

**Comparative Psychology: PSY375 (38699), Spring 2018**  
**Robert Deaner, Ph.D., Associate Professor**

**Office:** 1315 Au Sable Hall

**Office Hours:** W & F 12:00 – 1:15, 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.

**Phone:** 331-2423 (definitely not recommended; I don’t check phone messages.)

**Course time:** Wed, Fri 8:30 – 11:50

**Course location:** 2310 AuSable Hall

**Prerequisites:** PSY101 (pass)

**Required text:** Buss, David M. (2014). *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Psychology Press. ISBN 978-0205992126.

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

**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 Description (Dr. Deaner’s):** Course material will be mainly drawn from the textbook, although we will also read other materials including primary research articles, review papers, and book chapters. Approximately two-thirds of the class meeting time will be lecture-based; there will be at least one required reading for each lecture, usually a textbook chapter. Approximately one-third of class time will be devoted to discussion of an assigned reading or film. For most discussion meetings, students will answer questions on the reading prior to the class (called “Response Assignments”) and submit their responses to the instructor via Bb by 8:00 AM that day. 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+
Autobiographical Sketch	5	83-86.99	B
Observational Exercise	30	80-82.99	B-
Literature Critique	30	77-79.99	C+
Response Assignments	110	73-76.99	C
Exams	200 (midterm and final exam, 100pts each)	70-72.99	C-
Total Points =	<u>375</u>	67-69.99	D+
		60-66.99	D
Number Grade = Earned pts/375 x 100 (no rounding up!)		59.99 & below	F

**Autobiographical Sketch (5 pts)**

- **Description** – To make it easier for me to get to know you, your assignment is to create a one page (8½" x 11") mini-autobiography. This mini-autobiography, or sketch, should include your full name, what you like to be called, and your class year. The sketch should also include three other brief items of interest, such as your hometown, your favorite activity, your most unique talent or interest, why you're interested in psychology, or why your family status or background is unusual. It is also suggested that you include personal information directly relevant to this course, such as, "I work 60 hours per week and will never be able to meet the instructor before or after class." The sketch must include, as part of the 1 page, a headshot of yourself – photocopying your student ID is acceptable. **The entire written part should be 80 words or fewer.** The sketch doesn't have to be a work of art; in fact, I'd recommend spending about 5 minutes on it. Briefer is better. The sketch must be typed and handed to me before or after class or during office hours. No emailed sketches will be accepted. To receive credit, it must be turned in by Friday May 11<sup>th</sup>, at the latest. Briefer sketches are better than longer ones!

**Response Assignments (11 assignments, 10pts each, 110pts in total):**

- **Description** – Roughly one-third of class time will be organized around the discussion of 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 film. Materials for each assignment generally will be provided about one week in advance. Students will submit their responses via Bb by 8:00 AM prior to the class where they will be discussed. Students can only earn full credit for an assignment if they submit it by the deadline.
- **Lateness (for all written assignments):** Assignments are due at the time and date specified in the syllabus and/or communicated by the instructor via email. A late assignment will be docked 2 points for each day it is late, including holidays and weekends.

**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 a reading and 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. 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 \$7).

**Literature Critique (30pts):**

- **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.

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

- **Exam format:** There will be 2 exams, a Mid-term and a Final. Exams will consist of multiple choice questions and may also include short-answers or short essays. 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. Please note that make-up exams must be completed outside of regular class time. 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%.
- **Other issues:** During exams, you will be required to turn off all digital devices, such as cell phones, pagers, and hand-held computers. Any student identified with such a device powered on during an

exam will receive an F on the test at the instructor's discretion. Students are responsible for bringing their own #2 pencils to the exams.

**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, the instructor will provide links. The instructor will attempt to make the lecture materials available prior to each class, although this cannot be guaranteed.

**Communication**

The instructor will communicate all class announcements in class and via Blackboard email. You are expected to check your email regularly. The instructor will send an announcement with this syllabus prior to the first day of class. If it is the first day of class and you haven't received this email yet, it is your responsibility to figure out why and make sure that you receive future emailed announcements. Announcements will 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.

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

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.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

If there is any student in this class who has special needs because of learning, physical or other disability, please contact me or Disability Support Resources (DSR) at 616.331.2490. Furthermore, if you have a disability and think you will need assistance evacuating this classroom and/or building in an emergency situation, please make me aware so I can develop a plan to assist you.

**Canceled Classes**

Unless the instructor emails you otherwise, if classes are canceled at the university, any exam will take place at the next class meeting.

**Course Schedule:**

This is a provisional schedule, meaning dates will 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, assignment due dates, the grading scheme, or the topics covered. When the instructor makes changes, he will communicate them in class and via email.

**Provisional Schedule**

DATE	READING DUE AND ACTIVITY	OTHER ASSIGNMENTS DUE
May 9 - W	In-class Reading; Chpt 1 – pages 2-16	Autobiographical sketch
May 11 - F	Chpt 1 – pages 18-31; Chpt 2 – pages 33-59	Assignment #1
May 16 - W	Chpt 3 - all	Assignment #2
May 18 - F	Chpt 4 - all; Observational Methods - Readings TBA	Assignment #3
May 23 - W	Chpt 5 - all; Chpt 6 - all	Assignment #4
May 25 - F	Assignment of Observational Exercise; Exam Review	Assignment #5
May 30 - W	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	Assignment #6
June 1 - F	Chpt 7; Assignment of Lit Critique	Assignment #7
June 6 - W	Chpt 8	Assignment #8
June 8 - F	Chpt 9	Assignment #9
June 13 - W	Intelligence - Readings TBA	Assignment #10; <b>Observational Exercise</b>
June 15 - F	Abnormal Psych – Readings TBA; Exam Review	Assignment #11
<b>June 20 -W</b>	<b>Final Exam 8:30 – 11:50</b>	<b>Literature Critique</b>