

# ANM301 Animal Behaviour

**School:** School of Science, Technology and Engineering

2026 | Trimester 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 [unisc.edu.au](http://unisc.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
<b>BLENDED LEARNING</b>			
<b>Learning materials</b> – Prerecorded learning materials on Animal Behaviour theory	1hr	Week 1	12 times
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 1</b> – Tutorials reviewing learning material content and applying practical skills	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
<b>Fieldwork</b> – Fieldwork	6hrs	Week 6	Once Only
<b>Tutorial/Workshop 2</b> – 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.

## 5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

# 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 4 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 5	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	3	Oral	Individual	20%	10 minutes	Week 9	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

<b>GOAL:</b>	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.							
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Quiz/zes							
<b>AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:</b>								
<b>FORMAT:</b>	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).							
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <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> </tbody> </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	
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<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Problem solving, Information literacy							

### All - Assessment Task 2: Short report and reflection

<b>GOAL:</b>	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.																
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Report																
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<b>FORMAT:</b>	Short report (600 words)																
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<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Problem solving, Applying technologies, Information literacy																

**All - Assessment Task 3:** Group Oral Journal Presentation

<b>GOAL:</b>	<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"> <li>1) Communicate professionally and accurately the key concepts and results of a scientific paper related to one of the key themes in animal behaviour.</li> <li>2) Explain the methods and theoretical context of the study.</li> <li>3) Understand how information in peer-reviewed scientific articles is organised and structured.</li> <li>4) Critically assess information presented in primary scientific literature within the field of animal behaviour.</li> <li>5.) Work and collaborate as a team to communicate science</li> </ol>																			
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Oral																			
<b>AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:</b>																				
<b>FORMAT:</b>	<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>																			
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<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Information literacy																			

## All - Assessment Task 4: Scientific Poster

<b>GOAL:</b>	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.	
<b>PRODUCT:</b>	Artefact - Technical and Scientific, and Written Piece	
<b>AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:</b>		
<b>FORMAT:</b>	Your submission will take the form of a scientific research poster (maximum 1000 words not including references).	
<b>CRITERIA:</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Learning Outcome assessed</b>
	1	Provide an overview of your study, including rationale and aims <b>4</b>
	2	Apply appropriate statistical methods to correctly analyse data and use technical terms accurately and consistently <b>2 3</b>
	3	Thoughtfully interpret your results in the context of animal behaviour, outlined limitations and drawn accurate/defensible conclusions. <b>1 4</b>
	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 <b>4</b>
<b>GENERIC SKILLS:</b>	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	Evolution of Behaviour
Week 4	Nature and Nurture
Week 5	Foraging
Week 6	Animal Communication
Week 7	Aggression
Week 8	Migration and Movement
Week 9	Sexual Selection and Mating Systems
Week 10	Social Evolution
Week 11	Kinship and Cooperation
Week 12	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

You need regular access to the resource(s) below. Many texts are available as ebooks through the [Library](#) at no additional cost.

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 9 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:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

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 submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

Less than 15 minutes: No penalty

From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty

More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

### 10.4. 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>

### 10.5. 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.

### 10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- [UniSC Student Central](#)
- [UniSC Adelaide Student Central](#)