

Syllabus - ANS 3008 Domestic Animal Behavior and Welfare – Fall 2025

Course Title

ANS 3008 Domestic Animal Behavior and Welfare (3 credits)

Time and Location

- Online – lectures delivered asynchronously
- Synchronous (virtual) class sessions are held via Zoom on Wednesdays 11:45 – 12:35 (5th period) or 12:45 – 1:35 (6th period), according to class schedule (Page 5 of this Syllabus).

Course Instructors, Teaching Assistants, and Office Hours

Instructor:

Emily Miller-Cushon, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Department of Animal Sciences

Email: emillerc@ufl.edu

Teaching Assistant:

Elizabeth Kostalnick, M.S.

Ph.D. student, Department of Animal Sciences

Email: ea.kostalnick@ufl.edu

Lectures are pre-recorded by Dr. Miller-Cushon. Our weekly synchronous class sessions are led by Dr. Miller-Cushon, Elizabeth, and guest lecturers in some weeks.

Course Description and Objectives

This course explores factors influencing the expression of animal behavior, and the ways understanding behavior may be used to assess and improve animal welfare. Basic principles will be illustrated with examples drawn from a wide range of species, both domestic and wild, but the focus of the course will be on applying concepts to understand the behavior and welfare of domestic animals. This course involves formal lectures and group discussion.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe fundamental processes involved in development and causation of behavior
- Recognize basic categories of behavior, drawing examples from different species
- Evaluate how common housing, care, and management practices influence behavior of domestic animals
- Apply an understanding of animal behavior to draw conclusions about animal welfare

- Develop approaches to address animal welfare challenges
- Interpret and critique scientific literature in the field of animal behavior

Class Structure

Course Website on Canvas: Our course website can be found through login to Canvas (<http://elearning.ufl.edu>). All course material, including the syllabus, lectures, and content described below, are on Canvas. Grades and assignment feedback are also posted through Canvas. I will also use Canvas as the primary means to contact with you any important announcements.

If you are not yet familiar with using Canvas, please look at the Canvas 'Getting Started' Guide: guides.instructure.com/m/8470. To make sure you are not missing any announcements, please make sure your Canvas settings are adjusted as follows:

- Go to your general **Canvas Settings** (upper right corner within Canvas) > **Notifications** (left menu bar) > **Notification Preferences**: here set to **"ASAP"** for (at least) Announcements.

Lectures and course content: Lectures are pre-recorded and available to you via Canvas, organized by topic within weekly modules. In addition to these lectures, topics are covered through use of materials, such as short videos and additional reading, which are listed under the recorded lecture videos to accompany the recorded lecture. Each weekly module links to a discussion thread, where you may post any comments or questions related to the content. The instructors and TAs will be monitoring this thread and posting replies, and you are also welcome and encouraged to respond to your classmates' comments. Participation in class discussion boards will contribute to your 'Class Participation' grade, as described below.

Weekly class meetings: Class sessions are synchronous on Wednesday and held via Zoom, with your attendance counting towards your 'Class Participation' grade. During these meetings, we will have a range of activities to complement lecture material, on dates as outlined in the syllabus. These will often involve some reading ahead of time and incorporate discussion (e.g. using 'breakout rooms' to facilitate small group discussion). These live class sessions will also be used for review sessions during quiz weeks and involve guest speakers during some weeks. Topic and any expectations, such as assigned reading, for the weekly synchronous class sessions are outlined in the Class Schedule (Page 5 of this Syllabus) and on Canvas under Modules (readings will be posted on Canvas before the discussion date).

The following textbook is an optional supplemental reference for this course:

Price, E. O. 2008. Principles & applications of domestic animal behavior. (2008) Principles and applications of domestic animal behavior. CAB International.

Communication Expectations and Guidelines

Please review our course policy on a few topics important for this online course, including online security, written communication guidelines, communication with class instructors and TA, discussion board etiquette, and synchronous class etiquette:

<https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/406165/pages/communication-expectations-and-guidelines>

Assignments and Grading

Assignments will be graded according to rubrics posted on Canvas. Unless otherwise stated, you should expect timely feedback from class assignments and quizzes (within approximately one week of submission). The final grade in the course will be assigned based on numeric average, as described below.

Grading scheme:

A	92.5-100%	B+	87.5-89.4%	C+	77.5-79.4%	D+	67.5-69.4%	E	< 59.4
A-	89.5-92.4%	B	83.5-87.4%	C	73.5-77.4%	D	63.5-67.4%		
		B-	79.5-83.4%	C-	69.5-73.4%	D-	59.5-63.4%		

For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Activity	Percentage of final grade
Quizzes (3 during semester; 12% each)	36%
Assignments (3 during semester; 12% each)	36%
Independent research project – written paper	15%
Independent research project – media presentation	8%
Class attendance and participation	5%

Quizzes: There will be three non-cumulative quizzes completed during the semester to assess your knowledge of course material. See the Class Schedule for quiz dates. All quizzes are scheduled on Fridays, and will open at 8 am and close at 10:00 pm. Each quiz will cover material introduced since the previous quiz, as specified in the schedule. Expect quizzes to consist of both multiple choice and short answer written questions. During each quiz week, the Wednesday synchronous class period will be a review session summarizing material and answering questions.

Assignments: There will be three written assignments due throughout the semester (see Class Schedule for due dates; cut-off time is 10:00 pm) on topics designed to complement lecture material. The complete guidelines and rubric for all assignments can be found on Canvas and these assignments will also be discussed during a synchronous class before the due date.

Independent research project and presentation: This class assignment will focus on a behavioral topic of your choosing (to be discussed during a synchronous class session and subject to instructor approval). This assignment will involve independent reading and research. You will be responsible for 1) reading and summarizing 4 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles (see 'Tips for Finding Journal Articles' on the course Canvas page), 2) describing unanswered questions related to your behavior topic, and 3) planning how you would go about conducting research to address an unanswered question. The complete guidelines and rubric for this assignment can be found on Canvas. This assignment is intended

to build on what you have learned in-class throughout the semester. It is in place of a conventional cumulative final exam and is due during the final exam period.

Based on the behavior topic selected for the literature review, you will develop a media presentation. This can be a poster, infographic, oral presentation (< 3 min in duration), or another format that you would prefer (with prior instructor approval). Be creative! Your presentation should concisely summarize key scientific information about your topic. These presentations will be shared with your classmates during the last week of class, as outlined in the Class Schedule.

Class participation: This will be evaluated based on attendance during in-class meetings (held during period 5 on Wednesdays, via Zoom) and participation in discussion boards. To ensure you receive full marks for participation, you should plan to attend all in-class activities (unless you have an excused absence, as defined below) and participate in required discussions.

Absences, Make-up Work, and Late Assignments:

Assignments should be submitted by the assigned deadline. I will accept late assignments for up to 4 days after the posted deadline, with a penalty of 20 % for every day that the assignment is late. In the case of emergencies, please contact me as soon as possible to arrange to turn in assignments without penalty. Requirements for class and quiz attendance are consistent with university policy, and reasons for absence outside this policy will be considered unexcused and may result in a grade of zero for missed quizzes: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Please note: there will be no opportunities for make-up work or extra credit assignments, and grade point cut-offs are firm. To do well, I encourage you to keep up with lectures, carefully review all assignment guidelines and rubrics, take advantage of all learning opportunities (study review sessions, review guides), and visit with me early in the semester if you have any concerns. To avoid disappointment with final grades, I aim to provide informative feedback and transparent grading throughout the semester so that you know how you are progressing.

Class Structure

Class dates are color-coded by the quiz in which that material is assessed: Quiz 1 material is **blue**, Quiz 2 material is **green**, and Quiz 3 material is **orange**.

Week	Modules to cover	Class topic	Other things to do	Deadlines
1	Introduction to animal behavior	<i>Aug 27</i> - Introduction to the course	Post in Introductions discussion thread	
2	Domestication and behavioral genetics	<i>Sept 3</i> – Activity: Developing an ethogram		
3	Learning and motivation	<i>Sept 10</i> – Activity: learning and motivation	Assigned reading before class	Assignment 1 <i>Sept 12</i>
4		<i>Sept 17</i> - Quiz 1 review	Participate in quiz review discussion board	Quiz 1 <i>Sept 19</i>
5	Feeding behavior	<i>Sept 24</i> – Activity: Foraging in captivity	Assigned reading before class	
6	Social behavior	<i>Oct 1</i> – Research about social behavior		Assignment 2 <i>Oct 10</i>
7	Maternal and reproductive behavior	<i>Oct 8</i> – No class		
8		<i>Oct 15</i> – Quiz 2 review	Participate in quiz review discussion board	Quiz 2 <i>Oct 16</i>
9	Abnormal behavior	<i>Oct 22</i> – Animal welfare introduction	Assigned reading before class	
10	Animal welfare	<i>Oct 29</i> – Equine behavior and welfare case study: guest Dr. Carissa Wickens	Assigned reading before class	Assignment 3 <i>Nov 7</i>
11	Animal welfare, cont.	<i>Nov 5</i> – Animal welfare research	Assigned reading before class	Annotated bibliography <i>Nov 7</i>
12		<i>Nov 12</i> – Quiz 3 review	Participate in quiz review discussion board	Quiz 3 <i>Nov 14</i>
13	Careers in animal behavior and welfare	<i>Nov 19</i> – Careers in animal behavior and welfare	Post in the 'Careers in animal welfare' discussion thread	Media presentation <i>Nov 21</i>
14		<i>Nov 26</i> – No class	Happy Thanksgiving!	
15	Independent topics	<i>Dec 3</i> – Independent topics and presentations	Participate in discussion	Behavior topic paper <i>Dec 3</i>

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Technology requirements and privacy

During synchronous class meetings, please ensure access to a camera and microphone for full participation. We encourage students to participate with their cameras turned on and prepare to

unmute and speak during discussion times. For privacy of participating students and given the interactive nature of synchronous classes (and frequent use of breakout rooms), our synchronous class sessions will not be recorded.

Computer requirements for this course are consistent with UF policy for student computing requirements, and likely similar to your other classes: <https://it.ufl.edu/policies/student-computing-requirements/>

Videos of pre-recorded lectures are shared on lecture pages using **Microsoft Stream**. The first time you access the video, you will need to login to your Microsoft Stream account using your UF username and password.

This course uses **Canvas** for providing course content. Please see the links below for important information regarding privacy and accessibility of these tools:

Canvas (Infrastructure) privacy policy: <https://www.instructure.com/policies/privacy>

Canvas (Infrastructure) accessibility statement: <https://www.instructure.com/canvas/accessibility>

Academic Honesty

As a student at the University of Florida, you have committed yourself to uphold the Honor Code, which includes the following pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity." You are expected to exhibit behavior consistent with this commitment to the UF academic community, and on all work submitted for credit at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

It is assumed that you will complete all work independently in each course unless the instructor provides explicit permission for you to collaborate on course tasks (e.g. assignments, papers, quizzes, exams). Furthermore, as part of your obligation to uphold the Honor Code, you should report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. It is your individual responsibility to know and comply with all university policies and procedures regarding academic integrity and the Student Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code at the University of Florida will not be tolerated. Violations will be reported to the Dean of Students Office for consideration of disciplinary action. For more information regarding the Student Honor Code, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

Since critical thinking and independent review and interpretation of scientific literature is part of the learning outcomes of this course, we expect that all work students submit for this course are written using their own words. Written assignments will be screened using Turnitin, an online anti-plagiarism service (<https://www.turnitin.com/>), which provides reports visible to the student at the time of submission on Canvas. This tool will flag passages of text that are drawn directly from online sources. When preparing your written assignments, it is critical that you write information you have learned using your own words, and not directly copy sentences or paragraphs from your sources. The UF Library also provides resources to understand plagiarism and how to avoid it: <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/c.php?g=147797&p=967443>.

We additionally caution students against the use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT) when preparing assignments, as these tools are unlikely to facilitate writing that meets specific assignment requirements and does not provide the same learning benefits as independent reading, interpretation, and discussion.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Campus Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx, 392-1575

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department:

www.police.ufl.edu/, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:

ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center, 352-733-0111

1515 SW Archer Road (ER)

GatorWell Health Promotion Services:

gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu, 352-273-4450

For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Resource Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

<http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Library Support: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints Campus:
https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

Services for Students with Disabilities

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

Online Course Evaluation Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals,
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Process Statement on In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and

delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.