Instructor

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706C UL (Department of Psychology); Office hours MW 11:00 AM-Noon, and by appointment

Materials: For this class, we will be discussing several research or review articles from the primary literature.
An initial list is printed below, but additional readings may be assigned. Each article is available online, although in some instances you may need to use campus computers to access the readings. Each student is responsible for gaining access to each article, and should read the paper in advance of the corresponding class so he/she is prepared for the discussion.

APA Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in the Care and Use of Nonhuman Animals in Research


Learning objectives

1. Students who complete this course successfully should have increased awareness of the history, issues, methods, findings, and implications of the study of animal minds. Students will learn about many of the questions that have been investigated in the study of animal minds, the methods used to answer these questions,
and the results and interpretation of those studies.

2. Students who complete this course successfully should develop critical-thinking skills, both through instruction and through practice, required for recognizing assumptions, analyzing evidence, evaluating arguments, and interpreting findings from research on the mental lives of animals.

**Assessment of objectives**: In order to determine whether students have met these learning outcomes, and in recognition of the fact that learning assessments can also serve as important learning tools, the final grade will be based on a combination of examinations, written assignments, and class participation:

1. **Exams**: Two online quizzes will be administered. The exams may include multiple-choice, matching, short-answer and essay questions. Each will be designed to test knowledge of the facts of the course (from readings and lecture), as well interpretation and evaluation of that information. Because tests are also learning opportunities, students can re-take each to improve their score. Each exam will be conceptually comprehensive (100 points possible for each quiz, 200 points total.)

2. **“Animal minds in the media”**: A portion of the final grade will be based on an assignment in which students provide a brief critical analysis of how the mental activity or competency of animals is portrayed in a movie, television show, documentary, comic, or other pop-culture example. In each assignment, briefly describe one scene, or reproduce the image (one per assignment). Write a paragraph or so (200+ word, not including the words required to describe the scene) explanation of what the vignette assumes and implies about animal minds, and evaluate whether you think these assumptions and arguments are accurate. Link your evaluation as much as possible to what we have discussed and read in class, citing material appropriately. Avoid “low hanging fruit” (e.g., “This cartoon shows a cat talking, but cats can’t talk”) and find media messages that really make you think—and do some investigating—about what/whether the animal is thinking. See the example at the end of this syllabus. (50 points possible for each of your analyses; 100 total points possible.)

3. **Class participation**: The class-participation portion of the grade will be based on in-class activities and writing assignments, and discussion of topics throughout the semester. Some “Honors Life” assignments will be included. Many will be graded on a pass/fail basis (100 total points possible.)

4. **Service learning**: An optional service-learning element of the class will be available. This is an ungraded component of the course, so your available to participate or not will not affect your grade. Details to be discussed.

**Grading**: This is a pass/fail course. To receive the grade of “PASS” you must accumulate at least 280 points.

**Policies**

1. **Class attendance**: Students are expected to attend class; however, attendance is not recorded as a separate part of the grade. Students are responsible for information or assignments missed during absences or late arrivals; such information will not be repeated or otherwise distributed. Students who miss graded class-participation activities and opportunities to contribute to discussions will not be permitted to earn these points later.

2. **Make-up examinations**: For students who miss an exam due to an excused absence, make-up exams will be administered as soon as possible following the scheduled exam date. In order to have the opportunity to take a make-up exam, the student must provide timely written documentation of an illness or emergency to the professor, who will then determine whether the absence is excused. The instructor reserves the right to change the exam for students taking a make-up exam.

3. **Late assignments**: Assignments will be penalized 10% for each class session (or portion thereof) they are
late. No late assignment will be accepted after the final examination period.

4. **University Policy on Disruptive Behavior**: Students who exhibit behaviors that disrupt class violate the Board of Regents Policy on Disruptive Behavior. Inappropriate classroom behavior includes, but is not limited to, talking/conversing during lecture or presentation, interrupting or acting disrespectfully to others, talking out of turn or monopolizing class time with excessive questions/comments, inappropriate behavior during group work, or any behaviors that compromise the learning environment of the course. Students who do not abide by these rules will be given a verbal warning. The second warning will be documented in writing and the student will meet with a designated faculty member and/or the Director of the Honors Program. The student will then be subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in the GSU General Catalogue. Note that the guiding principle is, “Do not interfere with others’ opportunities to learn or enjoyment of the course.” If you must slip into class late or slip out of class early, you may do so quietly. See [www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/codeofconduct.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/codeofconduct.html) and [http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwsen/minutes/2002-2003/disrupt2.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwsen/minutes/2002-2003/disrupt2.html) for more information.

5. This course will follow the University System policy on academic dishonesty with respect to the academic code of conduct ([http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/codeofconduct.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos/codeofconduct.html)) and the consequences of various forms of academic dishonesty (including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and unauthorized collaboration). The policy represents a core value of the university and all members of the academic community are responsible for abiding by its tenets. Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. All members of the academic community – students, faculty, and staff – are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The minimum penalty for academic dishonesty in this class is the grade of “F.”

The most common types of academic dishonesty are plagiarism, cheating on assessments, and unauthorized collaboration. This course will follow the GSU Department of Psychology definition of Plagiarism: If a student uses or relies on others’ work in preparing any academic materials (e.g. written assignments, posters, presentations) the student must cite the source correctly according to the directions provided by the instructor. Failure to do so is plagiarism. Copying and pasting even part of a sentence or phrase is plagiarism, even when the source is cited correctly. Paraphrasing a source in a way that copies the phrase or sentence structure of a source is also plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism, students are expected to properly paraphrase others’ ideas. Quotes in scientific writing should only be used when the wording of the original source is critical to the student’s argument. Whether quoting is appropriate in a given instance is at the discretion of the instructor, not the student. For this class, direct quoting is permitted with proper citation, but is discouraged.

Cheating and Unauthorized Collaboration: Cheating includes the use or sharing of any unauthorized materials and/or assistance before, during, or after an assessment (e.g. exams, tests, quizzes). Unless otherwise specified by your instructor, you may not discuss an assessment or share materials or information with any other student at any time. Unauthorized collaboration occurs under the same circumstances as cheating, but involves assignments outside of the classroom (e.g. papers, projects, presentations) rather than assessments.

6. **Cell-phones and other technology**: Cell-phones, PDAs, laptops, tablets, and similar technologies must be turned off and stored during all exams and quizzes. At other times, you may use such devices so long as their use is directly related to the course (e.g., you may use a laptop to take notes or to access the D2L site, but not to check email, watch videos, listen to music, check Facebook pages, etc. during class) and as long as their use does not disrupt other students as described above. Students who are using devices in a way that is distracting to the instructor or to other students may lose the privilege of using those technologies in class.

7. **Extra-credit**: Individual examinations or other assessments may include options for extra credit (i.e., opportunities to earn points that can only help, not hurt, your grade). Students are encouraged to take advantage of any such opportunities. However, extra-credit opportunities will not be arranged for individual students.

8. **Course evaluation**: Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation. The instructor will also solicit feedback during the term. Contact the instructor if you have questions, problems, or suggestions about the course.

9. **Accommodations**: Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering
with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought.

10. **Other resources.** The GSU Counseling Center ([www.gsu.edu/counseling](http://www.gsu.edu/counseling)) is located at 75 Piedmont Avenue NE (Citizen’s Trust Bldg); 404/413-1640. The Office of the Dean of Students ([www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwdos)) is located in Suite 300, Student Center; 404/413-1515; Campus police is 404/413-3333; Safety escort can be requested at 404/413-2100.

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**Course Calendar** *The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary. (v1.1 23-August-17)*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>TOPIC / ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 23</td>
<td>Animal rules, animal associations (introduction, critical thinking)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: APA Guidelines</td>
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<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>Who has a mind? (methods and ethics)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Burghard</td>
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<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>What are animals? (history, anthropomorphism, and inference);</td>
<td>Minds in media #1 due Sept 6</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Wynne (2007)</td>
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<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>The smartest animals on earth (learning, intelligence)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Rumbaugh</td>
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<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Good animals gone bad (problem solving; insight)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Shettleworth (2010)</td>
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<td>Sept 27</td>
<td>Catch-up and review</td>
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<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>midpoint of semester – Students must withdraw by this date to be eligible for a W</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Time travel (memory)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Hampton &amp; Schwartz</td>
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<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Can animals be prejudiced? (concepts and categories)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Zentall</td>
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<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>Animal accountants (numerical cognition)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Beran</td>
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<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>Do willful apes know what they’re aiming at? (self-control, metacognition)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Smith</td>
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<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Why do bees shake, snakes rattle, and dogs roll? (communication)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Seyfarth et al.</td>
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<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Is language a uniquely human phenomenon?</td>
<td>Minds in media #2 due Nov 15</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Raffaele</td>
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<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Thanksgiving break – No class</td>
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<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>Animal mind reading (social cognition, “theory of mind”)</td>
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<td>Read for this week: Brosnan</td>
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<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Exam 2 = Dec 6 10:00-10:50</td>
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“Animal minds in the media” example:

This “Far Side” cartoon takes the unusually conservative position that dogs do not understand human speech, except for recognizing their own names. It pokes fun at our tendency to anthropomorphize and to assume that animal minds are like human minds. It also seems to recognize the fact that dogs and other animals do respond to vocal communication, without possessing language (or, at least, the English language). Rendall and Owren (2002) have contended that such communication is not semantic and symbolic in character, but rather functions to elicit attention and to incite changes in emotional states in the other animals. That is, it is not the words that this man is saying but rather the tone of his voice that is communicated. This is why a dog will lower its head and tuck its tail and appear submissive even if you say very positive things in a stern tone. These affective behaviors are likely established (as indeed would be true in our own species) through classical (Pavlovian) conditioning, in which vocal tone serves as a reliable predictor of subsequent unpleasant events. Although the capacity for true language comprehension also emerges through experience, this type of learning has been termed “emergent” rather than respondent (Pavlovian) or operant (Skinnerian) in nature (Rumbaugh, 2002).

Curiously, the dog in this cartoon seems not to be responding in a way that we might interpret as “apologistic” or “ashamed.” Again, these labels of the animal’s emotional states are anthropomorphic interpretations of the organism’s mental experience based on the animal’s behavior—but there is a long history, starting with Darwin, of studying the affective responses of animals. It is a trickier issue to determine empirically whether dog’s feel sorry when they look and act like they are sorry, experience shame when they look (or should be) ashamed, and so forth. With humans, we trust verbal reports to corroborate these overt behavioral indicators.

Larson seems to assume that dogs recognize their own names. There is of course ample evidence to suggest that this dog could be conditioned to respond differently to “Ginger” than to other words, but what remains unclear is what she understands about this word. Is it an alerting stimulus, conditioned through experience to attract the animal’s attention? In other words, does it serve a function like the ding that signals that an elevator has arrived but that doesn’t literally mean “elevator”? Or does Ginger recognize her name as a symbol representing her self—her identity to others? To date, the literature suggests no clear answer to this question. However, it seems unlikely that dogs possess very sophisticated self-concept. They have not passed the Gallup (1994) mark test of self-recognition, few researchers have examined self-regulation by dogs, and no studies to date have documented evidence of self-awareness. These are interesting empirical questions for future research.

Grading Rubric for “My Pet Project” proposal and “Animal Minds in Media” assignments
(Note: points are doubled for the Pet Project research proposal)

A. Grammar and Mechanics
0. The frequency and variety of errors obscures the writer’s intentions completely or indicate gross carelessness.
1. The frequency and variety of errors is disruptive to the reader.
2. The frequency and/or variety of errors are somewhat disruptive to the reader.
3. Errors are few and generally not disruptive to the reader.
4. Errors are rare and inconsequential to the reader.
5. The reader’s intentions are clearly expressed and the work shows careful attention to grammar and mechanics.

B. Content and Development
0. No details
2. Few details, and these are generally inaccurate or irrelevant
4. A variety of details, but some are inaccurate or irrelevant
6. A variety of relevant and accurate details, but some relevant details are missing
8. Thorough, relevant, and accurate details, but could be more concise or thorough.
10. Complete, relevant, and accurate details in an appropriately concise but comprehensive manner

C. Organization and Logic
0. Ideas are arranged in a chaotic way, with no logical connection between them (i.e., within sentences and/or paragraphs).
2. Ideas are arranged in an associative, digressive, or circular manner; the logical connections between ideas are consistently unclear.
4. Ideas are arranged in a way that makes sense to the author, but is inappropriate for the purpose or audience of the assignment; the logical connections between ideas are frequently unclear.
6. Ideas are arranged with some consideration for the purpose and audience of the assignment; the logical connections between ideas are sometimes unclear.
8. Ideas are arranged in a manner appropriate to the purpose and audience of the assignment; the logical connections between ideas are almost always clear.
10. Ideas are thoughtfully and effectively arranged in a manner appropriate to the purpose and audience of the assignment; the logical connections between ideas are consistently clear.

D. Use of Evidence
0. Is unquestioning of his/her acceptance of unproven or poorly supported claims
2. Is skeptical, but is unable to explain why or support claims with evidence
4. Supports claims with evidence, but this evidence is usually inappropriate, inaccurate, or irrelevant
6. Supports most claims with evidence that is appropriate, accurate, and relevant
8. Consistently supports claims with appropriate, accurate, and relevant evidence. However, some important evidence is missing.
10. Consistently and thoroughly supports claims with appropriate, accurate, and relevant evidence.

E. Position and Balance
0. Does not take any position on the issue
2. Does not take a consistent position on the issue
4. Takes a consistent position on the issue, but ignores relevant counterevidence and alternate points of view
6. Takes a consistent position on the issue and attempts to address some relevant counterevidence and/or alternate points of view
8. Takes a consistent position on the issue and addresses the relevant counterevidence and/or alternate points of view. However, claims and/or evidence could be presented more clearly and/or objectively.
10. Takes a clear and balanced position on the issue, thoroughly addressing relevant counterevidence and/or alternate points of view

F. Citation and Use of Sources
0. Has committed intentional plagiarism by copying and/or paraphrasing one or more sentences from a source and not using quotation marks or a citation to indicate the ideas are not his/her own
1. Has committed unintentional plagiarism by inappropriately paraphrasing one or more sentences from a source (e.g., by changing some of the original words and/or the original word order), although a citation is provided
2. Quotes rather than paraphrases a cited source, or fails to provide citations or to discuss sources at all.
3. Properly paraphrases all sources and provides citations for them, but has errors in citation mechanics
4. Properly paraphrases and cites all sources, but doesn’t consistently or skillfully integrate the cited material with his/her own ideas
5. Properly paraphrases and cites sources, while consistently and skillfully integrating the cited material with his/her own ideas