

Animal Minds



Montclair University

Spring 2024

Instructor: David Sorensen

Meeting Time and Dates: Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30-6:45 PM

Meeting Location: Conrad J. Schmitt Hall, Room: 242

Dates: 1/16-05/07

Course Description

Do chimpanzees have a sense of right and wrong? Do insects have subjective experiences? What is it like to be a bat? Philosophers have long speculated about the existence and contents of nonhuman animal minds. In the 21st century, science now offers us some answers, but much is still up for debate. *Philosophy of Animal Minds* explores the foundations and implications of three relatively new disciplines: sensory ecology, cognitive ethology, and evolutionary psychology. Sensory ecologists study how animals sense their environment and try to understand what their perceptual worlds (known as *umwelts*) are like. Cognitive ethologists study how animals think and try to understand the content of their thoughts. Evolutionary psychologists have largely focused their efforts on explaining how *human* psychology arose, but in this course, we will look at recent work that addresses how and when psychological capacities like thought, emotion, and reasoning emerged in the evolutionary timeline.

Course Materials

Required Materials/Textbook(s)

- 1) *The Animal Mind: An introduction to Philosophy of Animal Cognition*, 2nd edition, *Kristin Andrews* 2020
- 2) *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us*, *Ed Yong* 2022
- 3) *The Evolution of Agency*, *Michael Tomasello* 2022

Course Evaluation:

(a) **Exam** (30%): There will be one cumulative in-person final exam at the end of the semester. The exam will be comprised of multiple choice, multiple answer, and short answer questions. While the exam will cover material from throughout the semester, roughly half will be based on chapters 8 and 9 of the Andrews textbook.

(b) **Weekly quizzes** (12, drop the lowest two) 60%: During most weeks, there will be a timed (15 minute) Canvas quiz based on the assigned readings. You are allowed to use your notes. Each quiz will contain three multiple choice and two multiple answer questions (each worth 2 points, partial credit awarded for MA). The first quiz will be due Sunday, January 28th.

(c) **Attendance and Participation** (10%, 10 points): Attendance and participation will be tracked through the submission of a series of low-stakes writing assignments and/or discussion questions. These assignments will be turned in either in-person (hand-written) or online by participating in Canvas discussion threads. These assignments will be graded P/F and you will receive roughly one point for every satisfactory submission (10 required to receive the full ten points).

Assignment Grade Breakdown:

Weekly Quizzes: 60%

Final exam (cumulative): 30%

Attendance and Participation (10%):

Grading Scale:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	65-66
F	Below 65

Course Topics and Schedule

CR: Canvas Reading

Date	Topics	Homework
January 16 (Tuesday)	Course Introduction	Andrews, Chapter 1
January 18 (Thursday)	Animal Cognition: Philosophy of Mind and Epistemology	CR: <i>On 'Perception: First Form of Mind': An Interview with Tyler Burge</i>
January 23 (Tuesday)	Animal Cognition: Philosophy of Mind and Epistemology cont'd	Andrews, Chapter 2

January 25 (Thursday)	Animal Cognition: Methodologies in the Animal Minds Sciences	Andrews, Chapter 3 Quiz #1 Due: Sunday, 1/29
January 30 (Tuesday)	Animal Consciousness	Andrews, Chapter 4, Sec. 1
February 1 (Thursday)	Theories of Consciousness	Andrews, Chapter 4, Sec. 2 and 3 Quiz #2 Due: Sunday, 2/4
February 6 (Tuesday)	Sensory Ecology: Olfaction and Gustation	Yong, Introduction and Chapter 1 <i>Smells and Tastes</i>
February 8 (Thursday)	Sensory Ecology: Vision	Yong, Chapter 2 and 3 <i>Light and Color</i> Quiz #3 Due: Sunday, 2/11
February 13 (Tuesday)	Sensory Ecology: Pain and Nociception	Yong, Chapter 4 <i>Pain</i>
February 15 (Thursday)	Sensory Ecology: Thermoreception and Touch	Yong, Chapter 5 and 6 <i>Heat, Contact, and Flow</i> Quiz #4 Due: Sunday, 2/18
February 20 (Tuesday)	Sensory Ecology: Audition and Echolocation	Yong, Chapter 8 and 9 <i>Vibration and Sound</i>
February 22 (Thursday)	Sensory Ecology: Electroreception and Magnetoception	Yong, Chapters 10 and 11 <i>Electric and Magnetic Fields</i> Quiz #5 Due: Sunday, 2/25
February 27 (Tuesday)	Introduction to Evolutionary Theory	
February 29 (Thursday)	The Evolution of Agency and Intentionality	Tomasello, Chapters 1 and 2 Quiz #6 Due: Sunday, 3/3
March 5 (Tuesday)	Ancient Vertebrates as Goal-Directed Agents	Tomasello, Chapter 3
March 7 (Thursday)	Animal Self-Consciousness and Animal Thoughts	Self-Consciousness Andrews, Chapter 4, Sec. 5 Andrews, Chapter 5, Secs 1 and 2 Quiz #7 Due: Sunday, 3/10
March 12 (Tuesday)	SPRING BREAK	
March 14 (Thursday)	SPRING BREAK	
March 19 (Tuesday)	Animal Beliefs and Concepts	Andrews, Chapter 5, Sec. 3
March 21 (Thursday)	Ancient Mammals as Intentional Agents	Tomasello, Chapter 4 Quiz #8 Due: Sunday, 3/24

March 26 (Tuesday)	Animal Emotions	Excerpt from <i>The Emotional Lives of Animals</i> , Bekoff
March 28 (Thursday)	Animal Emotions, cont'd	Excerpt from <i>The Emotional Lives of Animals</i> , Bekoff Quiz #9 Due: Sunday, 3/31
April 2 (Tuesday)	Animal Rationality and Ancient Primates as Rational Agents	Andrews, Chapter 5, Sec. 5 Tomasello, Chapter 5
April 4 (Thursday)	Animal Communication: Signs and Origins of Language	Andrews, Chapter 6, Sec. 1-3 Quiz #11 Due: Sunday, 4/7
April 9 (Tuesday)	Animals and Mindreading	Andrews, Chapter 7.1 and 7.2
April 11 (Thursday)	Animals and Mindreading: cont'd	Andrews, Chapter 7.3 and 7.4 Quiz #12 Due: Sunday, 4/14
April 16 (Tuesday)	Animal Culture	Andrews, Chapter 8 (sec 1 and 2)
April 18 (Thursday)	Animal Culture con'd	Andrews, Chapter 8 (sec 3 and 4)
April 23 (Tuesday)	Ancient Hominids as Socially Normative Agents	Tomasello, Chapter 6
April 25 (Thursday)	Animals and Moral Standing	Andrews, Chapter 9, Sec. 1
April 30 (Tuesday)	Animals and Moral Standing: Nonhuman persons?	Cetacean Personhood, <i>Marino and White</i>
May 2 (Thursday)	Animal Moral Psychology	Andrews, Chapter 9, Sec. 2
May 7 (Tuesday)	Final Exam	

How to do well in the course:

- 1) **Take the readings seriously:** There will be lots of readings assigned in this course, some of which will be quite difficult. It is best to complete all the readings *before* attending the lecture for which they are assigned. Reading philosophy can be difficult, requiring much more time and focus than readings in other fields and genres. As a philosopher, you are also not just aiming to understand what the author is saying, but whether their claims are true. Thus, a special kind of *active* reading is required to get the most out of the assigned readings. I've provided a Canvas module with some tips and articles on active reading (in general) and also how to read philosophical papers.
Also, taking careful notes on the readings will help you ace the quizzes.
- 2) **Be prepared with questions and comments**

- 3) **Regularly check Canvas** (at least once every 48 hours) for course updates, assignments, and newly added powerpoints
- 4) **Attend office hours:** If questions remain after class, or some questions were not adequately addressed, office hours allow students to have continued and more focused conversations about the course content. You do not even have to come to office hours prepared with a list of questions or comments about the course. I am happy to talk with you about any topics of interest in philosophy or science.

Unexplained absences and missing assignments:

Under most circumstances, if you do not report to me, in advance, that you will be absent or unable to submit an assignment on time, then you will not receive full credit for missed work. Assignments that are not complete by May 4th will automatically turn into zeros.

Academic Honesty and Integrity:

Academic Honesty is a core University value. Take time to understand the [University's policy](#). Your questions about academic honesty are always welcome. You can ask me or consult the [Center for Academic Success and Tutoring \(CAST\)](#) or the [Center for Writing Excellence \(CWE\)](#) before submitting work.

Academic

- [Academic Advising](#) is available for all students, with **success centers** in every college and school:
 - [College of Science and Mathematics](#)
 - [College of Education and Human Services](#)
 - [College of the Arts](#)
 - [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)
 - [The Feliciano School of Business](#)
 - [The School of Nursing](#)
 - [University College Academic Advising](#)
- [Career Services](#): Provided by each college and school's success centers.
- [Center for Academic Success and Tutoring \(CAST\)](#): Tutoring, supplementary instruction, and peer coaching for common struggles with subject matter, time management, studying, and managing school-work-life balance.
- [Center for Writing Excellence](#): Tutoring and workshops on writing.
- [The Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#): Assistance for students in receiving accommodations to equalize access.
- [Navigate](#): The tool that connects you to your support team across campus.
- [Public Speaking Resource Center \(PSRC\)](#): Assistance and coaching for individual or group presentations. and job interviewing.
- [Sprague Library](#): In addition to a variety of [study spaces](#), we offer a host of [resources](#), including [course reserves](#), [streaming media](#), and [subject-specific guides](#). You can get [research help](#) from a librarian in-person, via chat, text, phone, email, or make an appointment.

Well-being

- [The Office of the Dean of Students](#) resolves concerns that impact academic and/or personal well-being: deanofstudents@montclair.edu/973-655-4118. For housing, food, or life concerns, see the [Case Manager](#); for professional clothing, see [Rocky's Closet](#); for food security, see [Red Hawk Pantry](#).
- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) provides free short-term counseling, group therapy, [online therapy resources](#), [Let's Talk "walk-ins"](#) and referrals that are confidential. Phone: 973-655-5211.
 - In a crisis after hours, select option "2" or University Police at 973-655-5222. The National Suicide Prevention Hotline offers 24/7 support at 800-273-8255.
- [MSU Cares](#) helps students who are alone, stressed, or afraid. Community members may report concerns about a student via a [CARE Report](#).
- [Office Of Student Belonging](#) provides engaging and supportive opportunities through programming for all students.
- [University Health Services](#)

Student Services

- [Red Hawk Central](#): The first stop for administrative and financial questions should be Red Hawk Central, which is home to Student Accounts, Financial Aid, and the Registrar. Live chat available at the website for referrals and quick questions.
- [Undergraduate Student Guide](#) or the [Graduate Student Guide](#): Your rights and responsibilities as a Montclair State University student. See additionally:
 - [Campus Climate for Civility and Human Dignity](#) aims to foster an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and goodwill.
 - [Preferred Name](#): Students may select their preferred name for use at the University. [Apply](#) online to make changes.
 - [Sexual Violence Policies and Support](#): The University is committed to a safe environment and investigates all reports of sexual misconduct. If you share sexual misconduct information with instructors, your instructor is required to report this to the Title IX officer.

Technical Support:

- To troubleshoot Canvas problems, click "Help" in the left-hand navigation, visit the [Montclair State Canvas Student Orientation](#), or consult the [Instructure Canvas Student Guides](#).