Psychology 3T3-Sociobiology

Time: Tuesday Evening 19:00-22:00 (Term 1)
September 11 – November 27, 2005
Location: ITB/AB102

Instructor: Dr. Sigal Balshine
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Office Hours - Wednesdays 9:30-11:30 by appointment only
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Office Hours (by appointment): - Tuesdays 17:00 – 19:00

Course description and objectives: Sociobiology is a field devoted to understanding social behaviour of all species in terms of evolutionary theory. As a field it emerged from a synthesis of many scientific disciplines including evolution, ethology, biology, psychology, anthropology, zoology and population genetics. This course is NOT centrally concerned with Homo sapiens, and will take a comparative approach to the study of animal behaviour. Students seeking a course that focuses on human sociobiology are advised to consider taking a human behavioural ecology course such as Psychology 3F3.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the McMaster calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites for this course, the Department may cancel your registration at any time.


Evaluation will be based on:
Grades will be assigned on the basis of (1) a 3-hr registrar-scheduled final exam, worth 50% of your grade, and (2) 3 term tests, to be held in class on Oct 2, Oct 30 and Nov 20. Exams and tests will consist of either long, short answer and/or multiple-choice questions (with some choice). The questions will be based on the both the readings assigned for class and on the material covered in the lectures. Good marks will require thorough familiarity with and comprehension of the content of both the textbook and the lectures.

The best 2 of the term tests will each count for 25%. Term tests will assess knowledge and comprehension of lectures prior to the test night and of readings up to and including those assigned for the test night. There will be no "make-up tests". If you miss 1 test without filing some sort of excusing (e.g. medical) documentation with your Dean of Studies, your term mark will be based on the other 2. If you miss 1 (or more) and do file documentation with your Dean, then your grade will be based on the test(s) and exam that you completed, with appropriate re-weighting.
If class assignments conflict with a personal religious observance, please notify the course instructor at least three weeks in advance.

The tests and the final exam may include multiple choice and/or short answer and/or essay questions. A deferred final exam will not necessarily be of the same format as the December exam. Grades will be computed out of 100 points and converted to a letter grade as follows:

- A+ = 100-90, A = 89-85, A- = 84-80,
- B+ = 79-77, B = 76-73, B- = 72-70,
- C+ = 69-67, C = 66-63, C- = 62-60,
- D+ = 59-57, D = 56-53, D- = 52-50,
- F = 49-0

The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, on an individual basis, in light of special circumstances and/or the student's total performance in the course.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapters to Read</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. September 11</td>
<td>(Evolution, Natural Selection, Levels of Analysis)</td>
<td>1-2 Required Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. September 18</td>
<td>(Optimality &amp; Social Behaviour)</td>
<td>6, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. September 25</td>
<td>(Sex and Mating Systems)</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. October 2</td>
<td>(Sexual Selection 1. Competition &amp; Exam 1)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. October 9</td>
<td>(Sexual Selection 2. Mate Choice)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. October 16</td>
<td>(Sexual Conflict &amp; Sex Ratio Allocation)</td>
<td>Required readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. October 23</td>
<td>(Parental Care)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. October 30</td>
<td>(Parent-Offspring Conflict &amp; Exam 2)</td>
<td>Required reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. November 6</td>
<td>(Sibling Rivalry)</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. November 13</td>
<td>(Kinship &amp; Kin Recognition)</td>
<td>Required readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. November 20</td>
<td>(Cooperation &amp; Conflict In Social Groups &amp; Exam 3)</td>
<td>13</td>
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Assigned readings will be available as .pdf files on the class webpage. Lecture notes will also be found there, and will in future be available before the class. Feedback on tests and other course-related materials will also be placed on the Psych 3T3 site.

* Chapters 3-5 from Alcock’s Animal Behaviour 8th Edition Text Book are also highly recommended. They will be considered supplementary material and will not be tested.

**Academic dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can
result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm

The following illustrates only two forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

**Required Readings**

1. Reading for October 11th (Evolution)


2. Readings for October 16th (Sexual Conflict & Sex Ratio Allocation)


2. Reading for October 30th (Parent-offspring conflict)


3. Readings for November 13th (Kinship and Kin Recognition)
