Module Specification

Animal Behaviour and Cognition

Version: 2024-25, v2.0, 30 Aug 2024

Contents

Part 1: Information

Module title: Animal Behaviour and Cognition

Module code: USPJJB-15-3

Level: Level 6

For implementation from: 2024-25

UWE credit rating: 15

ECTS credit rating: 7.5

College: College of Health, Science & Society

School: CHSS School of Social Sciences

Partner institutions: None

Field: Psychology

Module type: Module

Pre-requisites: None

Excluded combinations: None

Co-requisites: None

Continuing professional development: No

Professional, statutory or regulatory body requirements: None

Part 2: Description

Overview: This module explores a wide range of non-human animal behaviour from both a developmental and functional perspective, but also its relationship with the wider ecosystem and environment.

Features: Not applicable

Educational aims: The module aims to equip students to approach the explanation of animal behaviours in terms of their evolutionary underpinnings and behavioural

ecology. Through the exploration of topics such as deception in insects, communication in birds, and problem solving in primates, students will explore and analyse diverse behaviours from across the animal kingdom in terms of both proximal and ultimate explanations.

Outline syllabus: Topics covered in the module may include:

Functions of Animal Behaviour: Principals of Evolution and Natural Selection (Adaptiveness; Kin Selection & Parental Care; Sexual Selection; Tinbergen).

Animal Senses, Perception and Cognition: Contributions to Fitness

Development of Animal Behaviour (Instinct; Learning Theory; Animal Memory), including animal play, imprinting, parenting and the development of birdsong

Causation of Animal Behaviour (Decision Making and Motivation: Mating Systems and Foraging)

Animal Culture and Social organisation, group living, dominance and cooperation

Coordination of Animal Behaviour: Communication; Language & Signals

Animal-human conflict and challenges to wildlife and biodiversity

Animal behaviour and its significance to addressing challenges to wildlife and biodiversity

Animal behavioural research methods and evaluation 1 (including field activities)

Animal behavioural research methods and evaluation 1 (including assessment workshops).

Part 3: Teaching and learning methods

Teaching and learning methods: The curriculum is interspersed with lecture content and outdoor activities which familiarise students with animal behavioural research methods and ethics. All learning activities are also shaped with a view to students considering the implications of the subject matter for humans, for sustainability and the conservation of biodiversity. To illustrate, students will be required to apply their understanding of animal behaviour to applied challenges such as: evacuation and relocation of animals from at-risk habitats (e.g. bush fires or deforestation); animal welfare in zoos, and communicating animal behavioural science to the general public.

Module Learning outcomes: On successful completion of this module students will achieve the following learning outcomes.

MO1 Understand and apply a behavioural ecology approach to analysing animal behaviour and integrate both proximal and ultimate levels of behavioural analysis and explanation.

MO2 Recognise and evaluate ways in which their animal behavioural knowledge can be applied to threats to sustainability and biodiversity, and the response to these threats e.g. conservation strategies or education

MO3 Identify and apply appropriate research design, behavioural measurement techniques and ethical considerations to animal behaviours of interest to the student.

MO4 Integrate ideas and findings from previous research and their own observational data collection skills to formulate their own evaluation.

MO5 Communicate ideas and research, both effectively and fluently, by a range of potential media and to different audiences.

Hours to be allocated: 150

Contact hours:

Independent study/self-guided study = 117 hours

Face-to-face learning = 33 hours

Total = 0

Reading list: The reading list for this module can be accessed at readinglists.uwe.ac.uk via the following link

http://readinglists.uwe.ac.uk/lists/24411B02-E375-758E-76B2-456CC0D776AE.html

Part 4: Assessment

Assessment strategy: The module has two summative assessments which build on a formatively assessed analytic report. This design supports students to engage with summative assessments that are: scaffolded; designed as 'real-world' tasks allowing for learner creativity and choice, and support key employability skills and competences.

Formative Assessment:

In the opening five weeks of the module, the lecture content supports students to undertake an analysis of the behavioural ecology of a non-human species of their choice, and then submit a short report of this analysis for formative feedback (1000 words max).

The formative analytic report that students submit for feedback will include a description of: i) the animal of choice, ii) its natural habitat, and iii) at least two broad behavioural features of the animal (e.g. foraging / hunting, navigation, mating, parenting, predator evasion, communication, social affiliation). In addition to this descriptive account, the report will then also include an analysis of the proximate and ultimate explanations of the selected behaviours. This will be achieved through comparing and contrasting the behaviours of their chosen species with those of another animal exhibiting a distinctly different behavioural profile.

The purpose of this report is to provide the basis for subsequent summative assessment, and students will receive feedback to help develop the summative assessment pieces. Formative feedback provided to the student will focus on: i) developing their conceptual understanding; ii) guiding further reading, and, iii) facilitating students to consider the applied implications of their analysis. i.e. they will

be helped to consider and further explore how the behavioural ecology of the animal might be applied to issues such as: improving the human-animal interface; conservation education; captive care; captive or wild habitat augmentation; or species relocation/re-introduction.

Summative Assessment:

Task 1:

Intervention Proposal (1200 words)

Using their prior analysis in the formative assessment report and the feedback they receive, students will then complete an intervention proposal. The students will be provided with headings and maximum 1200 word limit to synthesise the information from their formatively assessed analysis and subsequent reading in order to create a proposal that:

Identifies a behavioural or conservation challenge to their species named in the formative analytic report

articulates a proposed intervention to respond to the challenge

presents a concise and relevant review of what is already known about the species and relevant behaviours and underpinning the proposed intervention

communicates a method for evaluating the proposed intervention (including detail of data collection and ethical considerations)

Task 2:

Coursework Funding Application (1500 words)

Using their analysis presented in the formative assessment report and the feedback provided, students will complete a funding application for a public engagement grant.

The application will use the structure and criteria from an authentic grant process supported by the Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour.

Guided by their formative feedback, students are required to:

summarise the behavioural ecology of the species discussed in their formative report;

explain the value of engaging the public with this information (e.g. conservation, education)

identify how they would approach articulation of this information for a public audience (e.g. film, school outreach talks; short publication) and provide indicative materials illustrating their approach (not included in the word count).

Both assessment tasks will be accompanied by full assessment briefs and criteria, and will support the student in achieving all module learning outcomes.

In addition, the intervention and grant proposals have also been selected for their relevance to real-world tasks and the professional skills we are seeking to nurture in our graduates. They will demonstrate to future stakeholders (including potential employers) the student's skills in producing outputs with real-world impact and relevance. Through the summative feedback, learner choice, and bespoke nature of the assessment and topic focus, students will have the opportunity to produce original and innovative work.

Assessment tasks:

Written Assignment (First Sit)
Description: Funding Application (1500 words)
Weighting: 60 %
Final assessment: No
Group work: No
Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO5

Written Assignment (First Sit)

Description: Intervention Proposal (1200 words)

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: Funding Application (1500 words)

Weighting: 60 %

Final assessment: No

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

Written Assignment (Resit)

Description: Intervention Proposal (1200 words)

Weighting: 40 %

Final assessment: Yes

Group work: No

Learning outcomes tested: MO1, MO2, MO3, MO4, MO5

Part 5: Contributes towards

This module contributes towards the following programmes of study:

Criminology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Sociology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BSc (Hons) 2018-19

Psychology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][PT][Frenchay][8yrs] BSc (Hons) 2018-19

Criminology with Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology with Criminology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Psychology with Criminology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Criminology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Sociology with Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Sociology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Sociology with Psychology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2019-20

Sociology with Psychology [Frenchay] BSc (Hons) 2022-23

Criminology with Psychology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Criminology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Criminology with Psychology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology with Criminology [Sep][PT][Frenchay][6yrs] BSc (Hons) 2020-21

Psychology with Criminology [Sep][SW][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][FT][Frenchay][4yrs] BSc (Hons) 2021-22

Psychology with Criminology {Foundation} [Sep][SW][Frenchay][5yrs] BSc (Hons)
2020-21