	1	200	200	20.0%
Exam 4 - Optional Cumulative Final to replace lowest exam. (In Class, during finals week.)					
Total				1000	100.0%

End of Semester Extra Credit	% of Course
Individual Constructive Feedback on Canvas	0.5%
75% Class Participation in Anonymous Survey on UNCC's link	0.5%
Total	1%

Assignment Descriptions

Lecture Attendance & Engagement: The lecture Attendance and Engagement grade is for physical presence, attention, readiness, and engagement. It can only be earned *in class*, beginning Week 3.

Attendance and Engagement is assessed primarily through students' timely responses to geo-fenced Poll Everywhere prompts during lecture. However, the professor may use a sign-in sheet, another method, or a combination of methods at their discretion. For Poll Everywhere, accuracy does not matter; only timeliness. Students must respond when a prompt is presented to the entire class during lecture to receive credit for that item. Multiple Attendance and Engagement assessments may be used during each class. The grade for the day will be based on the percentage of assessment items completed in a timely manner.

Remote participation in Poll Everywhere or any other online platform used for Attendance and Engagement is prohibited and constitutes academic misconduct (cheating). Attendance and Engagement credit may only be earned by students who are physically present in the classroom. Any response submitted from outside the classroom will result in a zero for that day and a 3% course grade deduction per infraction. Multiple infractions may be reported to the Department Chair and may result in additional academic or disciplinary consequences.

Module Practice Questions: Students may attempt the Module Practice Questions (MPQs) up to five times. Canvas automatically records the highest score earned. A 15-minute waiting period is required between attempts to encourage studying between attempts and space retrieval practice. Students should plan accordingly and avoid waiting until the last minute if they wish to use multiple attempts before the deadline.

Documentary Assignment: Students will watch one documentary and provide short-essay responses to prompts. All answers must be based on the information presented in the film's time-stamped section noted for each question. Timestamp information is clearly displayed on the documentary available from within Canvas.

Animal Observation Reports: This course includes two animal observation reports. These are not book reports. Students will observe an animal, much like a field biologist would. The first observation report is on a domesticated animal, the second is on a wild animal. There are 5 main sections to both, which are done in order: behavior catalog, animal description, context, observation entries, and a reflection section. The wild animal report has additional subsections and requirements. Both are graded according to a detailed rubric.

Exams: Only students who physically sign in will have their exams graded. Exams are based on lectures, readings, and assignments. All exams are administered in class and must be taken on the student's laptop using LockDown Browser with screen recording. Tablets are not allowed because they cannot support screen recording.

Students will be presented with one question at a time and will not be allowed to backtrack. While the exams are predominantly multiple choice with a single answer, other types of questions are also asked including fill-in-the-blank and short essay. The first three exams will automatically close after 75 minutes, or at the end of class - whichever is first. The final will close after 90 minutes, or at the end of class - whichever is first. Students with testing accommodations may use the testing center, following their policies.

Submitted exams are not available for review.

Late Work / Make-up Policy

Engagement grades and Exams occur only in class and are not allowed to be completed remotely. These policies apply equally to all students unless university accommodations or policies require otherwise.

Lecture Attendance & Engagement: Two Attendance and Engagement scores will be dropped automatically. These drop days are intended to cover all absences, whether routine or extraordinary, and no documentation is required. Because this policy already provides flexibility for missed classes, no additional Attendance and Engagement drops will be granted.

Exceptions: SASS-verified absences, ongoing Title IX safety concerns, religious observances, and official university obligations (e.g., athletic travel waivers or other university-sponsored events, such as research conferences) will be handled in accordance with university policy. Make-up work or an alternative assignment may be required for multiple excused absences.

MPQ, Documentary, & Observation Assignments: If submitted after the listed due date, these assignments will automatically receive a zero. Exceptions are made only for SASS-verified events or at the professor's discretion if provided with verifiable official documentation for *extraordinary, multi-day* circumstances (such as *multi-day* hospitalizations). *Remember that the "due" date is not the "do" date.*

The Documentary assignment & first Animal Observation are available from the first day of the semester. The second animal observation is available for many weeks, as well. Students are encouraged to complete them in advance to avoid issues.

Exams: This course has four exams. The lowest exam score is automatically dropped at the end of the semester. As a result, make-up exams are not generally provided. Students are expected to use the dropped exam policy to accommodate any absence on an exam day, including those for documented extraordinary circumstances.

Exceptions for the first three exams may be made, in accordance with university policy, for SASS-verified absences, Title IX safety issues, religious observances, and official university obligations (e.g., athletic travel waivers or other university-sponsored events,

such as research conferences). However, the optional Cumulative Final cannot be made up under any circumstance.

Students must notify the professor as soon as possible about planned events, such as religious observances and official university obligations. A two-week notice (14 days) is required to allow the in-person testing date to be scheduled before the original exam date. Make-up exams cannot be taken after the exam's regularly scheduled date for planned absences.

For unexpected emergencies verified through SASS, the make-up exam must be completed in person within 2 business days after medical or university clearance has been given. For an email notification of clearance, this will be based on the timestamp the first notification was originally received. Make-up exams granted under these conditions may differ in format from the original exam. All make-up exams are administered in person, except those related to safety issues for ongoing Title IX cases.

Plagiarism, Suspicious Behavior, & Cheating

Original Work & Plagiarism: All submitted work must be completed in the student's own words and reflect their own understanding. Plagiarism is not allowed. Plagiarism is when a person presents another's words, ideas, data, images, or work as their own without appropriate acknowledgment. This includes copying from websites, books, articles, other students, AI-generated content, or any other source without proper attribution. Plagiarism also includes self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student's own previously submitted work. Unless explicitly authorized, students may not receive substantive assistance on assignments or assessments from other individuals, AI systems, answer-sharing websites, tutoring services, or other resources beyond those explicitly permitted for the activity.

Academic integrity concerns are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the nature and severity of the violation, consequences may include a zero on the assignment and referral to the Department Chair, referral to the Division of Student Affairs, or other sanctions authorized by university policy.

Suspicious Testing Behavior: Certain behaviors during examinations may create an opportunity to gain an unfair advantage, whether intentional or unintentional. Because suspicious behavior alone does not establish that academic misconduct occurred, students may be required to complete an alternative assessment to verify mastery of the course material.

All decisions regarding alternative assessments are at the professor's discretion. Alternative assessments may differ substantially from the original exam in format. For example, it may be an oral examination, fill-in-the-blank, or essay-based format. The alternative assessment will serve as the official demonstration of mastery. The score earned on the alternative assessment may replace the original assessment score. Failure to complete the alternative assessment may result in a zero for the original assessment, as well as referral to the Department Chair for review.

Academic Integrity Violations: Cheating and other confirmed academic integrity violations will be handled in accordance with UNC Charlotte Academic Integrity policies and will be immediately reported to the Department Chair. Potential penalties may include but are not limited to a zero on the assignment or examination, a reduction in the final course grade, failure of the course, suspension, or expulsion. Regardless of the specific sanction imposed, academic integrity violations may become part of a student's permanent university disciplinary record.

Copyright Notice and (No) Recording Policy

Course materials, including lectures, presentations, tests, and exams, are protected by copyright and owned exclusively by the professor. Students may use these materials for their own educational purposes, such as taking notes, but they are not allowed to reproduce or distribute them publicly without written consent. This includes providing them to commercial websites. Doing so violates university policies. Similarly, students own their own work, and written permission will be obtained before using it as a part of the course.

Recording class, whether in-person or online, is not allowed without the professor's written permission. Students with an approved recording accommodation from the Office of Disability Services may record but must give written notification first. Distributing any recordings is prohibited, regardless.

Syllabus & Policy Revision

The syllabus, class details, policies, and any information provided by the professor or the university may be modified at any time. Notice of changes will be announced in the notification area on the homepage of Canvas, by email (through Canvas as an announcement), and in class (for in-person courses). Those changes will be reflected in the updated documents posted on the course website and every attempt will be made to promptly update every Canvas page.

Select Tech Support & Student Services

Be sure to take advantage of the technology support and other services available for UNC Charlotte students. Below are only a select few.

- Technology Assistance:
 - ITS Help Desk at (704) 687-5500 or [ITS Website](#)
 - Canvas Assistance: (877) 257-9780 or [Canvas 24/7 Support Live Chat](#)
 - LockDown Browser: [UNC Charlotte Academic Software Center](#)
 - Borrow a Laptop: [Atkins Library Laptop Lending program](#)
- Free Tutoring: (704) 687-7837 or [University Center for Academic Excellence](#)
- Writing Help: (704) 687-1899 or [Writing Resources Center](#)

- Health Services: [Student Health Services](#) (insurance is not required)
- Mental Health Services: (704) 687-0311 or [University Counseling Center](#)
- Disability Support Services: (704) 687- 0040 [Office of Disability Services](#)
- Student Assistance and Support Services (SASS): [Absence Verification](#)
- Basic Needs Assistance, such as for food: (704) 687-0345 [Niner Needs](#)
- Emergency Housing Assistance: [Short Term Emergency Housing Program](#)

Select University Policies & Procedures

University policies will be followed and enforced. They can be found on [UNCC's Legal Department Website](#). Below are some select policies that are important to note. However, it is the student's responsibility to know all applicable policies, including those not listed here.

- Office of Legal Affairs: [Code of Student Responsibility Policy 406](#)
- Office of Legal Affairs: [Code of Student Academic Integrity Policy 407](#)
- Office of Civil Rights and Title IX: Policies on [Nondiscrimination, Interpersonal Violence, and Title IX](#)
- Office of the Provost: [Policy on Academic Credit Hour](#)
- Office of the Provost: [Policy on Withdrawal and Cancellation of Enrollment](#)
- Student Assistance and Support Services: [Incomplete Grade Request](#)
- Office of the Provost: [Policy on Course Attendance and Participation](#)
- Office of Legal Affairs: [Religious Accommodation for Students Policy 409](#)
- Office of Accessibility and Accommodation: [Student Responsibilities for Disability Services](#)
- Office of Legal Affairs: [Student Grievances Policy 411](#)