

The Philosophy of Animal Minds

PHI4930

Fall 2019

University of Florida

MWF 1:55-2:45

Course Syllabus

<u>Professor:</u>	Amber Ross amber.ross@ufl.edu
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<u>Professor Phone:</u>	352-273-1811
<u>Course Location:</u>	MAT 0005
<u>Course Times:</u>	MWF Period 7
<u>Office hours:</u>	M & W 3-4pm & by appointment
<u>Course Website:</u>	Canvas https://elearning.ufl.edu/

Course Description:

How do animals experience the world, and how is their experience similar to and different from ours? We need to be able to answer this question for many practical and theoretical purposes- what are the limits, both scientific and philosophical, of our ability to answer it? In this course we will address questions such as: What is a mind? Which animals have minds? How can we learn about them? What kinds of emotions and thoughts do nonhuman animals have? Is language required for thought? Who is self-conscious? Can animals have moral agency?

The course is an examination of the philosophy of animal minds, and also draws from natural and social sciences: cognitive ethology and psychology. We will use a

philosophical approach to examine several empirical examples and case studies, including: Cheney and Seyfarth's vervet monkey research, Thorndike's cat puzzle boxes, Jensen's research into humans and chimpanzees and the ultimatum game, Pankseep and Burgdorf's research on rat laughter, and Clayton and Emery's research on memory and metamemory in scrub-jays.

Course Readings

All required readings will be posted under “Files” on our Canvas website:

<https://elearning.ufl.edu>

A very useful online guide for writing philosophy papers is available here:

<http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html>

Graded Requirements:

All assignments to be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Research Project (55%)

Research Paper, 40%: The main goal of this course is select and complete your own original research project and to present that research to the class. The class will read an article that you select to accompany your presentation and to engage in your own original research. Your research paper will be due on the Monday of exam week, and is worth **40%** of your final grade. Length will be 2500-3200 words

Research Presentation, Handout, and article selection (10%): Beginning in November, the content of the course will be decided by students' research projects. Each student will give a **short (max 15 min) presentation** on their research topic, followed by a short (10 min) Question and Answer session. You must provide the class with a **handout** to accompany the presentation that summarizes the main points of your presentation, and you will also select an **article** for the class to accompany your presentation. Suggested length for the handout is 1-2pgs, and you must submit your article to me at least 4 days in advance of your presentation for approval, and your handout must be submitted at least 1 day in advance of your presentation so that it may be printed and distributed to the class. The presentation and handout combined are worth 10% of your final grade.

Research Paper Proposal & Outline (5%):

A proposal for your research paper is due on **Fri Oct 18th**. We will discuss how to complete this assignment as the date approaches.

An outline of the content and structure of your research paper will be due on **Wed Oct 30th**. We will discuss how to complete this assignment as the date approaches.

The proposal and outline will be worth a combined total of **5%** of your final grade.

Other Written Work (35%):

Short Paper (20%): Due **Mon Sept 30th**. You will be provided with a set of topics on which to write your short paper. Length will be approx. 900–1200 words, and I will provide you with a paper topic.

Weekly Discussion Board Posts (15%): Each week you will post to the class discussion board. Students will be divided into three groups and will upload a 1-2 paragraph post by 7pm either Sunday, Tuesday, or Thursday regarding the reading assigned for the next class meeting. You should use these posts as a chance to engage with the text- this may involve asking a questions(s) or raising idea(s) concerning your assigned reading.

On weeks with holidays, groups with missing days will be split in half and will post on days when classes are held for that week. Discussion posts will not be graded individually but you will receive a cumulative grade based on overall effort you put into them.

Other Graded Requirements (10%)

Class attendance and participation (10%): You are required to come to class on time and prepared, and to contribute in a positive way to class. Being prepared includes having completed the reading. There is a lot of reading in this class, and the reading is difficult and dense.

Grading Scale	
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-98
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63

E	0-59
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Other Requirements:

- **Regular Attendance, Reading, and Note-Taking:** In order to have the fullest understanding of the material you will need to be present for each class meeting and take notes on the class discussion.
- **Bring the Text and Paper + Pen/Pencil to Class:** Each class, we will look at the readings in depth and you will want to be able to mark your text where appropriate. Please bring something to write with and on to each class. If you do not print the text, please bring a device with the text downloaded and ready to access during class.
- **Presentation Meeting- optional & by request:** I will hold extra office hours for seminar presenters beginning in November. I will be available to meet with each presenter the week before they present to discuss their upcoming presentation.
- **Participation, Presentation Q&A:** A short Question and Answer session will follow every presentation. There will not be time for every student to ask a question following every presentation, but at minimum you should plan to ask 1 question per presentation week.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Most instances of academic dishonesty can be avoided by thoroughly citing the resources you have used to help you understand the topic on which you're writing. **If you have read something that helped you understand the material, cite it!** Failure to cite sources is the most common (and easily avoidable) academic offense.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states:

"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows:

“A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.”

Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Campus Resources

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575

University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies

Academic Resources

E-learning Technical Support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to

Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Library Support <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

Writing Studio 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Attendance, Illness, Religious Holidays, and Twelve Day Rule

Requirements for class attendance, religious holidays, and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Excerpt from the statement on absences:

*Absences count from the first class meeting. In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved.***

**If you think you have an acceptable reason to be excused for your absence, you must contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) to receive an excuse letter. This prevents me from having to make difficult discriminations between excuses, and it provides you with something you can use for all of your missed classes.

E-mail guidelines:

(1) If you need some practical information about the course you should **look at most recently updated syllabus or on the website**. E-mails requesting information which is available on the most recently updated syllabus or on the website will not be answered.

(2) If you want to discuss a substantive philosophical question you should bring it up in class or come to my office hours. E-mails asking substantive philosophical questions will not be answered. (Except maybe by a note suggesting that you come to an office hour.)

If, after reading (1) & (2) you still think you should e-mail me, you are welcome to do so at amber.ross@ufl.edu. I will try to answer e-mail within a week. You must use your ‘ufl’ address.

Please note: I may not read email between 5pm and 9am.

How to do well in this course:

1. **Be sure to read the assigned material before lecture.** This will help to ensure that our class time is quality time.
2. **After class, re-read the material for the session**, paying special attention to the questions that you had before. Hopefully the material will make much more sense to you now.
3. **Bring specific questions with you to class.** Even if there are aspects of the readings or study questions you didn't fully grasp, the fact that you tried should help you to narrow down what it is that you don't get.
4. **See me in office hours**, if there are still questions you are unclear about. That's what office hours are for. Don't be shy.
5. **Manage your time well.** Many students make the mistake of waiting until a few days before papers are due to start writing. That is *bad* time management. The **same number of hours** devoted to the material BEFORE class can lead to a much more efficient use of your time, better understanding, and higher grades.

On Reading Philosophy Texts:

You will be expected to have done the assigned reading **before** you come to class to be able to follow the lecture and participate in tutorial discussion. Learning philosophy is as much learning a style of thinking and reasoning as it is learning certain contents. Therefore it is important that you try to participate actively and learn to engage with the readings critically.

You should budget enough time for the reading to be able to read each piece **at least three times**. Don't expect to be able to 'breeze through' the texts and you can avoid a lot of frustration. For all the readings you should have a pen and paper ready to take notes as you read. Philosophical writing is concerned with advancing and defending arguments. Your task will be to try to reconstruct the arguments and to critically evaluate them.

The first reading of the text should be fairly quick. Your goal here should be to get a first, rough sense of the general argument the author is advancing and the rough structure of the text. What is his or her main thesis? (write this down!) Where in the text is s/he arguing for it? Where does s/he address objections? Where does he discuss qualifications? Where does s/he motivate the argument? Don't worry, if during the first reading you don't yet understand how precisely the author is arguing for a thesis.

The second reading should be devoted to giving a reconstruction of the argument that is as sympathetic as possible. Now you should spend a lot of time on trying to understand how the author supports the main thesis, and how s/he might address potential objections. Here it is usually useful to try to jot down the following: What are the premises of the argument? How are the premises themselves supported? For example the author might appeal to shared intuitions or might claim that the premises are self-evident. What are the

steps which are meant to get the author from the premises to the conclusion? (Here worlds like ‘because’ and ‘therefore’ can provide a clue.) You might think of yourself as engaging in a dialogue with the text here. Ask critical questions of the text, such as “You say that all simple ideas are copies of impressions. Why should I be compelled to accept this?” Then search the text for answers. At this stage your aim should not yet be to try to discover flaws or problems in the argument. Aim to make the argument as strong as possible.

Finally it is time to be critical. During a third reading you ought to try to see if you can uncover weaknesses in the arguments. If someone would want to disagree with a conclusion, there are two general ways in which one might attack the author’s arguments. One, you can disagree with one or more of the premises. That is you might accept that *if* we grant the premises, *then* the conclusion follows, but you might disagree with one or more of the premises. (But then you should ask yourself how you would respond to the attempt to motivate the premises.) Or, two, you might disagree with one or more of the steps in the argument. That is, you might be willing to accept the premises, but you might deny that this commits you to the conclusion as well. If you have an objection of the latter kind you should try to explain why it is possible to accept the author’s premises and yet deny his or her conclusions. (Of course you also might have objections of both kinds.)

A careful reading of a difficult text takes time. Learn to read patiently and slowly, and before you get frustrated, remember that even professional philosophers struggle with some of the texts you are reading. One of the most wonderful aspects of reading philosophy is that it allows you to engage in conversations with some of the deepest and most original thinkers. Enjoy the challenge!

TENTATIVE Reading & Discussion Schedule

While we will largely stick to this schedule, we may decide to cut or extend some topics.

Most readings are **Required**; when readings are suggested, they will appear in brackets [...] and be noted as such. **Check Canvas Regularly for the current schedule!**

Week 1: Introduction

Aug 21 Wed Introduction to course

Aug 23 Fri Lurz, *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*, Introduction Sec 1-5

Week 2: Science of the Animal Mind

Aug 26 Mon Andrews, *The Animal Mind*, Ch1

Begin Discussion Board Posts Group A

Aug 28 Wed
Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 1, cont.

[Suggested: Dennett, *Kinds of Minds*, Preface and Ch 1]

Aug 30 Fri Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 2, sec 2.2-end

[Suggested: Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 2 to sec 2.2]

Week 3: Intentionality

Sep 2 Mon **No Classes**

Dennett, *KoM*, Ch 2

Sep 4 Wed

Begin Discussion Board Posts Group B

(1/2 Monday B group post to discussion board)

Sep 6 Fri Dennett, *KoM*, Ch 2, cont.

(1/2 Monday B group post to discussion board)

Week 4: Consciousness

Sep 9 Mon Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 3, to sec 3.6 (pp51-70)
External Article TBA

Discussion Board Posts Group A

Sep 11 Wed Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 3, Sec 3.7

Sep 13 Fri Consciousness, cont.

Week 5: Self Consciousness

Sep 16 Mon Bekoff and Sherman, "Reflections on Animal Selves"

Discussion Board Posts Group B

Sep 18 Wed Suddendorf and Corballis, "Behavioral evidence for mental time travel in non-human animals"

Sep 20 Fri Self-consciousness, cont.

External Article TBA

Week 6: Kinds of Minds

Sep 23 Mon Dennett, *KoM*, Ch 4

External Article TBA

[Suggested: Dennett, *KoM*, Ch 3]

Discussion Board Posts Group A

Sep 25 Wed Dennett, *KoM*, Ch 4

Sep 27 Fri Dennett, *KoM*, Ch 4

Week 7: Communication

Sep 30 Mon Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 5

No Discussion Board Posts this week

Oct 2 Wed Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 5

Oct 4 Fri **No Classes, Homecoming**

Week 8: Knowing Minds

Oct 7 Mon Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 6

External Article TBA

Discussion Board Posts Group B

Oct 9 Wed Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 6

Oct 11 Fri Andrews, *TAM*, Ch 6

Week 9: Emotions

Oct 14 Mon Robert Roberts, "The Sophistication of Non-human Emotions"

Discussion Board Posts Group A

Oct 16 Wed "Love and Friendship"

Oct 18 Fri "Grief, Sadness, and the Bones of Elephants"

Research Paper Proposal Due

Week 10: Emotions

Oct 21 Mon Reading TBD

Discussion Board Posts Group B

Oct 23 Wed **Professor Away- TBD**

Oct 25 Fri **Professor Away- TBD**

Week 11: Topic TBD by class interest

Oct 28 Mon **Professor Away- TBD**

Oct 30 Wed Reading TBD

Discussion Board Posts Group B

Research Paper Outline Due

Nov 1 Fri Reading TBD

Week 12: Topic TBD by Research Projects

Nov 4 Mon Presentations or Lecture, Reading TBD

Discussion Board Posts Group A

Nov 6 Wed Presentations, Readings TBD

Nov 8 Fri Presentations, Readings TBD

Week 13: Topic TBD by Research Projects

Nov 11 Mon **No Classes**

Nov 13 Wed Presentations, Readings TBD

Discussion Board Posts Group B

(1/2 Monday B group post to discussion board)

Nov 15 Fri Presentations, Readings TBD

(1/2 Monday B group post to discussion board)

Week 14: Topic TBD by Research Projects

Nov 18 Mon Presentations, Readings TBD

Discussion Board Posts Group A

Nov 20 Wed Presentations, Readings TBD

Nov 22 Fri Presentations, Readings TBD

Week 15: Topic TBD by Research Projects

Nov 25 Mon Presentations, Readings TBD

Friday B group posts to discussion board

Monday B group does not post

Nov 27 Wed **No Classes, Thanksgiving Break**

Nov 29 Fri **No Classes, Thanksgiving Break**

Week 16: Topic TBD by Research Projects

Dec 2 Mon Presentations; Readings TBD

Discussion Board Posts Group B

Dec 4 Wed Presentations; Readings TBD

Dec 9 Mon Research Paper Due