

BIOL 321 2025 Learner-Centred Syllabus

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Course Information

General Course Information

Course: BIOL 321

Course title: Animal Behaviour

Pre-requisites: RECOMMENDATION BIOL 200/3.0 or BIOL 202/3.0; COREQUISITE 6.0 units from BIOL 200/3.0; BIOL 205/3.0; BIOL 206/3.0; BIOL 201/3.0; BIOL 202/3.0

Semester and year: Fall 2025

Number of credits: 3

Learning hours: 120 hours

Modality (on campus, blended, or online): On campus

Classroom accessibility: Classrooms are wheelchair accessible and has automatic doors for increased accessibility.

Course Description:

This course is for students looking to understand an evolutionary approach to the study of animal behaviour. This course explores processes and patterns in behaviour, with emphasis on perception, communication, foraging, spacing, reproduction and social behaviour in a variety of animals. Methods of studying and analyzing behaviour are explored through laboratory exercises.

Topics

WEEK	TEXTBOOK CHAPTERS
Week 1	Chapter 1 and 2: Introduction and the integrative study of animal behaviour Labour Day, no additional topic
Week 2	Chapter 3: The developmental and genetic basis of behaviour Quiz review/ Platt and strong inference
Week 3	Chapter 4: The neural basis of behaviour Quiz Review/ How to set up your integrative research project (Grad student panel)
Week 4	Chapter 5: The physiological basis of behaviour Quiz review/Guest Lecture
Week 5	Chapter 6: Avoiding predators and finding food Quiz Review/What is optimal foraging theory?
Week 6	Chapter 7: Territoriality and migration Quiz Review/Victoria Tawa guest lecture
Week 7	Reading week

Week 8	Chapter 8: Principles of communication Quiz review/what is communication?
Week 9	Chapter 9: Reproductive behaviour Quiz review/sexual selection
Week 10	Chapter 10: Mating systems Quiz review/ what are mating systems?
Week 11	Chapter 11: Parental care Quiz review/Erin Bolger guest lecture
Week 12	Chapter 12: Principles of social evolution Quiz review/what is social evolution?
Week 13	Chapter 13: Social behaviour and sociality Quiz review/Animal Behaviour in the Fossil Record

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. On the successful completion of this course, students will be able to: Explain and integrate the proximate and ultimate causes of animal behaviours.
2. Evaluate the roles of evolution, genetics, neurobiology and endocrinology in shaping behaviour, recognizing how internal and external factors interact to produce outcomes.
3. Interpret animal behaviour through the lens of natural selection and adaptation, using cost-benefit and optimality models to explain behavioural strategies in foraging, predator avoidance, mating, and social interaction.
4. Apply principles of communication and signaling theory to explain how animals convey information, detect deception, and evolve communication systems.
5. Compare and contrast reproductive strategies and mating systems, understanding how sexual selection, parental investment, and ecological pressures influence behavioural evolution
6. Analyze social behaviour using theories of kin selection, inclusive fitness, and cooperation, including the evolution of altruism, eusociality, and group living.

Important University Dates

Please visit the [Faculty of Arts and Sciences Sessional Dates website](#) for all academic deadlines.

Inclusion

Land Acknowledgement

The territory that Queen's University occupies is included in the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Confederacy of the Ojibwe and Allied Nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. The Kingston Indigenous community continues to reflect the area's Anishinaabek and

Haudenosaunee roots. There is also a significant Métis community as well as First Peoples from other Nations across Turtle Island present here today.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Statement

Queen's University recognizes that the values of equity and diversity are vital to and in harmony with its educational mission and standards of excellence. It acknowledges that direct, indirect, and systemic discrimination exists within our institutional structures, policies, and practices and in our community. These take many forms and work to differentially advantage and disadvantage persons across social identities such as race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith, and socioeconomic status, among other examples. In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory, anti-racist and accountable environment where everyone feels welcome. Every member of this class is asked to show respect for every other member.

Building a Classroom Community

University is a place to share, question, and challenge ideas. Each student brings a different set of lived experiences. You can help to create a safer, more respectful classroom community for learners by following these guidelines:

- Make a personal commitment to learn about, understand, and support your peers.
- Assume the best of others and expect the best of them.
- Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to the course.
- Acknowledge the impact of oppression on other people's lives and make sure your words and tone are respectful and inclusive.
- Encourage others to develop and share their ideas.
- Pay close attention to what your peers say/write before you respond. Think through and re-read what you have written before you post online or send your comments to others.
- Be open to having your ideas challenged and challenge others with the intent of facilitating growth.
- Look for opportunities to agree with one another, building on and intentionally referencing peers' thoughts and ideas; disagree with ideas without making personal attacks, demeaning, or embarrassing others.

Fostering Accessibility

All of us have a shared responsibility for reducing barriers to learning and fostering accessibility and promoting meaningful inclusion of those with disabilities. The [Accessibility Hub](#) at Queen's University's Human Rights & Equity Office offer a host of [tutorials](#) that provide us all with practical tips for:

- creating accessible documents, e.g., to submit to your teaching team or share with peers in peer feedback activities/in a presentation,
- emails, e.g., while communicating with group members or your teaching team, and
- meeting practices (e.g., in tutorials/labs/seminars or virtual meetings).

Name/Pronoun

If, for whatever reason, you wish to change how your name appears in onQ and/or on class lists, please follow these steps. You may also use this process to add your pronouns to the appearance of your name.

1. Log into SOLUS.
2. Click on Personal Information tab.
3. Click on the Names tab
4. Click on the Add New Name tab
5. Choose Preferred from the Name Type drop down menu
6. Enter the name you would like to appear in onQ and/or on class lists.
7. Click Save.

Please allow 24 to 48 hours for your name to be registered within the system. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact ITS at Queen's University.

Course Materials & Technologies

Required Course Textbooks

Course Textbooks	Edition(s)	Publisher	For Purchase	Cost	At Queen's Library?
Animal Behaviour	12th	Oxford University Press	Amazon, Oxford University Press, Abe Books	\$67	Yes

Educational Technologies, Help, Privacy, and Accessibility

This course makes use of the following website(s), program(s), and/or application(s) for specific educational use/purposes.

Privacy: Be aware that your independent use of the website(s), programs, and/or application(s) used in this course, *beyond what is required*, is subject to their terms of use and privacy policy. You are encouraged to review the applicable privacy statements before using the site. Please see below.

Accessibility: Queen's University is committed to developing courses that are accessible. For further information on accessibility compliance of the website(s), program(s) application(s) used in the course, please consult the links below.

Software	Use	Support	Privacy	Accessibility
onQ	Online learning	https://www.queensu.ca/onqsupport/students/student-support	http://queensu.ca/registrar/resources/policies/accessprivacy	https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/
Kahoot!	Interactive learning	https://support.kahoot.com/hc/en-us	https://trust.kahoot.com/privacy-policy/	https://kahoot.com/accessibility/

Copyright of Course Material

Course materials created by the course instructor, including all slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other similar course materials, are the intellectual property of the instructor. It is a departure from academic integrity to distribute, publicly post, sell or otherwise disseminate an instructor's course materials or to provide an instructor's course materials to anyone else for distribution, posting, sale or other means of dissemination, without the instructor's express consent. A student who engages in such conduct may be subject to penalty for a departure from academic integrity and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

Communication

Questions about the Course and Contacting the Teaching Team

Students should contact either their TA (for Tutorial-related questions) or their instructor (for lecture and course-related questions). Students should ask specific questions that are within the ability of the TA or instructor to address.

Queen's Email

The university communicates with students via Queen's email. Please check your email regularly to ensure you do not miss important information related to your course.

Course Feedback

At various points during the course, you may be asked to take part in a variety of feedback activities, such as surveys and questionnaires. This feedback enables the teaching team to

improve the course. All surveys are anonymous and are directly related to activities, assessments, and other course material.

Assessments

Weighting and Alignment with Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

Assessment	Alignment with CLOs	Weighting
Tutorial Research Project	1-6	40%
Reading Quizzes	1-6	10%
Lecture Quizzes	1-6	18%
Tutorial Assignments	1-6	10%
Class Participation	1-6	2%
Final Exam	1-6	20%
Total		100%

Descriptions of Learning Activities and Assessments

Tutorial Research Project

Students will design, conduct and report on an independent project aimed at answering a question related to animal behaviour.

Reading Quizzes

Weekly quizzes covering material from the assigned readings.

Lecture Quizzes

Weekly quizzes covering material from the lecture, questions will be similar in structure to those of the exam.

Tutorial Assignments

Students will complete 3 assignments in their tutorial groups that will provide them with the skills needed to complete their research projects (observation in nature, observation in lab, statistics)

Class Participation

Answering questions in class, participating in Kahoot polls etc.

Final Exam

An exam focused on the synthesis of the knowledge and concepts students learn during the course.

Proctored Exams

Timing of Final Examinations

Once the exam schedule has been finalized, the exam date will be posted on your SOLUS account. The exam dates for each term are listed on the Faculty of Arts and Science webpage under "[Important Dates](#)." Student exam schedules for the Fall Term are posted on SOLUS immediately prior to Thanksgiving and on the Friday before Reading Week for the Winter Term. Students should **delay finalizing any travel plans until after the examination schedule has**

been posted. Exams will **not be moved or deferred** to accommodate employment, travel/holiday plans or flight reservations. For information regarding what is considered extenuating circumstances and qualifications for Academic Consideration, please visit the [Faculty of Arts and Science's Academic Consideration webpage](#).

If you are unable to attend an exam and receive approval for a deferred proctored exam, a further deferral of that exam will not be accommodated.

Assignment Submission Policy

Each assignment will have a three-day grace period; your assignments are due on the due date posted but will be accepted, without penalty, up to 72 hours afterwards. Late penalties of 5% a day will apply to submissions after this grace period. Short term academic consideration is therefore built into all assignment due dates and will not be extended past this 3-day grace period for students without long-term academic consideration or accommodations for disabilities.

Policy Review of Graded Work

Requests for assignment regrading may be made to your instructor a minimum of 48 hours after you have received the marked copy of your assignment, but no more than 10 days later. Be sure to read the feedback carefully before you submit a review of graded work. To request that your assignment be reviewed, please include the following in your email:

- *Your name, student number, and TA's name.*
- *The original copy of your marked assignment, attached.*
- *Your reason for the request:*
 - *The specific aspects of your assignment that you believe were not sufficiently awarded, referring to the categories of the rubric.*
 - *Why you believe that your assignment meets the criteria for a higher mark for each of the categories of the rubric that you indicated above. Please make explicit reference to the detailed descriptions of each category provided in the rubric.*

If a review of graded work results in only a slightly different final grade, the original grade will stand. Should we find an error where marks were not assigned when they should have been or were missed in adding up the total score or were added up incorrectly resulting in a higher score than earned, the grade will be changed so that it is accurate. Grades would only increase or decrease if there was evidence of an error in marking, not simply because the regrader interprets or applies the rubric slightly differently than the original grader.

Policies

Class Attendance

Your presence and participation in class contributes to the knowledge and skills that you will develop throughout this course. I expect that you attend class regularly, participate in class conversations and learning activities. These types of activities provide active engagement, promote a deeper understanding of the course content, and contribute to your success in this course.

Academic Support

All undergraduate students face new learning and writing challenges as they progress through university: essays and reports become more complex; effectively incorporating research into writing becomes more important; the types of assignments become more diverse; managing your time and developing the skills you need to read and think critically gets more challenging. I encourage students to contact Student Academic Success Services (SASS). SASS offers many different ways to receive support:

- Free online or in-person [appointments](#) to get personalized support on writing and academic skills from expert staff and trained peers.
- [Workshops](#) and [drop-in programs](#). SASS' [Events Calendar lists events coming soon](#).
- [Online resources](#) that provide strategies for academic skills and writing development at university.
- If English is not your first language, SASS has specific resources for [English as Additional Language students](#), including weekly programs and EAL academic skills appointments. You can meet on an ongoing basis with an EAL consultant to work on your academic writing, speaking, listening, and reading skills.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to working with students with disabilities to remove barriers to their academic goals. Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS), students with disabilities, instructors, and faculty staff work together to provide and implement academic accommodations designed to allow students with disabilities equitable access to all course material (including in-class as well as exams). If you are a student currently experiencing barriers to your academics due to disability related reasons, and you would like to understand whether academic accommodations could support the removal of those barriers, please visit the [QSAS website](#) to learn more about academic accommodations or start the registration process with QSAS by clicking **Access Ventus** button at [Ventus | Accessibility Services | Queen's \(queensu.ca\)](#)

VENTUS is an online portal that connects students, instructors, Queen's Student Accessibility Services, the Exam's Office and other support services in the process to request, assess, and implement academic accommodations.

To learn more go to: <https://www.queensu.ca/ventus-support/students/visual-guide-ventus-students>

Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances

Academic Consideration is a process for the University community to provide a compassionate response to assist students experiencing unforeseen, short-term extenuating circumstances that may impact or impede a student's ability to complete their academics. This may include but is not limited to any extenuating circumstance (illness, bereavement, traumatic event, injury, family emergency, etc.) which is short-lived, begins within the term, and will not last longer than 12 weeks - see [Academic Consideration](https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/undergraduate/student-services/academic-consideration) webpage for details (<https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/undergraduate/student-services/academic-consideration>)

Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. For more information, undergraduate students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences should consult the Faculty's webpage on [Academic Consideration in Extenuating Circumstances](#) and submit a request via the [Academic Consideration Request Portal](#). Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

Students are encouraged to submit requests as soon as the need becomes apparent and to contact their instructor and/or course coordinator as soon as possible once academic consideration has been granted. Any delay in contact may limit the options available for academic consideration. While we encourage instructors to accommodate, each instructor has discretion in deciding whether or how to apply the Academic Consideration. For more information on the Academic Consideration process, what is and is not an extenuating circumstance, and to submit an Academic Consideration request, please see the Faculty of Arts and Science's [Academic Consideration website](#). ASO courses include links to information on **Academic Consideration** on your **Course Homepage** in onQ.

Please see the Teaching Team page for contact information for your instructor and TA(s), where relevant.

For more information, please see the [Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances](#).

Queen's Policy Statement on Academic Integrity

Queen's University is dedicated to creating a scholarly community free to explore a range of ideas, to build and advance knowledge and to share the ideas and knowledge that emerge from

a range of intellectual pursuits. Each core value of academic integrity, as defined in the [Senate Academic Integrity Policy](#), gives rise to and supports the next.

Honesty appears in presenting one's own academic work, whether in the context of an examination, written assignment, laboratory or seminar presentation. It is in researching one's own work for course assignments, acknowledging dependence on the ideas or words of another and in distinguishing one's own ideas and thoughts from other sources. It is also present in faithfully reporting laboratory results even when they do not conform to an original hypothesis. Further, honesty is present in truthfully communicating in written and/or oral exchanges with instructors, peers and other individuals (e.g. teaching assistants, proctors, university staff and/or university administrators).

Trust exists in an environment in which one's own ideas can be expressed without fear of ridicule or fear that someone else will take credit for them.

Fairness appears in the proper and full acknowledgement of the contributions of collaborators in group projects and in the full participation of partners in collaborative projects.

Respect, in a general sense, is part of an intellectual community that recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honours and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas. However, "respect" appears in a very particular sense when students attend class, pay attention, contribute to discussion and submit papers on time; instructors "show respect by taking students' ideas seriously, by recognizing them as individuals, helping them develop their ideas, providing full and honest feedback on their work, and valuing their perspectives and their goals" ("[The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity](#)", 3rd Edition, p. 8).

Ultimately, responsibility is both personal and collective and engages students, administrators, faculty and staff in creating and maintaining a learning environment supported by and supporting academic integrity.

Courage differs from the preceding values by being more a quality or capacity of character – "the capacity to act in accordance with one's values despite fear" ("[The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity](#)", 3rd edition, p. 10). Courage is displayed by students who make choices and integrous decisions that are followed by action, even in the face of peer pressure to cheat, copy another's material, provide their own work to others to facilitate cheating, or otherwise represent themselves dishonestly. Students also display courage by acknowledging prior wrongdoing and taking proactive measures to rectify any associated negative impact.

All of these values are not merely abstract but are expressed in and reinforced by the University's policies and practices.

Syllabus statements for Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools (select one of the following)

Instructors should include clear guidelines or a statement in the syllabus to advise students on the use of generative AI tools. The below statements were developed by the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science and shared with permission.

- **Permitted with citation**
 - Students must submit their own work and cite the work that is not theirs. Generative AI writing tools such as ChatGPT are welcome in this class, provided you cite the material that they generate. Any other use constitutes a departure from academic integrity.
- **Permitted in specific assignments, with citation**
 - Students must submit their own work and cite the work that is not theirs. Generative AI writing tools such as ChatGPT are only permissible when explicitly noted in the assignment instructions. In these cases, be sure to cite the material that they generate. Any other use constitutes a departure from academic integrity.
- **Not permitted**
 - Using generative AI writing tools such as ChatGPT in your submitted work is not permitted in this class. This type of use constitutes a departure from academic integrity. Original work, completed wholly by you, is expected to be submitted in this course.

Queen's [Student Academic Success Services](#) (SASS) offers a self-directed, online academic integrity module which we encourage all students to take which will help with:

- Understanding the nature of the academic integrity departure
- Understanding the expectations of and role of sources in scholarly writing
- Integrating sources into your writing (paraphrasing, quoting, summarizing)
- Understanding when and how to cite your sources
- Managing your time effectively to avoid the need for shortcuts
- Taking effective notes to ensure accuracy of source material and correct attribution