

Anthropology 425 (Winter 2015)

Primate Cognition

Time: Mondays 6 - 8:45pm
Instructor: Dr. Hugh Notman
Office: ES 602
email: hgwnotma@ucalgary.ca

Class Location: EEEL 161
Office Hours: Monday 4-6pm
Phone: 220-6516

TA: Colin Dubreuil
Email: cjdubreu@ucalgary.ca
Ph: 220 6516
Office hours: TBA
Location: ES 722

Readings: Text: Michael Tomasello & Josep Call 1997. "Primate Cognition". New York: Oxford University Press. [ISBN 0-19-510624-5 pbk.]

In addition to this text, you will be required to read journal articles relevant to the topic or theme being addressed on a given week. These journal articles are a mix of empirical (experimental) papers as well as review/theoretical essays. All (or most) readings will be provided to you via your Blackboard portal, or you can access them using the UofC online journal library.

It should be noted that *this is a heavy reading course that requires weekly readings and class attendance*. You must stay on schedule with the readings and be familiar enough with the material to make informed comments, when appropriate, and/or to ask questions.

Aims

- 1 To promote basic understanding of the data and controversies in the topic areas of primate cognition.
- 2 To review primary research and review articles and discuss them with the class.
- 3 To develop critical evaluation skills as they relate to assessing research papers and the current state of primate cognition research

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- 1 Understand the topic areas in primate (and other animal) cognition.
- 2 Critique primary research articles in the area.
- 3 Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of particular theoretical views.
- 4 Integrate knowledge from different aspects of research in primate behaviour.



Group Essay Assignment

This is a large class, and primate cognition covers a very broad area. There are a multitude of topics that one could do a research essay about, as well as an overwhelming amount of articles and resources. As a result, your essay assignment will take the form of a “review-of-a-review”. This means that you will read, analyze and critique one of three review papers on a particular area of animal cognition written for the journal *Behavioral and Brain Sciences (BBS)*. Review articles for this journal are written by researchers who have been associated with long-standing research programs in a particular area relating to human and animal cognition. The articles typically provide a background literature review, an analysis of what the literature thus far has produced in a specific area, and then the author(s)’ own take based upon his or her own research and their interpretation of the data. In addition, BBS articles invite open commentary from research peers; i.e., other researchers not necessarily connected to the authors, but people who have similar research programs and who can provide intelligent comments and criticisms on the authors’ work. These submissions are appended to each research article, and then responded to by the original authors at the end.

Your task, then, is to choose one of the 3 articles to read and review (provided below). Each article pertains to a research topic that we will cover in class, although we may not go into all the detail provided in the BBS article. You will be required to READ the article, and REVIEW the background context that has generated the article (i.e., what are the outstanding questions that need answering? Why is research necessary in this area in the first place? What has been done already to address these questions? What do the authors of the BBS article think of this body of research?). Then, you will need to PRESENT the BBS author(s)’ own research findings and their interpretations of the results. What have they contributed to answering the questions they present in the literature review/introduction? Next, you will READ, REVIEW and SUMMARIZE the open peer commentary at the end of each article (in actual fact, the commentary section constitutes about half of the total article). Many contributors will have similar comments – these can be lumped into “points of view”, or by author/contributor. Finally, you will summarize the BBS author(s)’ responses to their peers’ comments.

In essence, this is a review paper in which the work has already been done for you by someone else (the BBS authors); now you need to “review their review”, as it were. By the end of it, you will have a firm understanding of the ideas surrounding the particular research topic on which the article focuses.

This is a GROUP ASSIGNMENT. At the beginning of the course, students will be assigned to small groups (depending on class numbers), of up to 4 classmates. How you divide up the tasks for completing the assignment is up to you; however, know that ALL GROUP MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE THE SAME MARK, regardless of how much work you think you put in relative to your other group-mates. This means that you need to organize your workload in such a way that is equitable, and best suits the abilities of each person. You will also have to establish a way of keeping on top of your group-mates and avoid freeloading **because in addition to your essay, each group will be required to submit a “group assignment log”, signed by each group member, that outlines (in a single page) the role that each group member played in the assignment.** Your essay submission should be 9 – 12 pages long (double-spaced). You will

have time in some term classes (see schedule) to work on your assignments, and to discuss with me. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE CLASS TIMES TO WORK TOGETHER AND ASK ME QUESTIONS!

Group Essay Articles: Each group must choose ONE of the following articles.

1. Michael Tomasello, Malinda Carpenter, Josep Call, Tanya Behne, and Henrike Moll
Understanding and sharing intentions: The origins of cultural cognition. BEHAVIORAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES (2005) 28, 675–735.
2. Shanker, S. G. and King, B.J. The emergence of a new paradigm in ape language research. BEHAVIORAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES (2002) 25, 605–656.
3. Rendell, L. and Whitehead, H. Culture in whales and dolphins. BEHAVIORAL AND BRAIN SCIENCES (2001) 24, 309–382. (NOTE: although this paper focuses on cetaceans, the issues regarding animal culture are relevant across taxa, including primates. Many of the peer comments are made by cognitive primatologists.)

Evaluation

You will also be evaluated on a midterm exam and a final exam. The final will **not** be cumulative.

Group research paper (due March 16)	35%
Midterm exam(Monday Feb. 9)	30%
Final Exam (registrar scheduled)	35%

Academic Accommodations - It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

Classroom Expectations/Regulations

- Try to arrive on time to prevent disruption to the class. If you are late please take a seat at the back of the room to minimize disruption. Likewise please stay seated until class is concluded. We will not run overtime.
- Do not converse with classmates during lectures. This is unfair to students sitting nearby who may miss lecture material that will subsequently appear on exams. If you are discussing lecture material please raise your hand to share the comment or question as that will benefit the whole class. Relevant interruptions are welcome. You may also email questions which will be answered in the next lecture.
- All email enquiries about term tests or exams will be answered in class.

- Use of laptops in class is NOT permitted unless you have express permission from SAS. It has proven to be too disruptive during class as many people end up surfing the net.
- Please turn off cell phones during class.

Missed tests or presentations automatically receive a score of zero. In the event of an emergency or illness, the Anthropology office (220-6516) or the instructor **MUST** be notified **BEFORE** the exam, and documentation **MUST** be provided before a make-up test will be scheduled. Performance on make up exams is typically lower than those taken with the class.

The midterm is NOT returned to students. I will go over the test IN CLASS the week after the test, by which time marks will be available on Blackboard. If you would like to consult your test, you may come to our posted office hours, or make an appointment. If, after consulting the key, your notes, and the text you have concerns about the marking of your exam, you will be asked to provide a detailed written statement of your concern. Your exam will then be re-graded in its entirety, and marks will be raised, lowered or left unchanged as is warranted. Deadline for the submission of written statement is one week after results of an examination have been posted.

No special arrangements will be made following a poor test performance. For example, we cannot change the weighting of the tests, allow retakes, or accept alternate assignments in lieu of the test. Prepare in advance to ensure a good test performance – this is your opportunity to perform well, not later. After the test no changes will be made.

Final course grades will be calculated as follows:

A+	100 - 94.9%
A	94.8 - 89.9%
A-	89.8 - 84.9%
B+	84.8 – 79.9%
B	79.8 - 74.9%
B-	74.8 – 70.9%
C+	70.8– 66.9%
C	66.8 – 62.9%
C-	62.8 – 58.9%
D+	58.8 – 54.9%
D	54.8 – 49.9%
F	49.8% and below

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PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Plagiarism: "to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one's own" (Webster's). Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will automatically result in a failing grade for the submission. Any student caught plagiarizing July also be subject to additional University sanctions. Students are expected to be familiar with the Anthropology Departments policy on intellectual honesty available at:

<https://www.anth.ucalgary.ca/home/links/intellectual-honesty-guidelines>

EMERGENCY EVACUATION:

In the event that the classroom should need to be evacuated due to an emergency situation please note that the primary assembly point shall be at the Social Sciences Food Court and the ICT Food Court shall be used as a secondary assembly point.