

BIOE 409 - Behavior & Evolution Discussion

Course Information:

Teaching Assistant: Alexis Billings

Email: alexis.billings@umontana.edu

Office: HS 210

Office hours: Monday 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

Term: Fall 2015

Credits: 1

Location & Time: HS 108; Monday 2:10-3:00 or Wednesday 1:10-2:00

Course Description:

This course will complement BIOE406, introducing students to primary literature related to the general topic of behavior and evolution, and provide them with constructive feedback on writing skills. Course outcomes include providing students with an introduction to the literature and methods of the study of animal behavioral ecology and meaningful feedback on the art of effective written communication.

Assessments:

1. Discussion writing assessments and participation:

Students will participate in a weekly discussion section of supplemental readings and complete 5 short synopses throughout the semester. The 5 written assignments will be concise paragraphs of the paper for the week. Students may pick to write a synopsis on any of the assigned supplemental readings. The synopsis needs to be emailed to the TA (Alexis Billings; alexis.billings@umontan.edu) BEFORE the class period. The synopses should include the following things (however, if these are not in the paper, do not force it).

Background: 2-3 sentences

Hypotheses & predictions: 1-2 sentences

Methods: 1 sentence

Results: 2-3 sentences

Broader implications: 1-2 sentences

2. Written Assignment:

The written assignment consists of a topic chosen by the student and approved by the instructor, and involves a research paper of 2 – 3 pages in length. Emphasis for grading will be on the quality of the writing, including organization, grammar, polish and style, and students are expected to show drafts of their paper to others for comments prior to turning the paper in. Students will revise and continue to polish their paper for two additional rounds, for a total of three times graded (once by the TA and twice by the instructor).

Grading Rubric:

Written Assignment:

Outline	20%
First version	20%
Final version	30%
Synopses:	20%
Participation:	10%

Learning Outcomes:

- At the end of this course students should be comfortable reading, evaluating, and discussing current and classic literature in the fields of Animal Behavior and Evolutionary Biology.
- Students will have honed their writing skills, writing, and then repeatedly revising a term paper to improve their fluency, grammatical accuracy, and style.
- Students will be comfortable writing effective thesis statements, designing an effective paper structure, using effective transition sentences to connect topics in adjacent paragraphs, and crafting sentences with elegance and style.
- At the end of this semester students will have an essay that is polished and professional, perfect for inclusion in job or other applications.