



PSB 4250 Animal Cognition

Section: RVC

Internet/Fully Online

Spring Term 2024

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Eliza Nelson

Contact: elnelson@fiu.edu

Turnaround Time: 48 business hours

Office Hours:

Tuesdays: 2:00-4:00 pm via Zoom or by appointment

Additional Notes:

Drop in for virtual coffee hours on Tuesdays with Dr. Nelson (she/her/hers) using the link go.fiu.edu/coffeehours. You do not need to have a question about class to join. You can ask about how to apply for a job, how to get into graduate school, meet her dog Berrin (she/her/hers), or just chat. Dr. Nelson also parents three children. All family members are welcome on zoom. If the coffee hours time doesn't work, you can request a one-on-one virtual meeting with Dr. Nelson.

Graduate TA: Kate Long

Contact: klong023@fiu.edu

Turnaround Time: 48 business hours

Office Hours:

By appointment only

Course Description and Purpose

Issues and concepts relating to the evaluation of cognitive abilities in animals. Examines theoretical, methodological and philosophical issues and problems in the study of animal cognition.

Translation: this course is about answering three questions:

1. What do animal cognition scientists do?
2. What do we know about animal minds?
3. Is human cognition unique from other animals?

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Students will be able to:

- describe key paradigms and summarize major findings in animal cognition;
- conduct independent research and interpret data in animal cognition;
- write effectively for different audiences in animal cognition;
- connect topics in animal cognition to real life.

Expectations of the Course

Hands-on Format:

This asynchronous online course is hands-on and requires a level of engagement that may differ from your prior experience. A distinguishing feature of the course is the chance for you to conduct your own research in animal cognition using an animal of your choice. There are no exams. It is important to see how this workload fits into your life before the key dates below. Try out assignments in the first week!

Key Dates:

- Jan 16: Add/Drop
- Mar 18: Last Day to Drop with DR grade

Late Policy:

All assignments have a suggested due date on Canvas to help you pace the workload. However, you can turn in any assignment without penalty until the availability date indicated on Canvas.

Canvas applies a "0" automatically if you miss the suggested deadline. This feature is enabled to avoid cases of "forgetting" an assignment is due soon. The "0" is replaced with your earned score once your assignment has been graded.

You may not use the Canvas grade comment feature, the Canvas messaging feature, or email to submit work for an assignment that has closed.

Make-up Policy:

No make-up work is permitted.

We will spend 2 weeks on each module. This grace period sufficiently covers unexpected illness, holidays, work schedules, and other emergent events that could impact your ability to submit your work. Do not wait until the last day to start the homework. Once the availability date has passed, no work is accepted. No exceptions.

You can work ahead in the course if you anticipate being unavailable. Aim to complete your notebook entry for your semester-long project as you wrap up each module, rather than waiting until the end of the course.

Preferred Name Policy:

Names and identity are important and valued in this course. Dr. Nelson earned her Ph.D. before she got married, and continues to use Nelson as her professional name. However, the FIU systems sometimes revert to her legal name and you may see her as Eliza Eccles. If you have a preferred name that is not recognized by FIU, please let Dr. Nelson know. We want you to feel welcome in this space.

AI Policy:

You are allowed to use generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) in this course but when you do, you must acknowledge it. Leave a grading comment on any assignment where AI was used stating what you used AI for and what prompts you used. You are responsible for all content that you submit in the course. If you do not understand a topic, do not use AI as you may not be able to recognize when the tool has made mistakes or left out important information. Not all assignments may benefit from AI tools. I encourage you to use your best judgement on when to use emerging AI technology.

Email Policy:

Email is the fastest way to reach Dr. Nelson. It is helpful to put the reason for your email message in the subject line instead of leaving the subject line blank. You should also include your full name, the course name, and your Panther ID in the body of the message. Dr. Nelson likes an empty email inbox and will respond as soon as she can. If you have an ongoing hardship, contact Dr. Nelson when you are able to. If you'd like to meet one-on-one outside of virtual coffee hours, just ask!

Grade Posting Policy:

All homework is graded by the Graduate TA using rubrics by Dr. Nelson. Grades for discussions, journals, and exercises post within 2 business days of the recommended due date or the module closing date (whichever is applicable). The notebook project is evaluated by Dr. Nelson. Grades for the notebook project post within 4 business days of the closing date. Submitting early does not mean your work will be graded faster.

Re-Grading Policy:

All of the assignments in this course are graded with a rubric that is available to students before starting the work. If you do not understand your grade, first check the rubric and any comments left for you. If you believe your work meets criteria for a higher score, you can petition Dr. Nelson for a re-grade by leaving a grading comment on the assignment. You must ask for a re-grade within 72 hours of the assignment closing date. Your grade could go up or down after an assignment is re-graded.

Announcements Policy:

You are responsible for logging into the course regularly, reliably checking your FIU email, and reading all course announcements. Each week Dr. Nelson posts a to-do list of required and recommended activities through the course announcement tool.

Incomplete Policy:

Students who have completed at least half of the assignments but cannot finish the course may petition Dr. Nelson in writing for an Incomplete. Students must be in good standing (i.e., passing the course) at the time the request is made. Requests are handled on a case-by-case basis and are not guaranteed. An Incomplete may not be appropriate in all cases, and Dr. Nelson will work with you individually to decide the best course of action. You may not graduate with an Incomplete on your record.

Assignments

Readings:

Required readings in this course are from the textbook *Animal Cognition 101* (Authors: Colbert-White & Kaufman, Publication Date: 2019, ISBN: 9780826162342). Purchase or rent the e-book from your favorite bookseller so that you can get started on assignments right away.

Key features of the textbook

- Provides a scientific yet accessible introduction to animal cognition studies
- Examines the development of the field, its theories and methods, and the latest findings and controversies
- Addresses animal consciousness, communication, social cognition, and cognitive flexibility
- Highlights individual animals that have made significant contributions to the field
- Connects topics in animal cognition to human behavior and cognition
- Provides ideas for readers to conduct their own investigations into animal cognition

Why Dr. Nelson selected this textbook

- Animal cognition, like other sciences, has traditionally been dominated by white men. The authors of this textbook are women, one of whom is also a person of color. Diversity and inclusion are valued and expected in this course.

Most modules also have free recommended readings posted to Canvas as PDFs.

Onboarding Requirement:

There is an onboarding module in this course that must be completed to unlock the course content. Completion includes viewing pages, contributing to the Icebreaker, and submitting two training assignments that are required by all FIU personnel working with animals in research. **Trainings are completed on an external website at no charge.**

Lectures:

Lectures in this course are presented via the interactive video platform PlayPosit. Each lecture is made up of multiple video segments and has various required interactions like polls, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. All interactions must be completed in order to earn points. This type of assignment can be stopped, rewind, and restarted over multiple sessions. However, the fast-forward function is disabled. Grades on this type of assignment are provided automatically by PlayPosit when you reach the end of the exercise, and grades sync back to Canvas automatically. It is recommended that you have done the reading from the textbook before starting the lecture. However, you will be able to retake most questions as you go through the assignment.

Homework:

Each module has three homework assignments that map onto the organization of the textbook: (1) an animal spotlight discussion (requires internet search); (2) a human application journal (requires watching a TED talk); and (3) a research exercise. The research exercises use video recordings with Dr. Nelson's dog Berrin (she/her/hers). It is recommended that you do not start the module research exercise until you have completed the corresponding module lecture. Discussion posts and journal submissions can be done in any order. Detailed instructions and rubrics are provided with each of these homework assignments on Canvas.

Semester-Long Project:

There is a semester-long project in this course. If you have access to an animal, you may choose to replicate the research exercises on your own. You will submit photos or video screenshots of your research along with your results and reflections on the experience. If you do not have animal access, you may summarize published journal articles that correspond to the key concepts tested in the research exercises using species that were not discussed in that module. The format for this assignment is a slide deck resembling a digital lab notebook. Detailed instructions, templates, and a rubric are provided on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Week	Wednesday	Saturday
1	[M1] Icebreaker	[M1] CITI Certificates (2)
Complete onboarding in M1 to unlock the course content **Welcome check-in closes at 11:59 pm on Wednesday 1/18**		
2	[M2] Discussion	[M2] Lecture
3	[M2] Journal	[M2] Exercise
No work from M2 accepted after 11:59 pm on Sunday 1/28		
4	[M3] Discussion	[M3] Lecture
5	[M3] Journal	[M3] Exercise
No work from M3 accepted after 11:59 pm on Sunday 2/11		
6	[M4] Discussion	[M4] Lecture
7	[M4] Journal	[M4] Exercise
No work from M4 accepted after 11:59 pm on Sunday 2/25 **Mid-semester check-in closes at 11:59 pm on Sunday 2/25**		
8	Spring Break	Spring Break
9	[M5] Discussion	[M5] Lecture
10	[M5] Journal	[M5] Exercise
No work from M5 accepted after 11:59 pm on Sunday 3/17		

Week	Wednesday	Saturday
11	[M6] Discussion	[M6] Lecture
12	[M6] Journal	[M6] Exercise
No work from M6 accepted after 11:59 pm on Sunday 3/31		
13	[M7] Discussion	[M7] Lecture
14	[M7] Journal	[M7] Exercise
No work from M7 accepted after 11:59 pm on Sunday 4/14		
15	[M8] Discussion	[M8] Lecture
Finals Week	[M8] Journal	[M8] Exercise (Friday)
		[M8] Notebook (Friday)
End-of-semester check-in closes at 11:59 pm on Sunday 4/21		
No work from M8 accepted after 11:59 pm on Saturday 4/27		

All due dates are Eastern Standard Time (EST).

Grading

Grades are earned, not negotiated, in this course. Assignments are weighted according to the following percentages. Please read rubrics carefully before starting assignments.

Number of Graded Items and Assignment Weighting

Course Requirements	Number of Items	Weight
Certificates	2	5%
Discussions	7	15%
Lectures	7	25%
Journals	7	15%
Exercises	7	25%
Notebook	1	15%
Total	31	100%

Extra Credit:

There are 3 check-in surveys throughout the course. At the end of the semester, the number of check-ins completed will be added to your final grade (1 check-in submitted = 1% improvement, 2 check-ins submitted = 2% improvement, 3 check-ins submitted = 3% improvement). There is no other way to improve your grade in the course.

Final Letter Grades:

Final letter grades will be computed according to the following ranges. Grades are rounded to the nearest percentage, not the nearest letter. There is no curve.

Calculating Final Letter Grades

Grade	Grade Range
A	100% to 96%
A-	< 96% to 90%
B+	< 90% to 87%
B	< 87% to 83%
B-	< 83% to 80%
C+	< 80% to 77%
C	< 77% to 70%
D	< 70% to 60%
F	< 60% to 0%

Textbook and Course Materials for Purchase

If no materials listed, no items are needed.

Animal Cognition 101

Required/Recommended: Required

Authors: Colbert-White, Kaufman

Publisher: Springer

Publication Date: 2019

Copyright Date: 2019

ISBN 10: 0826162347

ISBN 13: 9780826162342

Notes: Renting is more affordable

Panther Book Pack Undergraduate Rental Program

FIU has implemented the Panther Book Pack rental program, which provides your required print and digital course materials at a flat rate of \$20 per undergraduate credit hour. When you registered for your classes this session, you were notified via email of the required course materials that are included in the Panther Book Pack. The Panther Book Pack program applies to all undergraduate credit hours per academic session. I recommend that you review the pricing for all materials across your classes this session compared to the Panther Book Pack flat rate. If the Panther Book Pack is not your best option, you may opt out up to three days after the add/drop deadline. You may opt back into the Panther Book Pack up to three days after the add/drop deadline. If you do not opt out of the Panther Book Pack rental program, you will be charged \$20 per credit hour and the course materials will be reserved for you for the undergraduate courses for which you are registered. For more details, visit bookpack.fiu.edu

Zoom Video Conference

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities.

Before joining Zoom:

- Reference the Zoom Student Tutorials to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.
- Access the Zoom Test Meeting Room to test out the software before joining an actual session.

- If you encounter any technical difficulties, please contact the FIU Canvas Help Team. Please ensure you contact support immediately upon the issue occurring.

There are no required zoom meetings in this course. Zoom is used for virtual coffee hours and 1x1 meetings only.

Dr. Nelson uses a recurring zoom link that can be accessed here: go.fiu.edu/coffeehours.

What are coffee hours?

This is a time set aside each week from 2:00-4:00 pm on Tuesdays to talk to students. You do not need to have a question about class to join. You can ask about how to apply for a job, how to get into graduate school, meet Berrin (she/her/hers), or just chat. Dr. Nelson also parents three children. All family members are welcome on zoom. If the coffee hours time doesn't work, you can request a one-on-one virtual meeting.

Policies

Please review the [FIU's Policies webpage](#). The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses. For additional information, please visit [FIU's Policy and Procedure Library](#).

As a member of the FIU community, you are expected to be knowledgeable about the behavioral expectations set forth in the [FIU Student Conduct and Honor Code](#).

Technical Requirements and Skills

One of the greatest barriers to student success is a lack of basic computer literacy. By computer literacy, we mean being able to manage and organize computer files efficiently and learning to use your computer's operating system and software quickly and easily. Keep in mind that this is not a computer literacy course, but students enrolled in online courses are expected to have moderate proficiency in using a computer. Please go to the [What's Required webpage](#) to find out more information on this subject

Privacy Policy Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)
- [Adobe](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [ProctorU](#)
- [HonorLock](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [OpenStax](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)

Please visit our [Technical Requirements webpage](#) for additional information.

Accessibility and Accommodation

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

For additional assistance please contact [FIU's Disability Resource Center](#).

Web Accessibility Statements for Partners and Vendors

- [Canvas](#)
- [Microsoft](#)

- [Adobe](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [ProctorU](#)
- [HonorLock](#)
- [Turnitin](#)
- [OpenStax](#)
- [Zoom](#)
- [Respondus LockDown Browser](#)

Please visit accessibility.fiu.edu for additional information about accessibility at FIU.

Academic Integrity

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Conduct and Honor Code.

Academic Misconduct includes:

Cheating

- The unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids or assistance from another person on any academic assignment or exercise, unless explicitly authorized by the course Instructor;

- Assisting another student in the unauthorized use of any materials, information, study aids, unless explicitly authorized by the Instructor; and
- Having a substitute complete any academic assignment or completing an academic assignment for someone else, either paid or unpaid;

Plagiarism

- The deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the Student's own.
- Assisting another student in the deliberate use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

Panthers Care & Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate's well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with [FIU's Panthers Care website](#).

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don't wait to call (305) 348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.

Inclusivity

This course will serve to embrace the diversity and inclusivity found within Florida International University. We appreciate and respect diversity, equality, equity,

cooperativeness, community, and sustainability within our online courses. We are committed to the ongoing education of our students and their participation within the course regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, geographical location, religion, and disability. We strive in encouraging collaboration by preparing our students to value the differences in others. At the core of our intentions is the encouragement of acceptance and appreciation of differences within our student population and community.

Copyright

The following conduct is prohibited by the Student Conduct and Honor Code. Lack of familiarity with University policy is not a defense to a violation of this Code. Unless specifically noted, the intent is not a required element to establish a policy violation. The following conduct violation or any attempt to violate the Code will be used in charging all Students or Student Organizations;

Section 5 | Conduct Violations - g. Computer Misuse

- vii. Unauthorized distribution or downloading of copyrighted materials, including but not limited to, unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing. This is a violation whether the user is using their own personal computer or the University's information technology system for unauthorized distributions.

Copyright Statement: The materials and content in this online course are provided solely for student use during the course. Course materials may not be shared outside of the course or with any third party without the explicit permission of the instructor or content publisher. [Visit FIU Library's Copyright Lib Guide](#) to learn more about copyright law and restrictions.

Additional Resources:

- [Student Conduct and Honor Code](#)
- [Digital Millennium Copyright Act Policy](#)
- [FIU - Copyright Guidance for Students](#)
- [FIU Library's Copyright Lib Guide](#)

Course Awards



Affordability Counts: This course has been awarded the Affordability Counts Medallion. The Affordability Counts initiative at FIU seeks to make learning more affordable by reducing the cost of course materials to \$60 or less. Find out more by visiting the Affordability Counts website at lowcost.fiu.edu.



High Quality: This certification mark recognizes that this course meets Panther High Quality review standards.