

***VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
ANIMAL BEHAVIOR SYLLABUS BIOL 6650 – Spring 2024***

## Course Learning Objectives:

This course covers a wide range of topics within the realm of animal behavior and allows student to develop their own ideas through an experiential learning process. The laboratory portion offers students the opportunity to get directly involved with experimentation and techniques for studying animal behaviors. Students will demonstrate understanding of the scientific principles that relate to the study of animal behavior in an evolutionary context, including

- a. The neural and hormonal control of behavior and the genetic basis of behavior
- b. Optimal foraging behavior and predator-prey dynamics
- c. The behaviors associated with migration and territoriality
- d. The evolution of communication from perspectives of both signaler and receiver
- e. Reproductive behaviors, including differences in sex roles, mating systems, and care of offspring
- f. Social behaviors, such as altruism and reciprocity

Skills will be gained through:

- a. Lectures and discussion of papers from the primary literature
- b. Presentation and discussion of research articles throughout the course
- c. Preparation of an experiment for an area of behavior/organism/system of your choosing with through well-developed hypotheses, experimental design, expected results, and thorough literature review.
- d. Participation in laboratory exercises that explore topics from lecture that we will investigate in more detail.
- e. Communicate effectively about behavioral topics in both oral and written form, reinforced through data analysis and writing assignments throughout the course.

These course objectives are aimed to fulfill the VSU General Educational outcomes 3,4,5 and 7.

[VSU Selected](#)

[Educational Outcomes for the B.S. Degree in Biology.](#)

Lecture & Lab Policies: Guidelines for your safety and the safety of those around you.

1. No eating or drinking in the lecture or lab.
2. K129.32

## Grade Determination:

**Assessment**

**Points**

**Grading Scale:**

## Course Policies:

### **Additional Academic Support**

The Academic Support Center (ASC) provides unlimited, in-person, free peer tutoring in core courses such as math, English/writing, sciences, social sciences, and languages. We also offer 8 hours of free online tutoring via Tutor.com (8 hours per student, available 24/7). Click the Free Tutoring link in any Blazeview course to make appointments. Please drop by our space in Odum Library, 2nd floor, or call 229-333-7570, email [asc@valdosta.edu](mailto:asc@valdosta.edu), or visit the website [www.valdosta.edu/asc](http://www.valdosta.edu/asc) for more information. We will have a PAL for the course that will offer biweekly sessions for extra help with the course material. The meeting times will be voted on by

### **Experiential Learning Statement**

This course includes an Experiential Learning opportunity carefully designed to allow students to explore concepts, skills, and principles beyond the traditional classroom, lab, or studio. Students will have opportunities to make connections across campus, collaborate with others, and apply and synthesize what they have studied in the course. In addition to the experience, students reflect on what they have learned during and at the completion of the course/activity to deepen their learning. Reflections help students transfer skills and concepts to different contexts

visit <https://qep.valdosta.edu/experiential-learning/>.

### **Mental Health Awareness**

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained or violent relationships, death and loss, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and

**Spring 2024-**

**Animal Behavior course (BIOL 4650/6650)**

**Note:** The professor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as necessary.

**Week 1**                      Tuesday 1/9  
-Introductions & Syllabus  
-**Chapter 1**

SPRING BREAK 3/11 3/15

Week 10	<u>Tuesday 3/19</u> <b>-Chapter 9:</b> Antipredator Behavior	<u>Thursday 3/21</u> <i>-Discussion 4:</i> <b>-Lab 10:</b> Lake Louise Field trip and begin designing experiments <b>-Homework: turn in your ideas for HW8 (10) by 3/26.</b>
Week 11	<u>Tuesday 3/26</u> <b>-Exam 3</b> (Chapters 5,6,8,9 and Discussion 3 & 4)	<u>Thursday 3/28</u> <b>-Chapter 10:</b> Dispersal and Migration <i>-Discussion 5:</i> <b>-Lab 11:</b> Finalize Independent Research Experiments and plan field trips for Lab 12 <b>-Homework: Upload 5 papers and Annotated Bibliography for your Independent Research Experiment topic for HW9 (20) by 4/9.</b>
Week 12	<u>Tuesday 4/2</u> <b>-Chapter 11:</b> Habitat Selection, Territoriality, and Aggression	<u>Thursday 4/4</u> <b>-Lab 12:</b> Field trip to local sites for data collection for Independent Research Experiments. Field trips to Gulf coast, springs, or other destinations for the groups who choose projects at further locations will occur on the weekends. <b>-Homework: Collect data for Independent Research Project</b>
Week 13	<u>Tuesday 4/9</u> <i>-Discussion 6:</i>	<u>Thursday 4/11</u> <b>- Chapter 15:</b> Sociality <b>-Lab 13:</b> Complete data collection and analyses <b>-Homework: Turn in your data analysis and figures with captions for HW10 (15) by 4/16.</b>
Week 14	<u>Tuesday 4/16</u> <b>-Chapter 16:</b> Cooperative Behavior	<u>Thursday 4/18</u> <i>-Discussion 7:</i> <b>-Lab 14:</b> Final Project data analysis and poster assembly <b>-Homework: Finish poster for presenting next week by 4/23.</b>
Week 15	<u>Tuesday 4/23</u> <b>-Exam 4</b> (Chapters 10,11,15,16 and Discussion 5,6, & 7)	<u>Thursday 4/25</u> <b>-Lab 15:</b> Practice presentations of posters <b>-Homework: Peer review poster presentations (20) by end of lab and turn in FINAL poster ppt file (75) for printing by SUN 4/28.</b>

Finals

Poster Presentation: 8:30-10am Tuesday 4/30