PS371-15 Animal Behaviour

20/21

Department
Psychology
Level
Undergraduate Level 3
Module leader
Olga Feher
Credit value
15
Module duration
12 weeks
Assessment
Multiple
Study location
University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This main aim of this module is to develop students' scientific understanding of the evolutionary approach to studying human psychology by examining the behaviour of non-human animals.

Module aims

The module will consider how animals behave in their natural environment, and why they behave in these ways. Its focus is on scientific ideas of broad applicability. The module takes a comparative approach across a broad range of animal taxa, and considers animal behaviour in an integrative framework, from the points of view of its causation, function, evolution and development.
Students will collect behavioural data in the field and/or in practical classes and will be required to explore, visualise and analyse the data using standard software packages. They will be taught the basics of sound and video analysis and how to design behavioural experiments to test hypotheses.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

1. 1. Introduction to animal behaviour and the integrative approach, Tinbergen’s 4 questions and different levels of analysis
2. Birdsong as a testcase for the integrative analysis of animal behaviour
3. Developmental and genetic bases of behaviour
4. Neural and physiological bases of behaviour (learning)
5. Predator avoidance and foraging
6. Principles of communication
7. Reproduction, parental care, mating systems
8. Social evolution: altruism, kin selection, conflict
9. Social behaviour and sociality: evolution, cooperation, individual differences
10. Comparative approaches to human behaviour
11. Revision Lecture
12. Revision Lecture

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Analyse animal behaviour as part of an integrative framework where all aspects of behaviour are considered (development, mechanisms, evolution, adaptive value)
- Apply animal behaviour data to inform knowledge of the evolution and genetic origins of human behavioural and psychological traits
- Understand and develop basic knowledge of the neural, genetic and physiological bases of behaviour and how these interact to produce behaviour
- Analyse different aspects of animal behaviour, such as communication, predator avoidance, foraging, reproduction, and parental and social behaviour;
- Develop and apply collection, analysis and presentation of behavioural data and experimental design skills.

Indicative reading list

Rubenstein, D. R. & Alcock, J. (2019). Animal Behavior, Eleventh Edition. Oxford University Press.

Searcy, W. A. & Nowicki, S. (2005). The Evolution of Animal Communication. Princeton University Press.

Subject specific skills

Analysis of animal behaviour and consider this as part of a broader behavioural framework
Understanding and analysis of behavioural and psychological traits
Data collection, analysis and presentation of behavioural data and experimental design skills.

Transferable skills

effective communication skills to develop a cogent argument supported by relevant evidence and being sensitive to the needs and expectations of an audience

critically evaluation primary and secondary sources
effective personal planning skills
data analysis and interpretation

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	12 sessions of 2 hours (16%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	2 hours (1%)
Private study	115 hours (77%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Guided Student Study

Other activity description

Visit to Twycross Zoo

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Assessment component			
Literature review	30%		Yes (extension)
Reassessment component is the same			

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification

Assessment component

Presentation	10%		No

1 x 15 minute presentation on individually analysed data

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Online Examination	60%		No

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment group S

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification

Assessment component

Literature review	30%		Yes (extension)

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Presentation	10%		No

Reassessment component is the same

Assessment component

Online Examination	60%		No

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification

Reassessment component is the same

Feedback on assessment

On oral presentation: feedback form accompanying mark that will give constructive feedback on both format (including slides, props, presentation skills) and on content (data collection, exploration, visualisation, analysis).\r\nOn lit review: feedback form that will consider the relevance and breadth of background research, discussion skills, ability to summarise the literature and detect relevant connections and overarching theoretical issues/hypotheses.\r\nFormative feedback: bi-weekly online quizzes. These will be optional and not marked, but will provide students and the instructor feedback on students¿ understanding of major concepts.\r\n

Past exam papers for PS371

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C800 Undergraduate Psychology
- Year 4 of UPSA-C801 Undergraduate Psychology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 3 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C804 Undergraduate Psychology with Education Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 3 of UPHA-VL78 BA in Philosophy with Psychology
- Year 4 of UPHA-VL79 BA in Philosophy with Psychology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 1 of TPSS-C8P9 Postgraduate Taught Psychological Research

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 3 of UPSA-C802 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics