

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
LONDON CANADA

Department of Psychology
Fall 2026

Psychology 2210A Section 001

Introduction to Animal Cognition

1 Calendar Description

An introduction to animal cognition, including topics such as classical and operant conditioning, memory, timing, and categorization.

Antirequisites: Psychology 2280E

Prerequisites: A mark of at least 60% in 1.0 credits of Psychology at the 1000 level.

3 lecture hours; Course Weight: 0.5

Unless otherwise stated, students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all prerequisites prior to enrolling. Where prerequisites have not been met, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the course. In accordance with Western policy, this decision is not subject to appeal.

In the event of a discrepancy between this outline and Senate or University policies, the latter shall prevail. The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of this course outline for pedagogical or operational reasons. Any such changes will be communicated to students in a timely manner.

2 Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Morgan Gustison
Office & Phone: SSC 9232
Office Hours: TBD
Email: mgustiso@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: TBD
Office: TBD
Office Hours: TBD
Email: TBD

Time and Location of Classes: Mondays 1:30-4:30pm in SEB-1059

3 Course Materials

Olmstead, M. C. & Kuhlmeier, V. A. (2015). *Comparative Cognition*. Cambridge University Press (approx 76\$ Amazon)

4 Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The following table outlines the course learning outcomes and how they are assessed.

Learning Outcome	Learning Activity	Assessment
Depth and Breadth of Knowledge 1. Describe and explain history, key concepts and research findings in animal cognition. 2. Summarize contributions of animal cognition to psychology, neuroscience, and biology. 3. Compare cognition across multiple species and identify evolutionary pressures.	Course Readings Lectures	Assignments Quizzes Tests & Final Exam
Knowledge of Methodologies 1. Recognize and compare experimental approaches used in animal cognition. 2. Describe methods used in the discipline to address challenges and limitations to studying cognition in animals.	Course Readings Lectures	Quizzes Tests & Final Exam
Application of Knowledge 1. Identify the aspects of cognition that are conserved across humans and other animals. 2. Generate and discuss research questions about animal cognition. 3. Critique and synthesize animal cognition research.	Course Readings Lectures Assignments	Assignments Quizzes Tests & Final Exam
Communication Skills 1. Communicate ideas and research-based evidence in professional writing.	Assessments	Assignments Tests & Final Exam
Awareness of Limits of Knowledge 1. Identify the unique challenges of studying animal cognition. 2. Identify outstanding questions in current research on animal cognition.	Course Readings Lectures	Assignments Quizzes Tests & Final Exam

5 Evaluation

Quizzes: 10%

Assignments: 10%

Test 1: 25%

Test 2: 25%

Final Exam: 30%

Quizzes

Quizzes will be timed open book assessments completed on Brightspace. The quizzes will be based on textbook material and are intended to help review relevant weekly course material.

Assignments

Students will complete two of three thought papers throughout the term. Thought papers are available for each of the three course units. The first available thought paper is based on course material covered in the first unit, the second paper is based on material covered in the second unit, and the third paper is based on material covered in the third unit. In each paper, students will apply a specific cognitive concept from that course unit to explain non-human animal behavior that they observe in everyday life (e.g., activities of a personal pet, animals in nature, reading a news article, social media video, etc.). Each thought paper will be no more than 250 words, and a rubric will be made available on Brightspace.

Tests & Final Exam

Test 1 will assess all lecture and textbook material from the first course unit. Test 2 will assess all lecture and textbook content from second course unit. The final exam will assess all lecture and textbook content from the third course unit. Although the tests and final exam are not cumulative, some foundational concepts covered earlier in the course will carry over to later assessments. Tests and the final exam will follow a similar format including multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, definition, and short answer questions.

The evaluation and testing formats for this course were created to assess the learning objectives as listed in section 4 and are necessary for meeting these learning objectives. All evaluations listed in this course outline are required components of the course and together account for 100% of the final grade. Weightings and assessment formats may be adjusted where required to support course learning objectives, with appropriate notice to students.

Policy on Missing Coursework

Students who encounter extenuating circumstances affecting their academic responsibilities may submit a request for academic consideration in accordance with Western University's Academic Consideration policies. Requests must be submitted through the [Student Absence Portal](#) and may require supporting documentation.

Specific policies for missed assessments in this course are as follows:

Quizzes: Only the highest 8 of 9 quiz scores will be counted towards the final grade. Due to built-in flexibility, requests for academic consideration may be denied.

Assignments: Students can select which two thought papers they want to complete of the three available papers. In addition, there will be a no-late-penalty period of 48h past the original deadline, during which a mark deduction will not be applied. Due to this built-in flexibility, requests for academic consideration may be denied.

Tests and Final Exam: Students who receive approved academic consideration may take the make-up versions of the Tests/Exam. Tests 1 and 2 required an approved documented or undocumented absence. The Final Exam is a designated assessment and requires an approved documented absence. Make-ups for Tests 1 and 2 will be arranged 1-2 weeks after the original test. The make-up Final Exam will be arranged during the official make-up period (early January for Fall courses and early May for Winter courses). Only one make-up will be offered per test/exam. Students with approved academic consideration for both the original and make-up test/exam will receive a SPC in the course. In order to complete the course, a student with SPC must take the corresponding test/exam the next time that the course is offered. It is the student's responsibility to contact the next course instructor (that instructor may be different from the current instructor) at the beginning of that term to arrange their test/exam.

Make-up Tests/Exam Format: The format of make-up Tests and the Final Exam may differ from the original test/exam. Although the content is similar, the format may be biased more towards question types that require recall of course material (e.g., fill in the blank without a word bank, definitions, and short answer questions) instead of recognition (multiple choice and true/false).

Course grades within the Psychology Department are expected to be distributed around the following averages:

70%	1000-level to 2099-level courses
72%	2100-2999-level courses
75%	3000-level courses
80%	4000-level courses

In the event that course grades are significantly higher or lower than these averages, instructors may be required to make adjustments to course grades. Such adjustment might include the normalization of one or more course components and/or the re-weighting of various course components.

Policy on Grade Rounding

Course grades are rounded to the nearest whole number. No additional assignments will be offered to enhance a final grade. Requests to change a grade because it is needed for a future program will not be considered.

6 Assessment/Evaluation Schedule

Quizzes: Timed open book quizzes on Brightspace to be completed by 11:55 PM on Tuesdays after the relevant lecture. There are 9 quizzes for weeks 2-4, 7-9, and 11-13. Only the top 8 quizzes will be counted towards the final grade. This means that students can miss one quiz without penalty.

Assignments: Thought papers are due October 6, November 10, and December 8 by 11:55 PM on Brightspace. Students select and submit only 2 of the 3 potential thought papers. If all three are submitted, only the first two papers will be counted towards the final grade.

Test 1: October 19 during class. Students will have 2 hours to complete the test.

Test 2: November 16 during class. Students will have 2 hours to complete the test.

Final Exam: Scheduled during final exam period (December 11-22). Students will have 2 hours to complete the exam.

7 Class Schedule

Week	Date	Lecture Topics	Textbook	Assessments
Unit 1: Fundamentals of Animal Cognition				
1	September 14	Introduction & History of Comparative Cognition	Ch. 1	
2	September 21	Sensory Systems & Memory I	Ch. 2 & 3	Quiz 1
3	September 28	Memory II & Associative Processes	Ch. 3 & 4	Quiz 2
4	October 5	Decision Making	Ch. 7	Quiz 3 Paper 1 (Oct 6)
5	Reading Week			
6	October 19	Test 1 (lecture/textbook material for weeks 1-4)		
Unit 2: How Animals Understand the Physical World				
7	October 26	Space, Time & Number	Ch. 5 & 6	Quiz 4
8	November 2	Causality & Tool Use	Ch. 8	Quiz 5
9	November 9	Categories & Concepts	Ch. 9	Quiz 6 Paper 2 (Nov 10)
10	November 16	Test 2 (lecture/textbook material for weeks 7-9)		

Unit 3: How Animals Understand the Social World				
11	November 23	Social Cognition & Prosociality	Ch. 10 & 11	Quiz 7
12	November 30	Communication	Ch. 12	Quiz 8
13	December 7	Social Learning	Ch. 13	Quiz 9 Paper 3 (Dec 8)
Final Exam Period (Dec 11-22)		Final Exam (lecture/textbook material for weeks 11-13)		

8 Academic Integrity

Scholastic offences are treated seriously at Western University. Students are expected to understand and comply with the University's standards of academic integrity. Scholastic offences may result in penalties up to and including expulsion from the University. Please read [Western's Scholastic Offences](#) policy for definitions and examples of Scholastic offences.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices are allowed during lectures for course-related (e.g. note-taking) purposes. Students who wish to use their devices for activities that are not course-related are encouraged to sit in the back of the lecture room to minimize disruption to their peers. Electronic devices are not permitted during tests and the final exam without prior accommodation approval.

Plagiarism Detection Software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western and Turnitin.com.

Use of AI

Responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools is **permitted** in this course as a support for learning, not as a substitute for critical thinking or scholarly work. All use of artificial intelligence tools must comply with Western University's academic integrity standards.

Students may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Copilot) for:

- Brainstorming ideas or refining research questions
- Improving clarity, grammar, or organization
- Preliminary or background exploration of topics

AI must not be used to:

- Generate full drafts or final versions of assignments
- Replace analysis, interpretation, or synthesis
- Fabricate, misrepresent, or cite sources that the student has not independently consulted
- Bypass engagement with course materials

You are ultimately responsible for all work submitted under your name. AI output should be critically evaluated, substantially revised, and integrated thoughtfully, not copied verbatim.

All written assignments must include a brief AI Usage Statement, indicating:

- Which tools were used (if any)
- The purpose for which they were used
- How the output was modified and incorporated

Assignments submitted without an AI Usage Statement will not be accepted. Misuse of AI or failure to disclose its use may constitute a scholastic offence and will be addressed in accordance with Western University's academic integrity policies. Students are responsible for ensuring that all work complies with Western's scholastic integrity standards.

Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams will be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

9 Academic Accommodations and Accessible Education

Western University is committed to providing an accessible learning environment. Students with disabilities or medical conditions requiring accommodation are encouraged to contact Accessible Education as early as possible. Accommodations will be implemented in accordance with University policy. Please review [Western's policy on academic accommodations](#) for student with disabilities. Accessible Education provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western. If you think you may qualify for ongoing accommodation that will be recognized in all your courses, visit [Accessible Education](#) for more information. Email: aeu@uwo.ca Phone: 519 661-2147

10 Absence & Academic Consideration

Please review Western's policy on [Academic Considerations](#):

11 Other Information

Helpful Websites

- Western's academic policies are available at the [Office of the Registrar](#).

- Departmental policies are available at the [Psychology Department website](#).
- Learning supports available at [Learning Development & Success](#).

Well-being

Western University provides a range of supports to promote student well-being. Students are encouraged to seek assistance when needed. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Health and Wellness at Western](#) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you.

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, please read the [policy documentation](#) on requests for relief. Please first contact the course instructor. If your issue is not resolved, you may make your appeal in writing to the Undergraduate Chair in Psychology (psyugrd@uwo.ca).

Copyright Statement

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, videos and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute any course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without the instructor's written consent.