

**Faculty of Science Course Syllabus
Department of Biology
BIOL 3630
Field Methods in Animal Behaviour
Summer 2017**

Instructor(s): Andy Horn aghorn@dal.ca LSC 4060

Lectures: First meeting 0830, 27 April 2017, LSC 4009. Thereafter, refer to detailed schedule.

Laboratories: Refer to detailed schedule.

Field trips: Refer to detailed schedule.

Course Description

First-hand experience in studying animal behaviour in the field. Day-long field exercises teach basic methods, then students plan, conduct, write up, and orally present a 5-day project of their own.

Course Prerequisites

[BIOL3062.03](#) or [PSYO 2160.03](#) or PSYO 3160X/Y.06 or permission of instructor

Overview

The purpose of this course is to give you first-hand experience in studying animal behavior in the field, so that by the end of the course you should be able to carry out field studies of your own. In a series of exercises, we will walk you through focusing questions, describing behavior, choosing sampling regimes, and designing experiments. You'll then apply these skills on a topic of your own choosing, which will be the main assignment of the course. You're not expected to produce a perfect study with a wonderful large data set, but you are supposed to show that you can apply the topics we've covered to your own work, in a systematic way.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Ability to conduct a field study of animal behaviour, from conception to reporting, including familiarity with basic behavioural sampling and recording methods, exploratory data analysis, formulation of hypotheses and predictions, and experimental design as applied to field studies of animal behaviour.

Course Materials

- No required textbook

Course website is here: <http://leonardlab.biology.dal.ca/biol3630/>

(Since the link has such an odd url, best to bookmark it – or you can also find it on the course's BrightSpace site).

Course Assessment

| Component | Weight (% of final grade) | Date |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tests | | |
| Exam | 20% | 6 May |
| Assignments (students may work in groups, but must submit assignments individually) | | |
| Lab reports | 30% | Day after each lab or TBA |
| Written proposal | 15% | 8 May |
| Final report | 35% | 12 May |

Other course requirements

As this is a field course, full attendance and participation is expected.

Conversion of numerical grades to Final Letter Grades follows the Dalhousie Common Grade Scale

| | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| A+ (90-100) | B+ (77-79) | C+ (65-69) | D (50-54) |
| A (85-89) | B (73-76) | C (60-64) | F (<50) |
| A- (80-84) | B- (70-72) | C- (55-59) | |

Course Policies

An assignment received after its due date might not be graded promptly. If it is received after the class received feedback on the completed assignment, it may also be graded according to more demanding criteria. Some labs and field trips might be cancelled or added depending on weather and class progress. Because this is a field course, missed coursework cannot be accommodated except in exceptional circumstances, which will be addressed case by case at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule (tentative)

Note that the schedule will have to be very flexible pending weather; be alert for sudden changes of plans. We'll try to finish by 5PM each day – often before that -- but don't plan on it. The formal schedule may show a break at noon for lunch, but in fact the time for lunch will vary.

Thu 4/27 0830 LSC 4009 and elsewhere within walking distance
Field notes, ethograms, and measures of behavior

Fri 4/28 0830 meet at Tower Road Parking Lot, Pt. Pleasant Park
Recording methods and interobserver reliability

Sat 4/29 0830 meet in LSC parking lot for trip to Shubenacadie Wildlife Park
Sampling methods

Mon 5/1 0830 meet at Tower Road Parking Lot, Pt. Pleasant Park
Basic data analysis

Tue 5/2 0830 meet in LSC parking lot for trip to Eastern Passage
Experimental design, Part 1

Wed 5/3 0830 meet at Tower Road Parking Lot, Pt. Pleasant Park
Experimental design, Part 2

Thu 5/4 0830 meet at Bishop's Landing for boat to McNabs Island
Finding and asking questions

Fri 5/5 Time TBA, LSC 4009
Informal oral presentations on previous day, prep for the next.

Sat 5/6 Time TBA, LSC 4009
Exam, then release for pilot work on projects

Mon 5/8 Time TBA, LSC 4009
Written proposals due

Tue 5/9 – Thu 5/11 Continued work on (and help with) independent projects

Fri 5/12 Time TBA LSC 4009 Oral presentations, written project due

What to bring on field trips and a few comments on safety

If you have a cell phone, please bring it and have it turned on.

Please work in pairs or groups when in less heavily traveled areas (even isolated bits of Point Pleasant Park, for example).

Please bring enough liquids and snacks/food to keep you going throughout the day. Likewise any meds you might need to take – not only prescription meds but also such things as tylenol if you're prone to headaches, benadryl if you're prone to allergies, etc.

Please bring clothes appropriate for changes in the weather (around here, the warmest sunny day can suddenly turn very cold, wet, and windy).

Any injuries, minor or not (e.g., stings, twisting your foot or knee, mysterious rashes), please let the instructor or TA know right away.

ACCOMMODATION POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian Human Rights legislation. The full text of Dalhousie's Student Accommodation Policy can be accessed here:

http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/student-accommodation-policy-wef-sep--1--2014.html

Students who require accommodation for classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the **Advising and Access Services Centre (AASC)** prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. More information and the *Request for Accommodation* form are available at www.dal.ca/access.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, with its embodied values, is seen as a foundation of Dalhousie University. It is the responsibility of all students to be familiar with behaviours and practices associated with academic integrity. Instructors are required to forward any suspected cases of plagiarism or other forms of academic cheating to the Academic Integrity Officer for their Faculty.

The Academic Integrity website (<http://academicintegrity.dal.ca>) provides students and faculty with information on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, and has resources to help students succeed honestly. The full text of Dalhousie's *Policy on Intellectual Honesty* and *Faculty Discipline Procedures* is available here:

http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity/academic-policies.html

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Dalhousie University has a student code of conduct, and it is expected that students will adhere to the code during their participation in lectures and other activities associated with this course. In general:

“The University treats students as adults free to organize their own personal lives, behaviour and associations subject only to the law, and to University regulations that are necessary to protect

- the integrity and proper functioning of the academic and non – academic programs and activities of the University or its faculties, schools or departments;
- the peaceful and safe enjoyment of University facilities by other members of the University and the public;
- the freedom of members of the University to participate reasonably in the programs of the University and in activities on the University's premises;
- the property of the University or its members.”

The full text of the code can be found here:

http://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS The following campus services are available to help students develop skills in library research, scientific writing, and effective study habits. The services are available to all Dalhousie students and, unless noted otherwise, are free.

| Service | Support Provided | Location | Contact |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| General Academic Advising | Help with - understanding degree requirements and academic regulations - choosing your major - achieving your educational or career goals - dealing with academic or other difficulties | Killam Library Ground floor Rm G28 <i>Bissett Centre for Academic Success</i> | In person: Killam Library Rm G28 By appointment: - e-mail: advising@dal.ca - Phone: (902) 494-3077 - Book online through MyDal |
| Dalhousie Libraries | Help to find books and articles for assignments Help with citing sources in the text of your paper and preparation of bibliography | Killam Library Ground floor Librarian offices | In person: Service Point (Ground floor) By appointment: Identify your subject librarian (URL below) and contact by email or phone to arrange a time: http://dal.beta.libguides.com/sb.php?subject_id=34328 |
| Studying for Success (SFS) | Help to develop essential study skills through small group workshops or one-on-one coaching sessions Match to a tutor for help in course-specific content (for a reasonable fee) | Killam Library 3rd floor Coordinator Rm 3104 Study Coaches Rm 3103 | To make an appointment: - Visit main office (Killam Library main floor, Rm G28) - Call (902) 494-3077 - email Coordinator at: sfs@dal.ca or - Simply drop in to see us during posted office hours All information can be found on our website: www.dal.ca/sfs |
| Writing Centre | Meet with coach/tutor to discuss writing assignments (e.g., lab report, research paper, thesis, poster) - Learn to integrate source material into your own work appropriately - Learn about disciplinary writing from a peer or staff member in your field | Killam Library Ground floor Learning Commons & Rm G25 | To make an appointment: - Visit the Centre (Rm G25) and book an appointment - Call (902) 494-1963 - email writingcentre@dal.ca - Book online through MyDal We are open six days a week See our website: writingcentre.dal.ca |