School of Biological Sciences
Te Kura Pūtaiao Koiora

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Course Information/ *Ngā Whakamārama* – 2024

BIOL 438
Behaviour

0.250 EFTS
First semester

General Course Description / *Whakamahuki*
This course will examine a variety of current subjects in behavioural research. Seminars will be structured around the discussion of assigned papers. Course content and topics of seminars (*Hōtaka*) will include such things as sexual selection, parasitism, animal cognition and animal navigation. Marks will be based on a written review, presentations during each seminar and a final exam.

Course Co-ordinator / *Kairuruku Akoranga*
Prof. James Briskie

Lecturers / *Pūkenga*
Ximena Nelson: Biology 336 Ximena.Nelson@canterbury.ac.nz
James Briskie: Biology 345 Jim.Briskie@canterbury.ac.nz
Elissa Cameron: Biology 234 Elissa.Cameron@canterbury.ac.nz

Seminars / *Hōtaka*
Every second week during term time. Each seminar will run for 2 hours. A total of 6 seminars will be held. See timetable for timing and location of seminars.

Textbooks
There is no textbook for this course. You will be assigned a series of readings from the scientific literature. The readings will be listed (on Learn) by the lecturers at the appropriate time in the seminar schedule, but at least one week before the seminar. Students are expected to have read the material, and to be prepared to discuss the papers by the start of each seminar.

Prerequisites
Subject to approval of the Head of School. Undergraduate courses in Evolution and Animal Behaviour are an advantage.

Assessment / Aromatawai
Final exam: 55%
Written review: 35%
Presentations for all seminars: 10%

The due date for the assignment will be announced during the seminars (but will be towards the end of the course).

Final Exam: date and time to be announced. The exam is 3 hours in duration. Some exams from previous years are available on Learn.

What is expected in assessments?
The expectations for assessment items relate to the learning outcomes above. A general marking rubric is as follows:

A to A+	Evidence that the student has developed an individual conception of the subject from wide reading and reflection. This individual understanding will likely be applied to a novel situation.
B+ to A-	Evidence of strategic reading from a few sources, and the ability to present lecture content in the student's own words.
C to B	Reproduction of lecture content following the structure used by the lecturer.
D to C-	Reproduction of some lecture content without clear structure.
E	Confusion of content or no meaningful content presented beyond knowledge that would be expected at the start of the course.

Goals of the Course
The objectives of the course are to develop an understanding of:

- the evolution and adaptive significance of behaviour
- how behavioural scientists approach the study of behaviour
- the ability to read the scientific literature critically
- the ability to synthesise the scientific literature into a review paper

Intended Learning Outcomes / *Hua Akoranga* and Associated Assessment / *Aromatawai*
As a student in this course, I will develop the ability to:

- Understand the theoretical basis of animal behaviour and to use this knowledge (and that from literature readings) to propose novel hypotheses to explain the evolution of animal behaviour (*assessment task: final exam*)
- Prepare summaries of scientific papers from the literature and present these to the class orally (*assessment: handouts for all seminars*)
- Write a critical review of a topic in animal behaviour using the primary scientific literature (*assessment task: written literature review*)

Transferable Skills / *Pūkenga Ngaio*
As a student in this course, I will develop the following skills:

- The ability to read the primary scientific literature critically (*In each seminar you will be asked to read a number of papers from scientific journals. These will then be discussed in depth during the seminar, including critiques of the author's approach, their methods, and their interpretation. We will also discuss how the questions might be researched more appropriately*)
- The ability to read a scientific paper and present your understanding (and critique) of the work orally to the class (*Students will be required to search for at least one additional paper, on top of those assigned by the lecturer, to present to the class during each seminar. These presentations are done informally over 5-10 minutes, but provide students with the opportunity to lead the discussion and explain the study to others*)

• Writing a comprehensive review of a subject (*Conducting a research project first requires a thorough understanding of the field. One must first know what has been done previously, and to have considered the work critically, before progressing onto new work. As part of this course, students will be required to write a literature review on a topic of their choice. This review will require extensive independent reading of the scientific literature, and the ability to summarise this information in a concise and critical fashion*).

RULES, REGULATIONS, AND WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

[updated January 2023]

If in doubt: ASK! The course coordinator is happy to answer questions. All staff involved in the course are available for advice on specific issues.

What do I do if I have to miss a test/exam or if my performance was impaired?
In Biological Sciences, we require a satisfactory level of achievement in both the theoretical aspects of the discipline and in practical activities. **This means you must attend all class activities (labs, tutorials, fieldtrips)** and submit all items of assessment unless you have a very good reason not to (e.g. medical reasons) and if this has been approved by your course coordinator.

If you feel that **illness, injury, bereavement or other extenuating circumstances beyond your control** prevented you from completing a **test/exam** worth 10% or more of the total course assessment, or if these circumstances affected your performance in such assessments, you should apply for Special Consideration. Applications for Special Consideration should be submitted via the Special Consideration website http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/special-consideration/ *within five working days* of the assessment or its due date. You should also notify the course coordinator. If you apply for Special Consideration because of medical reasons, you should visit a doctor within a reasonable timeframe (application form available on the website above or from the Student Health Centre).

The Special Consideration provisions are intended to assist students who have covered the work of a course but have been prevented by illness or other critical circumstances from demonstrating their mastery of the material or skills at the time of a text/exam – **they do not excuse you from doing the test/exam** within a reasonable time agreed with the course coordinator.

What do I do if I have to miss a quiz or assignment or if I need an extension?
You cannot apply for Special Consideration if you miss an assessment that is not a test/exam, such as a quiz, lab report, essay, literature review or other assignment, or if the test/exam is worth less than 10% or more of the total course assessment. If this happens or if you need an extension because of **illness, injury, bereavement or other extenuating circumstances beyond your control**, please contact the course coordinator and arrange an alternate activity and/or submission date. You should also do this if you have to miss a laboratory, tutorial or field trip.

What are other valid reasons to miss an assessment or mandatory course activity?
The Special Considerations policy (https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/about/governance/ucpolicy/student/special-consideration-procedures-and-guidelines/) outlines only a few kinds of activities that UC considers valid reasons for missing an assessment or mandatory course activity other than those outlined above. These include **involvement in international or national representative sport or cultural groups.** Holiday trips, birthday parties, weddings, work-related commitments etc. are not given special status in this University policy. Please contact your course coordinator to ask for an alternate activity and/or submission date if you are eligible.

Special Consideration for late discontinuation of a course
Students prevented by **extenuating circumstances** from completing the course after the final date for withdrawing, may apply for Special Consideration for late discontinuation of the course. Applications must be submitted via http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/study/special-consideration/ no later than five working days after the examination period has finished.

Academic Integrity
It is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the definitions, policies and procedures concerning academic misconduct/dishonest behaviour. Instances of academic misconduct will be dealt with in a serious and appropriate manner. Students should refer to:
https://www.canterbury.ac.nz/about/ako/academic-quality/academic-integrity/

Plagiarism

It is essential that you are aware that plagiarism is considered a very serious offence by the academic community, the University and the School of Biological Sciences. Plagiarism is defined as taking content from another work or author and presenting it, without attribution, as if it is your own work. Content here includes text (sentences or major parts of sentences), display items (graphs and tables), and overall structure (the detailed sequence of ideas). Plagiarism includes:

- re-use of previous assignments (even if each individual sentence has been rephrased to say the same thing in different words, if the overall structure is re-used).
- copying of another student's work (with or without their consent).
- the unreferenced use of published material or material from the internet, e.g. cutting and pasting of paragraphs or pages into an essay.

For most pieces of in-term assessment you will be given information concerning the use of direct and indirect quotes from previously published work. If you have any doubt about the appropriate use of published material, please speak with an academic staff member. If you are unsure what plagiarism is, seek advice.

It is a School policy that courses will likely that you submit work electronically for subsequent analysis of originality using *Turnitin*. Students agree that by taking courses in BIOL, assessments may be submitted to Turnitin.com for textual similarity review. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use as posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Where do I hand in assignments and then collect them once marked?
All assignments should be submitted as directed by the course coordinator. Typically, this will be electronically via Learn for on-line grading and for analysis in *Turnitin*. If a hard copy is requested, assignments should be placed in the designated collection boxes in the foyer of the 2nd floor of the School of Biological Sciences (Julius von Haast building, at the top of the stairs). All assignments must be accompanied by a cover sheet signed by you stating that the submitted work is not plagiarised. Cover sheets are available on top of the collection boxes, or you can download one from the Biology website (http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/media/documents/science-documents/assignment-coversheet.pdf).

Marked assignments will be returned through Learn or, if in hard copy, can be collected from the School of Biological Sciences reception, unless directed otherwise by the course coordinator. Teaching staff will endeavour to return work as soon as possible, and should contact you if there are likely to be any delays that will prevent return within the maximum 4-week timeframe.

What if I can't get it finished in time?
Reports and assignments should be handed in on time. Extensions may be granted if you have a valid reason (see above). **If you require an extension, you should request one from the course coordinator** (or the lecturer responsible for marking the work), with as much notice as possible. Please do this BEFORE the deadline for the assignment. **If you have been given an extension and you have been asked to submit a hard-copy of your work, you should hand the work DIRECTLY to the course coordinator** (do not put it in the drop box as it may not be cleared after the due date).
If an extension has not been granted:

- work handed in within 1 hour of the deadline: penalty of up to 5 percentage points of the mark for the assignment (e.g., a mark of 75% might be reduced to 70%).
- work handed in 1 – 24 hours after the deadline: penalty of 10 percentage points of the mark for the assignment (e.g., a mark of 75% is reduced to 65%).
- work handed in 1 – 7 days after the deadline: penalty of 15 percentage points of the mark for the assignment (e.g., a mark of 75% is reduced to 60%).
- work handed in more than 7 days after the deadline will not be marked or earn credit.

What if I have written more than the word or page limit?
If there is a word limit on an assignment, it is usually there to stop you doing too much work and to encourage you to write succinctly. You can be up to 10% over without too much worry, but if the length increases beyond that your mark may suffer due to failure to follow the requirements. If you find yourself way over the word limit talk to the lecturer concerned about how to get your assignment to an acceptable length. Unless specifically advised that there is flexibility, you must adhere to the word limit indicated.

What if I fail part of the course?
In Biological Sciences, we require a satisfactory level of achievement in both the theoretical aspects of the discipline and in practical activities. This means you must attend all class activities and submit all items of assessment unless you have a very good reason not to (e.g. medical reasons). **A student must attain an average score of at least 40% for in-course assessments (e.g. assignments, reports, quizzes) and an average score of at least 40% in the exam and/or tests, AND score at least 50% overall for the course, to be awarded a passing grade. See the course outlines for**

clarification of the assessment items included in each category and ask the coordinator if you are still unsure.

What's the best way to give feedback?
We welcome constructive feedback at all times – help us to make this a valuable course for you. We endeavour to remain approachable at all times. If you would rather give feedback anonymously, please use the online course survey or talk to lab demonstrators, or your class rep (who will all report back to the staff-student liaison committee that includes a representative from each of the undergraduate classes). Class representatives will be selected from each class at the start of course.

What's the best way to complain?
If you feel you have not been fairly treated during this course, please raise the issue with the lecturer or course coordinator in the first instance. Other avenues include your class rep., who can raise issues anonymously, or the UCSA education coordinator.

Grading

A+	90% or above
A	85 – 90
A-	80 – 84
B+	75 – 79
B	70 – 74
B-	65 – 69
C+	60 – 64
C	55 – 59
C-	50 – 54

A restricted pass (R) **may** be awarded to those who are close to a pass (i.e. an overall score of 48-49.9%) AND who have achieved at least a 40% overall score in both in-course assessment and tests/exams. If an R grade is awarded you gain credit for the course but **cannot continue into papers that require this course as a pre-requisite**. NB. The R grade is only available at 100 and 200 level - it cannot be awarded for third year papers.

Failing grades: D 40-49 E 0–39