

**Primate Behavior and Ecology**  
**Anthro 372/ES 372, Sec 001C**  
**UW Oshkosh Department of Religious Studies and Anthropology**  
**UW Oshkosh Environmental Studies Program**  
**Fall 2010**

**Instructor:** Dr. Stephanie Spehar  
**Office:** Arts & Communication 311  
**Office hours:** Tues. 11:30-1:00 and Wed. 2:00-3:00 or by appointment  
**Telephone:** 424-7073  
**Email:** [spehars@uwosh.edu](mailto:spehars@uwosh.edu)

**Class meetings:** TR 1:20-2:50 pm  
**Classroom:** A&C S121

**Course description**

The purpose of this course is twofold: to introduce you to the amazing diversity of the order Primates, and to give you a foundation in the field of primate behavioral ecology and conservation. Primates are exceptionally social creatures, exhibiting a great deal of behavioral complexity and diversity. This course takes an evolutionary approach, asking how behaviors allow primates to survive, reproduce, and succeed in the wild. Because an organisms' behavior is intimately connected to its ecology (how an organism interacts with its environment), we will use the theoretical framework of behavioral ecology to examine and understand primate behavioral patterns.

After being introduced to the colorful and fascinating members of the Primate order, we will examine primate ecology, investigating primate habitats, diets, activity patterns, and interactions with predators and their environments. We will then examine primate social behavior, including types of societies in which primates live, primate mating patterns, and primate social relationships. We will spend some time focusing on primate communication and cognition, particularly nonhuman primate tool use, culture, and the presence advanced cognitive functions in primates. Throughout, we will discuss what studies of primates can tell us about being human. As most nonhuman primates are threatened or endangered in the wild, we will also spend some time discussing primate conservation. Rather than using taxonomic groupings (i.e., prosimians, Old World monkeys, apes) to structure the course, I will follow a conceptual route, pulling examples from across the order Primates throughout the class.

Through this course, I hope you acquire a solid understanding of how evolutionary forces shape behavioral patterns, and, in particular, how ecology and the environment influence behavior. I also hope that you leave this class with a newfound appreciation of our closest living relatives, the fascinating nonhuman primates, and that through our examination of their behavior you develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be human.

**Required texts**

Primate Behavioral Ecology, 4th Edition (2010), by Karen Strier. Pearson.

The Primate Anthology (1998), Russell L. Ciochon & Richard A. Nisbett, Ed. Prentice Hall.

These books are available in the bookstore, and also online through Amazon and other vendors. Additional readings will be available via Desire2Learn or electronic reserve.

You should complete the required readings for each class before coming to class.

### **Course requirements**

Your grade will be based on five components: quiz and exam scores, homework assignments, an article presentation/discussion, a research paper, and class participation and attendance.

Article presentation (1):	5%
Homework assignments (5)	15%
Quiz (1)	10%
Exams (2)	40%
Research paper	20%
Class participation	10%

### Exams and quizzes

There will be one quiz, on Primate Traits & Taxonomy, which will be given early in the semester. This quiz will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, or short answer questions. There will be two non-cumulative exams during the semester. These exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer questions, and essay questions. I will always provide a review sheet before each exam, and if at all possible I will also hold review sessions outside of class time.

Exams and quizzes are in-class. No make-up tests will be given, except under extreme circumstances. Please contact me ahead of time if at all possible if you know you will have to miss an exam. Make-up exams will be entirely in essay format.

### Homework assignments

I ask students to choose and complete 5 out of 7 short homework assignments throughout this course. One of these is based on the field trip to the Milwaukee Zoo to see primates firsthand (marked on the course schedule). The other 6 will be assigned throughout the semester (the topics they will be based on are marked on the syllabus) and will constitute either sets of questions to be answered or a brief discussion paper on issues raised in course readings or lectures. Topics and assignments will be announced in class and posted on D2L, and will be due 10 to 14 days after their assignment.

### Article presentations

Groups of 3-4 students will be responsible for presenting and leading discussion on one scientific article to the class during the semester. I will have students rank their top

articles, and then I will group students based on their interests. See the course schedule for the articles and the dates on which they will be presented.

### Research project

Each student will be required to write a research paper of 12-15 pages in length (not including your bibliography) in this class. You can choose from three options for this paper:

- 1) The investigation and/or review of an issue in primate behavioral ecology (e.g., the influence of resource scarcity, juvenile development, infanticide, predation, female choice, theory of mind in primates- the list of possible topics is endless!).
- 2) A thorough review of the published information on the ecology and behavior of one particular primate species of your choice.
- 3) A research proposal for conducting a new research project on an issue or topic in primate behavioral ecology.

Your research project must be based on at least 12 sources other than the primary readings used in class. Of these sources, only one may be a website (which must be verified by me before it can be used); the other 11 must be *scholarly sources*. A *scholarly source* is a published work that has been subject to peer review, e.g., a book, a chapter in an edited volume, or a journal article (this can include journal articles found online). Other sources- such as websites, newspaper articles, or articles in popular magazines- must be reviewed by me first. I am happy to meet with you so I can help you locate information and plan your paper.

You are required to turn in a proposal for your research project and a preliminary annotated bibliography so I can ensure that you are on the right track in your research. You will also be required to submit a draft of your paper ~4 weeks BEFORE the final version is due. This draft will be graded, and returned to you; the grade you receive on the draft will be the grade you receive on the final paper unless you make the changes I request. Due dates are marked on the course schedule.

We will spend some time discussing this research project, including the nature of scholarly sources and how to find good sources, in class. Details on the format and expected content of the paper will also be distributed separately.

### Class attendance and participation

Attendance in this class is required, and a record of attendance will be kept and used in assessing your final grade. If you must miss a class, please try to inform me beforehand that you will be absent. If you cannot inform me beforehand, it is still a good idea to email or call me and let me know why you will be absent. *More than two unexcused absences for the semester will result in a lowering of your attendance score.* An “unexcused absence” is any absence for which you cannot provide a note from a doctor, another professor, or some other documented explanation of your absence. If you simply cannot make a class, please contact me before the class meets; perhaps an arrangement can be made to ensure that you are not penalized for missing class for legitimate reasons.

Throughout this course, I will have students participate in small group work, class discussions, and in-class activities. Sometimes I will also pose a question related to the readings that I expect you to think about and come prepared to discuss for the next class, or will ask students to come up with their own discussion question for the next class. Your participation in and contribution to these activities will constitute the majority of your participation grade. Most of these activities will be based on the assigned readings or lecture topics, so always come to class prepared (**meaning that you have done the readings and brought those reading materials with you to class!**).

You **active** participation in the class (and, by extension, your own learning) is the key to your success in this class, and to the success of this course as a whole.

### Readings

You need to do the readings for this class in order to participate fully. A couple important points about readings for this class:

*1. You should complete the required readings for each class BEFORE coming to class. It is essential to the success of this class that students actually do the readings and come to class prepared. If I sense that students are not completing readings on time, I will begin to institute in-class or pre-class quizzes to ensure that students come to class prepared.*

*2. Always bring the relevant books or copy of the readings to class with you. If you do not do this, then you will not be able to participate fully in class discussions and activities, and your participation grade will suffer.*

### **Grading**

Semester grades will be based on your percentage of the total points (weighted to correct for the different “values” of different assignments) possible in the class:

A = 93 - 100%

A- = 90 - 92%

B+ = 88 - 89%

B = 83 - 87%

B- = 80 - 82%

C+ = 78 - 79%

C = 73 - 77%

C- = 70 - 72 %

D+ = 68 - 69%

D = 62 - 67%

D- = 60 - 62

F = 0 - 59%

I reserve the right to lower one or more of these grade thresholds. Under no circumstance will I raise any of the thresholds.

### **Changes to the syllabus and course schedule**

I will do my very best to adhere to the course schedule; however, I reserve the right to change topic, dates, readings, etc. due to unforeseen circumstances! You will always be notified of these changes in class. You are responsible for any changes to the syllabus that are announced in class and/or are posted on D2L.

## Course schedule

Note: Readings for specific classes may change or be added, and these changes will be reflected in the syllabus on D2L. Always check before coming to class!

I RECOMMEND THAT YOU REGULARLY CHECK THE COURSE SCHEDULE ON D2L FOR CHANGES, RATHER THAN RELYING ON A PRINTED SYLLABUS.

S = *Primate Behavioral Ecology*

C&N = *The Primate Anthology*

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Reading
<b>Introduction to the Primates</b>				
1	Th	9/9	Introduction to Course: What is primatology? Why study primates?	S: Chp 1 “First Observations” (in-class)
2	Tu	9/14	Introduction to the Primate Order: What are primates? Where do they live?  Film: <i>Life in the Trees</i>	S: Chp 2  Guiding questions  HW1: Primate traits
	Th	9/16	Introduction to the Primate Order: What are primate lives like?  Film: <i>The Social Climbers</i>	S: Chp 3  Guiding questions  HW2: Primate taxonomy and diversity
3	Tu	9/21	Primate Traits, Taxonomy, and Distribution  Overview of the Primate Order: Prosimians & NW Monkeys	S: Reread Chp 2, pp 30-48  Review at least one prosimian and one NW monkey on the Primate Info Net website: <a href="http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/index/taxon/latin/pr">http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/index/taxon/latin/pr</a>
	Th	9/23	Overview of the Primate Order: Old World Monkeys and Apes	S: Reread Chp 2, pp 48-58, Chp 3, pp 70-79  “Gorillas Without Borders”

				Review at least one OWM from each the major groupings provided (baboons and drills, colobus monkeys, guenons and vervets, langurs and leaf monkeys, macaques, and mangabeys):: <a href="http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/index/taxon/latin/ow">http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/factsheets/index/taxon/latin/ow</a>
	Sat	9/25	<b>FIELD TRIP: Milwaukee Zoo</b>	HW3: Zoo assignment
4	Tu	9/28	Evolutionary Theory, Ecology, and Ethology I: Theoretical frameworks for studying primates  Film clips: <i>Evolution: Darwin's Dangerous Idea</i>	S: Reread Chp. 1, Chp 4 pp 80-89 "In the Field" "Evolution in Action"
	Th	9/30	Evolutionary Theory, Ecology, and Ethology II: Genes, the environment, and behavior	S: Chp 4 pp 89-98 "The Nature of Nurture" "A Gene for Nothing"
5	Tu	10/5	<b>Quiz 1: Primate Traits and Taxonomy</b>  <b>Due: Research project proposal</b>	Quiz 1 study guide
<b>Primate Ecology: Primates as Members of Ecosystems</b>				
	Th	10/7	You are what you eat: Diets and foraging strategies	S: Chp. 6  C&N: Chp 21, "Poison in he Monkey's Garden of Eden", Chp 24, "Diet for a Small Primate," Chp 26, "Menu for a Monkey"
6	Tu	10/12	Community ecology I: Primate communities and the ecological niche	S: Chp 11, pp 269-277  C&N: Chp 18, "The Kindness of Strangers", Chp 27, "Night Watch on the Amazon"

				Bshary & Noe 1997. Red colobus and Diana monkeys provide mutual protection against predators. (A1)
	Th	10/14	Community ecology II: Predator-prey interactions and seed dispersal	S: Chp 11, 277-286  C&N: Chp 12, "To Catch a Colobus," Chp 19, "The Vervets' Year of Doom"  Gutierrez-Granados & Dirzo 2010. Indirect effects of timber extraction on plant recruitment and diversity via reductions in abundance of frugivorous spider monkeys. (A2)  HW4: Community ecology
<b>Primate social systems: What types of groups do primates live in? Why?</b>				
7	Tu	10/19	An introduction to primate social systems  Ecology and social systems I: What about predation?	"You Are What You Eat"  Janson & Goldsmith 1995. Predicting group size in primates: Foraging costs and predation risks.
	Th	10/21	Ecology and Social Systems II: The importance of resources	S: Chp 7 pp 168-173, Chp 8 pp 196-202  Mitchell et al. 1991 Competitive regimes and female bonding in two species of squirrel monkeys ( <i>Saimiri oerstedii</i> and <i>S. sciureus</i> ) (A3)
8	Tu	10/26	Sex and Social Systems I: Sexual selection and mating patterns  Film: <i>Evolution: What about sex?</i>	S: Chp 5 pp 113-119  "The Handmaid's Tale"

			<b>DUE: Preliminary bibliography</b>	
	Th	10/28	Sex and Social Systems II: Mating patterns	S: Chp 5 pp 119-136  C&N: Chp 2, "Gorilla Society," Chp 4, "Family Feuds"
9	Tu	11/2	Sex and Social Systems III: Female reproductive strategies	S: Chp 5 pp 136-141  C&N: Chp 25, "Monkeys with Inflated Sex Appeal"  Stumpf & Boesch 2005. Does promiscuous mating preclude female choice?  Digby 1995. Infant care, infanticide, and female reproductive strategies in polygynous groups of common marmosets ( <i>Callithrix jacchus</i> ). (A4)
	Th	11/4	Sex and Social Systems IV: Male reproductive strategies	S: Chp 5 pp 141-144  "The Infanticide Wars"  Gomes & Boesch 2009. Wild chimpanzees exchange meat for sex on a long-term basis. (A5)  HW5: Reproductive strategies
10	Tu	11/9	<b>Exam 1: Primate ecology, social systems, and mating patterns</b>	<b>Exam 1 Study Guide</b>
<b>Group life: Individual strategies and relationships within social systems</b>				
	Th	11/11	Social life: Cooperation and altruism vs. conflict and competition	S: Chp 4, pp 121-140  "Survival of the Kindest" "How Animals Do Business"

11	Tu	11/16	Social strategies and social relationships I	S: Chp 7, 173-195  C&N: Chp 7, “Ms. Monkey”, Chp 11, “Leading Ladies”
	Th	11/18	Social strategies and social relationships II  Film: <i>Murder in the Troop</i>  <b>DUE: Research project draft</b>	S: Chp 8  Guiding questions
12	Tu	11/23	Social strategies and social relationships III: Human implications?	C&N: Chp 5, “What Are Friends For?” “Apes of Wrath” “Apes From Mars and Venus”  Mitani et al. 2010. Lethal intergroup aggression leads to territorial expansion in wild chimpanzees. (A6)  HW6: Social relationships
	Th	11/25	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
<b>Primate Communication, Cognition, and Conservation</b>				
13	Tu	11/30	Communication and nonhuman primate “language”?	S: Chp 10 pp 243-258 “A Telling Difference”  Wedekind et al. 1995. MHC-dependent mate preferences in humans. (A7)
	Th	12/2	Cognition I: Why are primates so smart?	S: Chp 10 pp 319-332 “Why Are Some Animals So Smart?” C&N: Chp 8, “In the Minds of Monkeys”
14	Tu	12/7	Cognition II: How smart are they, anyway?	“Are We in Anthropodenial?” “Tools of Deceit”

			Film: <i>Clever Monkeys</i>	“Got Culture?” HW7: Cognition
	Th	12/9	Primate Conservation	S, Chp 12  C&N: Chp 28, “The Perils of Primates”, Chp 31, “Lemurs Lost and Found”
15	Tu	12/14	Course wrap-up: What have we learned? What is the future for nonhuman primates?	
	Th	12/16	<b>Exam 2: Social relationships, communication, cognition, and conservation</b>  <b>Due: Final version of research paper</b>	Exam 2 Study Guide