

ANM301

Animal Behaviour

School: School of Science, Technology and Engineering

2025 | Semester 2

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course introduces you to the key concepts and techniques for the study of animal behaviour from an evolutionary perspective. You will learn to critically engage with central theories underpinning a range of topics, which will be illustrated via case studies and scientific research papers. You will practice and master the new techniques in tutorials/workshops and via a fieldwork component. You will learn how to analyse behavioural data and present findings.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Prerecorded learning materials on Animal Behaviour theory	1hr	Week 1	13 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Tutorials reviewing learning material content and applying practical skills	2hrs	Week 1	13 times
Fieldwork – Fieldwork	6hrs	Week 6	Once Only
Tutorial/Workshop 2 – Student Group Presentations for Task 3 assignment	6hrs	Week 10	Once Only

1.3. Course Topics

Theories and concepts in the study of Animal Behaviour can include:

- Introduction to the study of animal behaviour
- Proximate causes of behaviour
- Evolution of behaviour
- Nature and nurture
- Foraging
- Animal communication
- Animal Aggression
- Migration and movement
- Sexual selection and mating systems
- Social Evolution
- Kinship and Cooperation
- Learning and Cultural Transmission

Methods for the Study of Animal Behaviour can include:

- Methods in ethology
- Survey techniques
- How to analyse animal behaviour data
- How to interpret study results
- How to present scientific findings

2. What level is this course?

300 Level (Graduate)

Demonstrating coherence and breadth or depth of knowledge and skills. Independent application of knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts. Meeting professional requirements and AQF descriptors for the degree. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory or developing knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally undertaken in the third or fourth full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Retain, apply, and critically assess the core concepts, theories and data collection techniques in animal behaviour.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered Ethical
2 Apply appropriate field and statistical methods	Empowered Engaged
3 Analyse, interpret and present data for the study of animal behaviour	Knowledgeable Empowered
4 Communicate effectively and coherently in written and oral forms, using correct terminology, and appropriate formats.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker Empowered
5 Collaborate and work as a team to understand, interpret, and communicate science effectively.	Creative and critical thinker Empowered Engaged

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

ANM201 and ANM203

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Developing skills in animal ecology and physiology and working knowledge of Excel, and basic skills in data handling and statistics including using the R program.

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

You will receive feedback via graded weekly quizzes (Assessment Task 1) from Week 2 - 12. You will receive formative feedback on how to collect and critically assess field survey methods (Task 2), as well as how to choose, dissect, and present a good scientific article in Week 5 to prepare you for Assessment Task 3. You will have the opportunity to receive formative feedback on the analysis of your data (Assessment Task 4) in Weeks 10 and 11 and the presentation of your results section (Assessment Task 4) in Week 12.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Quiz/zes	Individual	30%	30 mins per quiz (3 questions) over 10 weeks	Throughout teaching period (refer to Format)	Online Test (Quiz)
All	2	Report	Individual	20%	600 words.	Week 6	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Oral	Individual	20%	10 minutes	Week 10	In Class
All	4	Artefact - Technical and Scientific, and Written Piece	Individual	30%	1000 words	Exam Period	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check

All - Assessment Task 1: Online Quizzes

GOAL:	The purpose of this task is for you to demonstrate your understanding of key concepts, theories and methods covered in the weekly material and readings.							
PRODUCT:	Quiz/zes							
FORMAT:	You will answer three multiple-choice questions per week via quizzes on Canvas in Week 2 - Week 12 (total 30 questions). Questions will be based on learning material and readings (peer-reviewed journal articles).							
CRITERIA:	<table> <tr> <th>No.</th><th></th><th>Learning Outcome assessed</th></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Demonstrate understanding of theories, concepts and methods used in the study of animal behaviour by correctly answering multiple-choice questions</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Demonstrate understanding of theories, concepts and methods used in the study of animal behaviour by correctly answering multiple-choice questions	1	
No.		Learning Outcome assessed						
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GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Information literacy							

All - Assessment Task 2: Short report and reflection

GOAL:	The purpose of this task is for you to learn how to critically assess a range of field survey methods. You will develop and use an ethogram and use two different survey methods to record animal behaviour. You will then compare and contrast the data you record from observing animal behaviour using each method. You will critically analyse the different methods, and discuss how appropriate each method is for the investigation of a specific research question provided.																
PRODUCT:	Report																
FORMAT:	Short report (600 words)																
CRITERIA:	<table> <tr> <th>No.</th><th></th><th>Learning Outcome assessed</th></tr> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Develop an ethogram and use it to record animal behaviours. Ethogram and datasheets must be included with short report.</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Compare and contrast different survey methods, outlining strengths and limitations of each method, including a discussion of which survey method would be more appropriate to answer your selected question</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>Reflect on the challenges of developing your own ethogram, the quality of your ethogram, and discuss any changes you may make to improve it.</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>Communicate your thoughts clearly and concisely in writing</td><td>4</td></tr> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Develop an ethogram and use it to record animal behaviours. Ethogram and datasheets must be included with short report.	2	2	Compare and contrast different survey methods, outlining strengths and limitations of each method, including a discussion of which survey method would be more appropriate to answer your selected question	3	3	Reflect on the challenges of developing your own ethogram, the quality of your ethogram, and discuss any changes you may make to improve it.	1	4	Communicate your thoughts clearly and concisely in writing	4	
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4	Communicate your thoughts clearly and concisely in writing	4															
GENERIC SKILLS:	Problem solving, Applying technologies, Information literacy																

All - Assessment Task 3: Group Oral Journal Presentation

GOAL:	<p>The purpose of this task is for you in small groups to select, critically engage with, and present an overview of a peer-reviewed article on a study of animal behaviour. The article must be related to one of the key topics outlined in this course. This will demonstrate your understanding and ability to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Communicate professionally and accurately the key concepts and results of a scientific paper related to one of the key themes in animal behaviour. 2) Explain the methods and theoretical context of the study. 3) Understand how information in peer-reviewed scientific articles is organised and structured. 4) Critically assess information presented in primary scientific literature within the field of animal behaviour. 5.) Work and collaborate as a team to communicate science 		
PRODUCT:	Oral		
FORMAT:	<p>You will in your group present to the class an overview of a self-selected peer-reviewed research article related to one of the topics covered in the course. The presentation can be in the form of a PowerPoint, or any other format approved beforehand by the Course Coordinator.</p>		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Explain and critically assess the aims, survey design and methods of the study	1
	2	Explain and critically assess key results and findings of the study	1
	3	Situate the research in the context of your understanding of the study of animal behaviour	3
	4	Communicate your understanding of the research study in a professional and interesting manner, including with engaging visual material. Marks will be deducted if video exceeds 10 mins.	4
	5	Collaborate as peer scientists to effectively interpret and communicate science	5
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Information literacy		

All - Assessment Task 4: Scientific Poster

GOAL:	The purpose of this task is for you to learn how to synthesise your knowledge of animal behaviour, and effectively communicate scientific information in the format of a research poster. Students will be expected to conduct their own research for relevant literature in order to contextualise their own research findings.		
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Technical and Scientific, and Written Piece		
FORMAT:	Your submission will take the form of a scientific research poster (maximum 1000 words not including references).		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Provide an overview of your study, including rationale and aims	4
	2	Apply appropriate statistical methods to correctly analyse data and use technical terms accurately and consistently	2 3
	3	Thoughtfully interpret your results in the context of animal behaviour, outlined limitations and drawn accurate/defensible conclusions.	1 4
	4	Utilise a hierarchy of appealing visual and textual elements to logically and effectively explain your study, highlighting the most important results and insights. Use appropriate, well labelled figures/graphs/maps etc to explain your results with ap	4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy		

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

7.1. Schedule

PERIOD AND TOPIC	ACTIVITIES
Week 1	Introduction to the Study of Animal Behaviour & Housekeeping
Week 2	Proximate Causes of Behaviour
Week 3	Fieldtrip
Week 4	Evolution of Behaviour
Week 5	Nature and Nurture
Week 6	Foraging
Week 7	Animal Communication
Week 8	Aggression
Week 9	Migration and Movement
Week 10	Sexual Selection and Mating Systems
Week 11	Social Evolution
Week 12	Kinship and Cooperation
Week 13	Learning and Cultural Transmission

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

Please note that you need to have regular access to the resource(s) listed below. Resources may be required or recommended.

REQUIRED?	AUTHOR	YEAR	TITLE	EDITION	PUBLISHER
Recommended	Paul Martin, Patrick Bateson	2007	Measuring Behaviour	n/a	Cambridge University Press

8.2. Specific requirements

Students are required to bring their own hat, sunscreen, food, suitable covered clothing and water to the fieldwork session.

In Week 10 we will have additional class time (2 hours) outside of our normally scheduled tutorial session to present the Task 3 oral assessment

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Risk assessments have been performed for all field activities and a low level of health and safety risk exists. Some risks concerns may include working in an unknown environment as well as slip and trip hazards. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%

The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

You have not failed an assessment task in the course due to academic misconduct

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submission of assessment tasks may be penalised at the following maximum rate:

- 5% (of the assessment task's identified value) per day for the first two days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.
- 10% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the third day - 20% (of the assessment task's identified value) for the fourth day and subsequent days up to and including seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task.
- A result of zero is awarded for an assessment task submitted after seven days from the date identified as the due date for the assessment task. Weekdays and weekends are included in the calculation of days late. To request an extension you must contact your course coordinator to negotiate an outcome.

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au