

MW 12:30 – 1:50 pm
ELA 229

Instructor: Dr. Carrie Veilleux
ccv15@txstate.edu

office hours: MW 9am – 10am or by appt
office: ELA 233

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will provide an overview of non-human primate behavior and ecology. Compared to most other mammals, primates are exceptionally social, often living in complex societies and exhibiting great behavioral and cultural diversity. For anthropologists, primates can offer models for understanding the evolution of human behavior and social systems. We will use an evolutionary approach to examine how various environmental and social factors (such as food, sex, and predation) have influenced variation in primate social organization and behavior.



Objectives: After taking this course you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the diversity of primate social systems, ecology, and patterns of social behavior.
- 2) Understand what it means to take an evolutionary approach to thinking about primate behavioral biology.
- 3) Be able to articulate evolutionary hypotheses for a given pattern of nonhuman primate social behavior (e.g., mate choice) and to design and critique tests of those hypotheses using logic and evidence.

TEXTBOOKS, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS

Primate Behavioral Ecology by Karen Strier, 5th Edition. The 4th edition has similar information, but be warned that multiple choice questions for exams will be based on the 5th edition.

Online Materials: Additional readings and assignments will be available online in TRACS. It is YOUR responsibility to check TRACS regularly for readings and announcements.

GRADING

Your grade for the semester will be based on the following five components:

Exam 1 – Introduction to Primate Studies	15%
Exam 2 – Surviving in a Dangerous World	15%
Exam 3 – Sociality—Challenges and Strategies	15%
Research Proposal Project	40%
Participation & Discussion	15%

Final Grade Ranges: A = 100-89.5; B = 89.49-79.5; C = 79.49-69.5; D = 69.49-59.5; F = < 59.49
--

Exams (45%): There will be 3 exams corresponding to the three sections of the course.

Exams will be non-cumulative and will cover all lecture material, assigned readings, and films. All exam questions will be objective format (e.g. true/false, multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, and short answer). In this course you will be responsible for compiling your own study guides.

The first five minutes of each class period will be devoted to reviewing key points, topics, and questions covered in the previous class. You should take notes during this review period and this will serve as your study guide for exams.

Make-up exams will be given **ONLY** with documented proof of dire emergency or illness. You must contact me within three days of a missed exam to qualify for a make-up.

Research Proposal Project (40%): Each student will write a research proposal in the format of a National Science Foundation Dissertation Improvement Grant on any relevant primate behavior topic of your choice. The total grade for this proposal includes:

1. *Brief Project Proposal (5%):* A 1-page overview of your proposal is due by Friday Feb. 10 via email. In this overview, you will summarize your research question within primate behavior, why it is interesting, and a rough idea of how you might collect data.
2. *Proposal Outline (10%):* After receiving feedback on your Project Summary, you will prepare a 3-5 page (double-spaced) proposal outline to workshop with your classmates. This outline will include a well-thought out research question, which species and/or population(s) you would study and why they are appropriate for your research question, specific hypotheses you propose to test, and detailed descriptions of methods you would use. The Proposal Outline is due on Monday Mar 6th. We will schedule a time to meet and share feedback on each project outline.
3. *Research Proposal (20%):* This 10-12 page (double-spaced) research proposal will be in the format of a NSF Dissertation Improvement Grant proposal (guidelines will be distributed at a later date). It will be due on the last day of class, Monday May 1st.
4. *Presentation (5%):* Each student will give a 8-10 min presentation of their proposal on the last day of scheduled student presentations (May 1st).

Participation and Discussion (15%): Participation is an important component of this class, and you are expected to come prepared having done the readings. All lectures will be interactive and many will involve in-class activities, where you will be asked to think about material we have been covering and to prepare questions or responses to prompts. Attendance will be taken randomly throughout the semester.

In the graduate section, we will occasionally dive more deeply into the literature on some of these topics in separate meetings. You will be expected to be able to provide summaries of the assigned articles and discuss them.

COURSE POLICIES

Students with disabilities: Students with special needs (as documented by the Office of Disability Services) are encouraged to meet with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any accommodations.

Grading Policies: If you have any questions about your grade on any exam, I will be happy to recheck your whole exam. Simple errors of grading (e.g., incorrect addition) will be corrected immediately. More complicated issues should be addressed in writing within 3 days after the return of the exams. Please include the exam with your request. You have 3 days after the exams have been returned to you to notify me of any errors or disagreements. After that, grades are final.

ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

Texas State University-San Marcos Honor Code

As members of a community dedicated to learning, inquiry, and creation, the students, faculty, and administration of our University live by the principles in this Honor Code. These principles require all members of this community to be conscientious, respectful, and honest. (see <http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01-att1.html>)

Learning and teaching take place best in an atmosphere of intellectual fair-minded openness. All members of the academic community are responsible for supporting freedom and openness through rigorous personal standards of honesty and fairness. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty undermine the very purpose of the university and diminish the value of an education. For more information on what is and what is not cheating, please visit: <http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/Student-Resources/Myths-about-Cheating-and-Plagiarism.html>

Cheating Policy

"Cheating" means engaging in any of the following activities.

- a) Copying from another student's exams, laboratory assignment, or homework, or from any electronic device or equipment.
- b) Using materials not authorized by your instructor during an exam.
- c) Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work. This might include hand gestures, signals, etc.
- d) Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered or administered exam.
- e) Falsifying data.

"Plagiarism" means the appropriation of another's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit.

"Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing any work offered for credit.

Without exception, any student found cheating (including plagiarizing) on an assignment will receive a grade of zero for the assignment, be dropped one letter grade for the final course grade, and will be referred to the Honor Code Council. Note that any attempt to alter a graded, returned exam in order to improve the score will be considered cheating and will result in a grade of zero for the exam.

Tentative Course Schedule*

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO PRIMATE STUDIES

		Readings
W Jan 18	Course logistics & what is a primate?	Ch 2
M Jan 23	Primate ecological and social diversity	Fleagle (1999), Ch 1
W Jan 25	Survey of the living primates and phylogeny	Ch 2
M Jan 30	Film: "Primates" BBC	
W Feb 1	Studying primates: history of primatology	Strum & Fedigan 1999, Ch 1
M Feb 6	Behavioral methods and ethics	Campbell et al 2011, Fedigan 2010
W Feb 8	Exam 1	

PART II: SURVIVING IN A DANGEROUS WORLD

M Feb 13	Evolution, natural selection, fitness	Ch 4
W Feb 15	Inclusive fitness and kin selection	Ch 4
M Feb 20	Primate diets and feeding ecology	Ch 6
W Feb 22	Predation and anti-predator strategies	Ch 11
M Feb 27	Diseases and parasites	Ch 11
W Mar 1	Primate sensory ecology	TRACS: TBD
M Mar 6	Socioecological models and primate sociality	TRACS: TBD
W Mar 8	Exam 2	

Mar 12-19 SPRING BREAK NO CLASSES

PART III: SOCIALITY--CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

M Mar 20	Sexual selection	Ch 5
W Mar 22	Cooperation with kin and non-kin	TBD
M Mar 27	Aggression, dominance, and power	Sapolsky (2005)
W Mar 29	Film: "Stress: Portrait of a Killer"	
M Apr 3	Male reproductive strategies	Ch 5, 8
W Apr 5	Female reproductive strategies	Ch 5, 7
M Apr 10	Infanticide	TBD
W Apr 12	Cognition and Communication	Ch 10, Duffy et al 2007
M Apr 17	NO CLASS - WORK ON FINAL PROJECTS	
W Apr 19	Conservation	Ch 12
M Apr 24	student presentations	
W Apr 26	student presentations	
M May 1	student presentations	

W May 10 Exam 3 - Final exam period 11-1:30 pm

*subject to change

Tentative Graduate Section Schedule:

1. Feb 1 - 3: history of primatology studies, methods, ethics
2. Feb 15-17: evolution of behavior
3. Mar 1-3: primate socioecological models
4. Mar 23-24: cooperation and conflict
5. Apr 6-7: male and female reproductive strategies
6. Apr 17: (during class period): cognition and tool use. We can also discuss NSF formatting and any questions you have about the research proposal.