

**Comparative Psychology: PSY375 (section 01, 38699; section 02, 40580), Spring 2021**  
**Robert Deaner, Ph.D., Professor**

**Virtual Office Hours:** Mondays 1:00 – 2:00, and by appointment. “Walk-ins” are welcome, but students with appointments have priority. It is recommended that you make an appointment by emailing the instructor.

**Email:** robert.deaner@gmail.com (recommended and preferred to deanerr@gvsu.edu). Always type “PSY375” in the subject line and include your full name in the message.

**Course time:** Mondays and Thursdays, 10:15 – 11:15 (**section 1**); 12:00 – 1:00 (**section 2**)

**Prerequisites:** PSY101 (pass)

**Required text:** Buss, David M. (2019). *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Psychology Press. ISBN 978-1138088610. Electronic versions of the book are fine. Earlier editions of Buss are acceptable but, on rare occasions, may put students at a disadvantage when the newer edition covers additional material. **The hardcopy (actually a paperback) of the 6<sup>th</sup> edition is somewhat difficult to read because of poor quality ink and paper, so I suggest considering purchasing electronic access.**

**Course Format:** **This is a partially synchronous 6-week online course**, using a “flipped classroom” model. This means:

We will have synchronous meetings where students and the professor will meet at the same time via video, probably Zoom. These meetings are required and will occur twice per week for 60 minutes (see syllabus for unusual dates). Section 1 will meet from 10:15 to 11:15, and Section 2 will meet from 12:00 to 1:00. Some students may occasionally attend the other section’s meeting time. If you would like to do this on a regular basis, you should consult with the instructor.

Students will prepare for each synchronous meeting in several ways. First, they will do a reading (usually a full chapter of the textbook). Second, they will watch a video lecture narrated by the professor. This lecture will be 50 – 100 minutes in length. The lecture will highlight the main points covered in the reading and sometimes substantially expand upon them. Third, students will complete a written assignment (“Response Assignment (RA)”) based on readings (or occasionally a video), and this will be due prior to the meeting. The readings for the Response Assignments will typically be primary research articles.

The synchronous meetings typically will involve the professor asking students questions about the main points of the narrated lectures and readings. This will take about 25 – 35 minutes. Then we will discuss that day’s Response Assignment for about 25 – 30 minutes.

After each synchronous meeting, students will have an opportunity to take a low-stakes extra credit quiz. Although these quizzes are not worth many points, they are a crucial way for students to gauge their understanding of the lectures and readings. Preparing and taking the quizzes is also an important part of preparing for the Midterm and Final exams.

**Catalog Description:** Study of the relationship between human and animal behavior. Includes discussion of mind in nonhumans, the sociobiology debate, natural selection and human behavior, including language and sexual behavior, and implications for child development and schooling. Includes zoo or field observations. Lecture and field study.

**Additional information:** Please note that a somewhat similar class is offered in the Biology Department called Animal Behavior (BIO352). However, PSY375 differs from BIO352 in several ways: PSY375 does not assume that students already have an extensive background in biology; PSY375 does not have a major lab component; PSY375 will place greater stress on particular topics, e.g. social learning and intelligence; and PSY375 places a greater stress on the application of principles to humans.

**Course Objectives:**

- Integrate different areas of knowledge and view behavioral phenomena from multiple perspectives, e.g. proximate vs. ultimate explanations; homology vs. analogy
- Use evolutionary principles to explain animal and human behavior

- Critique primary research articles
- Apply observational behavior methods to animal behavior
- Appreciate aspects of human psychology that have precursors in animals and those that don't
- Appreciate the relevance of evolutionary biology and other fields to psychology

### **Basis for Grading:**

		<u>Grading Scale</u>
		94 above A
<u>Potential Points</u>		90-93.99 A-
		87-89.99 B+
Extra Credit Quizzes	(20)	83-86.99 B
Course Connection	5	80-82.99 B-
Observational Exercise.	30	77-79.99 C+
Response Assignments	100	73-76.99 C
Exams	200 (midterm and final exam, 100pts each)	70-72.99 C-
Total Points =	<u>335</u>	67-69.99 D+
		60-66.99 D
Number Grade = Earned pts/335 x 100 (no rounding up!)		59.99 & below F

### **Course Connection (5 pts)**

- *Description* – Your first assignment is to briefly explore your personal connection to this course and to introduce yourself to the instructor. To earn all 5 points, you must complete this assignment by Wednesday May 12 at midnight. In 100 – 150 words, please tell me some or all of the following:
  - Your year and major(s)
  - Three things of personal interest, such as your job, hobby, pet, unusual talent, disability, living situation, family situation, or COVID-19 situation.
  - Something about this course that concerns you or that you are curious about.
  - Something specific that you hope to learn from this course.
  - Discuss how what you anticipate learning in this course might be relevant to your other courses or your life outside of GVSU (e.g., job, family).

### **Response Assignments (10 assignments, 10pts each, 100pts in total):**

- *Description* – Roughly one-half of synchronous meeting time will involve discussing an assignment that students will complete prior to the class. Generally, this will involve answering questions and responding to one or two primary research articles or chapters, although it may also involve some other activity such as watching a video. Materials for each assignment generally will be provided about one week in advance. Students will submit their responses via Bb by 9:00 AM prior to the meeting where they will be discussed. Students can only earn full credit for an assignment if they submit it by the deadline.

### **Observational Exercise (30pts):**

- *Description:* Many psychology studies measure human subjects' behavior and attitudes with some type of self-report method, such as a questionnaire. However, an animal cannot report its behavior linguistically and therefore scientists must directly observe it. For example, rather than asking a monkey about its eating habits, a scientist will count how many times a monkey brings a handful of berries to its mouth. We will have readings and a lecture on the various observational methods that can be used to effectively measure animal behavior. Then, outside of class, each student will conduct an exercise "in the field" where they will apply these methods. This exercise will probably occur at the John Ball Zoo, although other zoos may be suitable. Details on the requirements for this assignment will be provided later in the semester. **Students will be responsible for paying their admission to the zoo (about \$12 with student ID).** (Note, if the John Ball Zoo is not available (and it probably will be),

there will be no zoo or field observation; we will do another assignment, the Literature Critique, instead)

**Literature Critique (30pts, only if Observational Exercise cannot be done):**

- *Description:* In this course, we will regularly read primary research articles. The instructor will generally select these articles. However, for this assignment each student will select an article and summarize and critique it. Details on the requirements for this assignment will be provided later in the semester. We will only do this assignment if we are unable to do the Observational Exercise.

**Exams (2 exams, 100 pts each = 200 pts)**

- *Exam format:* There will be 2 exams, a Midterm and a Final. Exams will consist of multiple-choice questions. Questions will be drawn from the textbook, additional readings, lectures, and other materials, e.g. videos. The second exam may be partly cumulative. The instructor will make a study guide available prior to each exam.
- *Make-up exams:* If you miss an exam due to illness, you must provide a doctor's excuse within 24 hours following the scheduled exam time. If you must miss an exam for any reason other than illness, you **MUST** email me with a valid excuse 24 hours in advance to schedule a make-up exam. Failure to notify me in advance will result in a zero on the exam. Because make-up exams are difficult to create, schedule, and administer, at the instructor's discretion, the student's score for the exam may be reduced by up to 20%.

**Extra Credit Quizzes (0 pts):**

- *Description:* There will be 10 – 11 brief multiple-choice quizzes. These are for extra credit. **Quizzes will be your only opportunity for earning extra credit.** The quizzes will address assigned textbook readings, recent lectures, response assignments or other course activities. **Quizzes cannot be made up. If you have a great excuse for missing a quiz (even if excused by the University), you still cannot make up a quiz.** Quizzes will have 5 questions, each worth 0.4 points (2 points max per quiz). There will be a total of 20 - 22 quiz points available during the semester. This is enough to substantially boost your overall course grade. For example, a student who answers an average of 3 out of 5 questions correctly on 9 quizzes would earn an extra 10.8 points, which would raise their overall course average by about 3 points; this would be enough to push a student with a B average (e.g., 85) to a B+ (e.g., 88).
- No password is required to take the quizzes. A student can take a quiz even if they didn't attend that day's synchronous session. Quizzes will be available from 10:00AM until 11:59PM on the day of the synchronous session.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning, physical or other disability, they should contact Dr. Deaner via email or Disability Support Resources (DSR) at 616.331.2490.

**The Student Code, Academic Dishonesty, and Plagiarism:**

This course is subject to the GVSU policies: <http://www.gvsu.edu/coursepolicies>.

Students are responsible for upholding ALL aspects of the Student Code:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/>

For example, **lying to a professor is a violation of the Code.** Here are some more details:

As described by the GVSU Student Code, "Academic dishonesty is defined as actions or behaviors that misrepresent one's contributions to or the results of any scholarly product submitted for credit, evaluation, or dissemination."

As described by the GVSU Student Code, "Offering the work of someone else as one's own is plagiarism...." "Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged." "Depending on the instructor's judgment of the particular case, he/she may...give a failing grade for the ... entire course."

Simply rearranging the words or substituting synonyms in the original source is still plagiarism.

**Writing Center and Library Knowledge Market:**

“The Fred Meijer Center for Writing, with locations at the Allendale and Pew/Downtown Grand Rapids campuses, is a peer service available to assist you with writing for any of your classes. Writing consultants, who are fellow GVSU students, are trained to help you with all stages of your writing process, from brainstorming to organizing to editing your papers. Simply bring an idea, prompt, or draft of your paper along with the assignment sheet to any of the Center's locations. Also, through your Gmail account, you have access to online consultations through Google Docs. The Center's services are free and you can drop in and work with a consultant or make an appointment, either through our website or by calling the Center (331-2922). Peer support is available for research and speech/presentation through the Knowledge Market, where the Writing Center partners with the Speech Lab and the Peer Research Center. Additional information about the Knowledge Market and Writing Center services and locations can be found on our website.”

**Blackboard:**

The syllabus, announcements, outside readings, assignments, and grades will be posted on Blackboard. If additional materials are placed elsewhere, e.g. electronic library reserves, I will provide links. I will attempt to make the lecture materials and other materials available prior to each class, although I cannot guarantee this.

**Communication**

The instructor will communicate all class announcements via Blackboard email. **You are expected to check your email regularly.** Announcements will generally remain on Bb throughout the semester. They should be considered as official amendments to the syllabus. Please read the relevant announcement before emailing a question to the instructor.

**Course Schedule:**

Below is a provisional schedule, meaning dates might change based on time constraints, unanticipated events, and the instructor's discretion. However, every effort will be made to make sure there will be no changes to the exam dates or the grading scheme. When the instructor makes changes, he will communicate them in class meetings and via announcements on Bb.

**Provisional Schedule**

<b>Week #</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>
1	Mon May 10	Chpt 1; Reading on Glasses; Quiz #1
1	Thurs May 13	Chpt 2; RA#1; Quiz #2
2	Mon May 17	Chpt 3; RA#2; Quiz #3
2	Thurs May 20	Observational Methods; RA#3; Quiz #4
3	Mon May 24	Chpt 4; RA#4; Quiz #5
3	Thurs May 27	Chpt 5; RA#5; Quiz #6
4	Sun May 30	Midterm Exam Review at 8PM
4	Mon May 31	Memorial Day Recess - No regular meeting
4	Tues June 1	<b>Midterm Exam available from 8AM until midnight</b>
4	Thurs June 3	Chpt 6; RA#6; Quiz #7
5	Mon June 7	Chpt 7; RA#7; Quiz #8
5	Thurs June 10	Chpt 9; RA#8; Quiz #9
6	Mon June 14	Intelligence; RA#9; Quiz #10
6	Thurs June 17	TBA; RA#10; Quiz #11
7	Mon June 21	Final Exam Review Session at 8pm
7	Tues Jun 22	<b>Final Exam available from 8AM until midnight</b>
7	Wed Jun 23	<b>Observational Assignment Due at midnight</b>