

# **Biol 339: Animal Behavior Laboratory**

## **Spring 2023**

### **Mondays 1:00-3:50/ 105 ISC**

Instructor: Dr. Kristi Hannam  
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**Office Hours:** Office hours will be held in person in **Dr. Hannam's office ISC 259** (second floor, near Milne Library entrance) on **Mondays 9:30-10:30am** and **Thursdays 3:45-4:45**.

On **Wednesday mornings 9:30-10:30** office hours are virtual on **MSTeams**. If you would like to meet with me during that time, send me a message in Teams via this link:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/chat/0/0?users=hannam@geneseo.edu>

Once I have confirmed I am not meeting with another student, we can start a video call. **Other times available by appointment – email Dr. Hannam** for an appointment suggesting some of your available times.

Readings and Lab Handouts will be assigned and available via Canvas

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. Produce a variety of written and oral reports that describe observations of animal behavior, and hypothesize explanations for the behaviors to practice different modes of science communication.
2. Participate in development and execution of studies individually and in small groups
3. Apply knowledge of theories of animal behavior by developing original tests of assumptions and hypotheses.
4. Design and carry out an independent investigation of animal behavior by identifying one or more testable hypotheses, carrying out the investigation, analyzing the data, reporting the results and drawing conclusions.

### **Pandemic Learning Objectives**

I hope you will join me in adopting these additional learning objectives. The COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing, and will continue to be a big opportunity for learning for all of us. To be as successful as we can be, let's commit to each other:

1. To be patient and kind with ourselves and each other as we adapt to ever-changing ways of living and learning.
2. To embrace the opportunity to discover how to learn in new ways and grow as life-long learners.
3. To do our best, knowing that our expectations of ourselves may look different than it has at other times.
4. To communicate openly and clearly about our expectations, concerns, and goals.
5. To be flexible. We are in unfamiliar and uncertain times. Circumstances for us individually or as a community may change over the course of the semester. Let's work together to make this the best class possible, knowing that this may be a moving target.

-credit to @MikkiBrock for sharing a draft of these objectives

## About our course

To successfully access and use the resources needed for this course, and to submit the required assignments, you will need the following technology:

**Hardware:** a laptop computer (one that fulfills the Geneseo Laptop requirement) and a high-speed internet connection, sound card, speakers or headphones, and a microphone (if there is one built into your laptop, that should be fine)

**Software:** An internet browser compatible with Canvas, Adobe Reader, and Google Docs and Google Slides (you may also find Microsoft Word useful).

**Course Design:** This course is divided into 4 modules, and you will find the course modules labeled on Canvas. Each module focuses a theme in the study of in animal behavior, and for each week there will be readings, quizzes, activities, discussions and assignments. The class will meet face-to-face each Monday, and you will have additional lab work to complete outside of this time. To complete a module, and move on to the next module, you must complete the assignments for that module.

The following schedule of lab activities & experiments is not set in stone. The schedule may change depending on the weather, the availability of study animals or the progress of the class in exploring a particular topic.

### Date Lab Activity

## MODULE 1: Observing and Quantifying Animal Behaviors

Jan 30 - Week 1: Sit-Spot Lab / Observations

Feb 6 - Week 2: Ethics in Animal Behavior Research, Defining Animal Behaviors in Ethograms + Stats Exercise

Feb 13 - Week 3: Ethograms 2

Feb 20 - Week 4: Wrap up Ethograms (con't) & Bird Foraging

## MODULE 2: SOME APPROACHES TO STUDYING ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

Feb 27 – Week 5: Ethograms wrap up & Foraging Behavior in Local Feeder Birds (con't)

Mar 6 - Week 6: Bioacoustics 1

Mar 13 – Spring Break – No Lab Meeting

Mar 20 – Week 7: Honest Signaling & Sexual Selection in Fiddler Crabs

Mar 27 – Week 8: Honest Signaling & Sexual Selection in Fiddler Crabs

April 3 – Week 9: Migration Behavior 1

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## MODULE 3: DESIGNING & CONDUCTING YOUR OWN STUDIES IN ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

April 10 - Week 10: Independent Project 1

April 17 - Week 11: Independent Project 2

April 24 - Week 12: Independent Project 3

## MODULE 4: PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

May 1 - Week 13: Data Analysis/Final Write-ups & Presentation Design

May 8 - Week 14: Final Presentations

### Grading:

Grades in lab are based on the following:

Participation & Journal Article Discussions 15% Short Writeups & Quizzes 20% Lab Reports (1 from module 1; 1 from module 2) 40% Independent Project 25% TOTAL 100%

Final grades are earned according to the following point distribution: >93%, A; 90-93%, A-; 87-89%, B+; 83-86%, B; 80-82%, B-; 77-79%, C+; 73-77%, C; 70-72%, C-; 60-69%, D; <60%, E. Under most circumstances, there will be no adjustment to your grades.

### Individual Lab Reports (40%)

The two full lab reports are to be written individually. Lab reports should be written in the format of a scientific journal article (specific details will be given in class), and each report will be worth 100 pts. Lab Reports are due approx. two weeks after the experiments in class are complete (see schedule on syllabus), as assigned.

### Discussions & Participation (15%)

Your physical presence and active participation in the lab each week – in designing and conducting experiments, in discussion of readings and experimental designs – is worth 15% of your grade. Participation will be graded by the instructor each week using a rubric provided to the students. Three or more absences significantly impacts the learning in this course and will result in a failing grade.

### Independent Project (25%)

In the latter part of the semester, students (working individually or in pairs, depending on our campus situation) will design and carry out an independent project. The project will involve the development of a

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research question, design of methods to address the question, data collection for 6-8 hours of lab time, analysis and presentation of data in a final poster presentation. Additional information will be given in class.

### Short Writing Assignments & Quizzes (20%)

For some of the lab experiences and field trips a formal lab report is not required, but an alternative written assignment will be completed and turned in. These assignments will typically be due in class two weeks after the lab experience (see Canvas for dates). In addition, there will be short quizzes on the pre-lab reading assignments for each lab due at the beginning of lab or online depending on the week.

## Attendance and Public Health

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital that we all do what we can to protect the health and safety of each other. If you are feeling unwell on a day that class meets in-person, do not attend. Remember that it is better to stay home if you are not feeling well than to attend class and risk spreading illness to others.

Throughout the semester, ***please be proactive in communicating about absences*** and contact the Dean of Students if you expect to be out for an extended period of time. If you are experiencing common symptoms of COVID-19, stay home and contact Health and Counseling Services as soon as possible. I strongly encourage you to set a daily reminder to fill out the screening report.

## Face-Masks and Other Behavior in the Classroom

Face masks are required in all instructional spaces (including classrooms, lecture halls, and laboratories) and all common areas including residence halls and academic buildings. If you forget your mask, please be sure to pick up a disposable one before entering the classroom. Masks must be worn for the duration of class. If you do not have a mask or are unwilling to wear one, you will be asked to leave the classroom. I cannot safely hold class if all students are not wearing face masks.

If you would feel more comfortable or if my teaching could be more accessible if I wear a clear face mask, please let me know as soon as possible. Students who have concerns about wearing a face mask due to a documented disability need to contact the Office of Accessibility Services ([access@geneseo.edu](mailto:access@geneseo.edu)) to request reasonable accommodations

## ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN CLASS

Please make sure all cellphones, laptops and other electronic devices are on “silent” during face-to-face class. While laptops and other electronic devices can be useful learning tools in class, there is strong evidence that they can also be serious distractions from learning for the user, and for other people seated around the user. I do request you bring laptops to class on all days (except the first day of class) to access online material, software and data, however, please be mindful of how you use electronic devices in class, and their impact on the other learners around you. Also keep in mind that it is pretty clear to the instructor at the front of the classroom when electronic devices are being used for learning, and when they are being used for other (usually entertainment and communication) purposes. Not only is it apparent to the instructor, research (Ravizza et al. 2016) measuring the duration of student Internet use in class found that students who used laptops in class for nonacademic reasons had poorer class performance, as indicated by their final grade.

## ACCOMMODATIONS

SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical, emotional, or cognitive disabilities. Accommodations will also be made for medical conditions related to pregnancy or

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parenting. Students should contact the Dean in the Office of Accessibility Services (585-245-5112) and their faculty to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

SUNY-Geneseo’s policies on academic dishonesty are summarized in the Code of Student Conduct found in the

Geneseo Undergraduate Bulletin online. Plagiarism and other forms of academic cheating are prohibited and may result in a zero on an assignment or exam. Plagiarism and cheating will be reported first to the departmental office, and may be referred to the Campus Judicial Council. Repeated incidents will result in failure of the course. Lab reports and discussion contributions will be checked for plagiarism. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty please contact the instructor.

## PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is very serious. If you plagiarize, you will be prosecuted. No excuses. No second chances -- even if you had planned to graduate. Plagiarism doesn't just happen accidentally. You are responsible for determining how to properly cite the work and ideas of other people. If you are unsure or have questions, refer to Milne library's links for citations (under "Research Help"). If you still need assistance, ask your instructor or a librarian.

Students sometimes think that citations are necessary only when using material that is a direct quote. This is not true. A citation is necessary any time you include any information or idea that is not yours (i.e., directly or indirectly derived from someone else's thinking or writing). Any non-original idea that you fail to cite is plagiarized. Plagiarism is intellectual stealing and the consequences of plagiarism are substantial. In order not to be accused of plagiarism, all a student needs to do is properly cite sources.

For the purpose of this policy, plagiarism shall be considered to be deliberate representation of someone else's words or ideas as one's own or the deliberate arrangement of someone else's material(s) as one's own.

## COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

The best way to communicate with Dr. Hannam this semester is via email ([hannam@geneseo.edu](mailto:hannam@geneseo.edu)) messages or office hours. If this is not possible, the Canvas Inbox is the second most favored means of communication. Dr. Hannam will make every effort to respond to emails/messages sent to her during the workday by 7pm the same day. Emails sent after 4.45pm may not be answered until the following workday depending on Dr. Hannam's schedule outside of work.

**\*\*Dr. Hannam will communicate with the class as a whole primarily via "Announcements" on the course Canvas page.** Please make sure you check the "Announcements" page regularly and/or sign up for notifications to your phone or email when additions have been made to the "Announcements" page.

## TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

The Biology major is demanding, and as your instructor I try to keep in mind that mine is not the only course you are taking, and that most of you also have other demands on your time and attention in addition to your coursework. Juggling your many responsibilities can have an impact on your mental health. With this in mind, I realize that diminished mental health, including significant stress, mood changes, excessive worry, or problems with eating and/or sleeping can interfere with optimal academic performance. The source of symptoms might be strictly related to your course work; if so, please make an appointment to speak with me one-on-one. I realize, problems with relationships, family worries, loss, or a personal struggle or crisis can also contribute to decreased academic performance.

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SUNY Geneseo provides mental health services to support the academic success of students. Counseling Services, a part of the Lauderdale Center for Student Health & Counseling, offers free, confidential psychological services to help you manage personal challenges that may threaten your well-being and success here in college.

In the event I suspect you need additional support, I will express my concerns and the reasons for them, and

remind you of resources (e.g., Counseling Services, Career Services, Dean of Students, etc.) that might be helpful to you. It is not my intention to know the details of what might be bothering you, but simply to let you know I am concerned and that help, if needed, is available.

Getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do -- for yourself and for those who care about you.

## COPYRIGHT NOTICE

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