



ANSC*3090 - Principles of Animal Behaviour

Fall 2026 Course Outline

Section: 01

Credits: 0.50

Land Acknowledgement: Guelph

The University of Guelph resides on the ancestral lands of the Attawandaron people and the treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We recognize the significance of the Dish with One Spoon Covenant to this land and offer respect to our Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Métis neighbours. Today, this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples and acknowledging them reminds us of our important connection to this land where we work and learn.

Calendar Description

This course deals with why vertebrates behave as they do (with particular emphasis on mammals and birds), covering the causation of behaviour (including learning, motivation, affective states, hormones, sensory processing, and neurobiological mechanisms); function (both immediate/proximate and adaptive/ultimate); ontogeny (including socialization and sensitive periods); and phylogeny (especially the influences of taxonomic group and domestication). This framework is then applied to the following aspects of animal behaviour: foraging, anti-predator responses, sleep, sociality, mating, parental behaviour, play, dispersal and territoriality, animal intelligence, and behavioural pathologies.

Prerequisite(s): ANSC*1210 or ANSC*2210

Restriction(s): ANSC*4090. Restricted to students in BSCH.ABIO, BSAG.ANSC and BBRM.EQM.

Department(s): Department of Animal Biosciences

This course covers the foundations of behavioural physiology, focusing on the structure and function of the nervous and endocrine systems and their interaction in guiding behaviour. It explores why domestic animals behave as they do, addressing the causation of behaviour (including learning, motivation, affective states, hormones, sensory processing, and neurobiological mechanisms), function, ontogeny, and phylogeny. Further, the course deals with how we scientifically study animal behaviour through observations and experiments. This framework is then applied to the species-specific behaviour of farm animals, including behavioural problems of these animals kept in human-managed systems.

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Lecture Schedule

MonWedFri 1:30pm-2:20pm in JTP*2266 (9/10 to 12/22)

Instructor Information

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Instructor

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Teaching Assistant

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Teaching Assistant

Email: ansc3090@uoguelph.ca

Learning Resources

Required Resources

Course Link (website) will be used to disseminate all course information, including lecture material, supplementary readings, grades, and any additional information regarding course content and proceedings (e.g. lecture schedules, due dates, course syllabus, etc.)

Course Resources

For students wanting to learn more about the course content, we recommend the following resources:

Physiology of Behavior (Neil R. Carlson)

The Ethology of Domestic Animals (Per Jensen)

Campus Resources

If you are concerned about any aspect of your academic program: Make an appointment with a Program Counsellor (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/uaic/programcounsellors>) in your degree program. If you are struggling to succeed academically: There are numerous academic resources offered by the Learning Commons (<https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/using-library/spaces/learning-commons>) including, Supported Learning Groups for a variety of courses, workshops related to time management, taking multiple choice exams, and general study skills.

Cost of Textbooks and Learning Resources

Recommended: Physiology of Behavior, Neil R. Carlson: You can purchase it at the bookstore by choosing one of the options below: eBook (Perpetual) \$87.00 180 day eBook \$60.50		
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Students are advised that prices are often determined by the publisher or bookstore and may be subject to change.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Use new ethological vocabulary appropriately, and identify appropriate ethological methods for collecting different types of behavioural data (including analyzing and interpreting data).
2. Distinguish between causal, developmental, functional and phylogenetic explanations of behaviour and demonstrate how these complement each other.
3. Explain how physiology, genetics, and nutrition influence behaviour.
4. Explain concepts of motivation and learning and their roles in the control of behaviour.
5. Explain different types of behaviours (i.e., social, maternal, play, foraging) and species-specific behaviours of domestic animals species.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date:	Topic	Activities	Due
Fri	9/11	No Class		
Mon	9/14	Information pertaining to the course, teaching team, assessments and expectations.		
Wed	9/16	No Class		
Fri	9/18	No Class		
Mon	9/21	Physiology & Behaviour Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	9/23	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	9/25	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	9/28	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	9/30	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	10/2	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	10/5	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	10/7	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	10/9	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	10/12	Thanksgiving Holiday		
Wed	10/14	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	10/16	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	10/19	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	10/21	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	10/23	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	10/26	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	10/28	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	10/30	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	11/2	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	11/4	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	11/6	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	11/9	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	11/11	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	11/13	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	11/16	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	11/18	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	11/20	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	11/23	Physiology & Behaviour		
Wed	11/25	Physiology & Behaviour		
Fri	11/27	Physiology & Behaviour		
Mon	11/30	Physiology & Behaviour		

Assessment Breakdown

Description	Weighting (%)	Due Date
Individual Assignment #1; Learning Outcome: 1,2	20%	October 7
Individual Assignment #2; Learning Outcome: 1,3	20%	October 21
Individual Assignment #3; Learning Outcome: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	20%	November 18
Final Exam; Learning Outcome: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	40%	TBD

Last Day to Drop Course

The final day to drop Fall 2026 courses without academic penalty is the last day of classes: December 04

After this date, a mark will be recorded, whether course work is completed or not (a zero is assigned for missed tests/assignments). This mark will show on the student's transcript and will be calculated into their average.

Course Grading Policies

Submission of Assignments

This course will use Courselink. Assignments should be submitted electronically via the online CourseLink tool. When submitting your assignments using the tool, do not leave the page until your assignment has successfully uploaded. To verify that your submission was complete, you can view the submission history immediately after the upload to see which files uploaded successfully.

The system will also email you a receipt. Save this email receipt as proof of submission.

Be sure to keep a backup copy of all of your assignments in the event that they are lost in transition. To avoid any last-minute computer problems, your instructors strongly recommend you save your assignments to a cloud-based file storage (e.g., OneDrive), or send them to your email account, so that should something happen to your computer, the assignment could still be submitted on time or re-submitted.

It is your responsibility to submit your assignments on time as specified on the Schedule. Be sure to check the technical requirements and make sure you have the proper computer, a supported browser, and reliable Internet access. Remember that technical difficulty is not an excuse for not turning in your assignment on time. Don't wait until the last minute, as you may get behind in your work.

If, for some reason, you have a technical difficulty when submitting your assignment electronically, please contact CourseLink Support.

Late Assignment

Late assignments will be penalized by 20% of the assignment grade each and every day they are late. No late assignments are accepted after 5 days (unless proof of an emergency).

Course Standard Statements

Course Policies

Course Technology Requirements

CourseLink

This course will be using CourseLink (powered by D2L's Brightspace), the University of Guelph's online learning management system (LMS). By using this service, you agree to comply with the University of Guelph's Access and Privacy Guidelines. Please visit the D2L website to review the Brightspace privacy statement and Brightspace Learning Environment web accessibility standards.

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/web/privacy/> <https://www.d2l.com/legal/privacy/> <https://www.d2l.com/accessibility/standards/>

CourseLink System Requirements

You are responsible for ensuring that your computer system meets the necessary system requirements. Use the browser check tool to ensure your browser settings are compatible and up to date.

If you need any assistance with the CourseLink website, contact CourseLink Support. Email: courselink@uoguelph.ca

Tel: 519-824-4120 ext. 56939 Toll-Free (CAN/USA): 1-866-275-1478

Standard Statements for Undergraduate Courses

Academic Integrity

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

The Academic Misconduct Policy (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-misconduct/>) is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Accessibility

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability. Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to make a booking at least 10 business days in advance, and no later than November 1 (fall), March 1 (winter) or July 1 (summer). For students at the Guelph campus, information can be found on the SAS website. (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>)

Accommodation of Religious Obligations

If you are unable to meet an in-course requirement due to religious obligations, please email the course instructor within two weeks of the start of the semester to make alternate arrangements.

See the Academic calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Accommodations of Religious Obligations (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-accommodation-religious-obligations/>).

Copies of Out-of-class Assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Drop Date

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester. This applies to all undergraduate students except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in the Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/dropping-courses/>).

Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

Health and Wellbeing

The University of Guelph provides a wide range of health and wellbeing services at the Vaccarino Centre for Student Wellness (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/>). If you are concerned about your mental health and not sure where to start, connect with a Student Wellness Navigator (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/navigators>) who can help develop a plan to manage and support your mental health or check out our mental wellbeing resources (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year>). The Student Wellness team are here to help and welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

Illness

Medical notes will not normally be required for singular instances of academic consideration, although students may be required to provide supporting documentation for multiple missed assessments or when involving a large part of a course (e.g., final exam or major assignment).

Recording of Materials

Presentations that are made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars (<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/?index>) are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the Undergraduate Calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration. (<https://calendar.uoguelph.ca/undergraduate-calendar/undergraduate-degree-regulations-procedures/academic-consideration-appeals-petitions/>)