Current Issues in Biology - Animal Behavior
Biology 5136-01 – Fall 2017

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Office Hours: Mon 3:00 – 4:00 pm; Tues 3:30 – 5:30 pm; Thurs 1:30 – 3:30 pm or by appointment. You do not need to make an appointment to see me during my posted office hours, just show up and I will be happy to talk with you. If you need to meet at another time, please do not hesitate to contact me to determine another time to meet.

Communication via email: Due to privacy issues, you need to email me using your official UTRGV email account. I will not respond to emails from other accounts (gmail, yahoo, etc.). I will do my best to answer email promptly, but this may take up to two working days. (If you haven’t heard back in two days, please send a new message, call or come to office hours.)

Blackboard - Information pertaining to this class will be listed on Blackboard. You can access information here, including the syllabus, lecture schedules, lecture notes, study materials, etc. Students are responsible for information made available through the Blackboard site.

All course materials, including PowerPoints, homework problems, exams, etc. are under copyright protection. Permission is needed to make audio recordings of any of the lectures or discussions. You may NOT distribute, post or sell PowerPoints, notes, additional course materials, homework questions, in class exercises, or exams without explicit written permission.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PREREQUISITES
This is a journal club style course where we will read and discuss articles from the primary literature. The main goal for this course is increasing your familiarity with the current literature in the field of Animal Behavior. In addition, feedback will help you improve your verbal and written communication skills.
Prerequisites: Graduate standing.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
At the end of this course, students will: 1) Be able to read and discuss primary literature in the field, 2) Have improved critical thinking skills, and 3) Enhance their presentation skills for communicating scientific findings.

CONDUCT
Students (and the instructor too) are expected to treat each other with respect. Students that are acting in a disruptive, disrespectful or aggressive manner will be asked to leave.

Cell phone use during class is strictly prohibited. Using laptops or other electronic devices for any reason not related to the course is prohibited. Students doing either of these things during class will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class period, thereby forfeiting earning any points during that class period.
ASSESSMENT AND GRADES
Grades will be based on presentations of student chosen articles and participation in article discussions. The number of papers each student presents will depend on the number of students in the course. Because this course centers on discussion of article, attendance is essential.

Grading Scale
UTRGV has adopted a grading scale without plus and minus grades
A ≥ 90%    B ≥ 80%    C ≥ 70%    D ≥ 60%    F ≤ 59%

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY: As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services.

Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

COURSE DROPS: According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE: In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential...
resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:** Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available Nov. 15 – Dec. 6