Class Time: Monday-Friday (1:00 – 4:00 PM)
Roger Milliken Science Center (RMSC) 330
The hours for the daily lab (consisting of training your rat to play basketball) are flexible for you and your partner, but your rat has to be trained every day, including weekends. You and your partner can share responsibility for daily training.

Instructor: Alliston K. Reid, Ph.D.
Office: RMSC 231C
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Email: ReidAK@wofford.edu (an easy way to contact me)


Prerequisites: None – students of all majors are welcome. No previous training in psychology is required.

Course Description:
This course explores the ways in which animals of many species perceive the world, communicate, solve problems, remember events and locations, forage for food, and interact socially with each other and with humans. We ask: How are their mental lives similar or different from ours? We will study a broad range of animal cognition by: (a) watching video documentaries of animal behavior, (b) reading an introductory textbook that surveys areas of comparative cognition, (c) complete and present individual projects focusing on particular topics in cognition, and (d) training our rats each day to play one-on-one Rat Basketball, leading to a tournament at the end of the interim.

Project Outline: We will meet in the classroom for three hours M-F. In addition, each student will train their rat in my lab (RMSC 224) for at least an hour every day, seven days a week (sharing responsibilities with their partner). Every student will also work on an individual research project on some topic of animal or comparative cognition, becoming the local expert in that topic. Each student will make an oral presentation to teach the class what they have learned in this research project. Finally, if enough rats are trained well enough within the one-month course, we will have a rat basketball tournament open to the public.

Course Website: A website is dedicated to this course containing links to pages describing homework assignments, a homework template to be used each day, and the syllabus. http://webs.wofford.edu/reidak/.
Format: This is a lecture-laboratory course based on the creation, evaluation, and communication of scientific knowledge about animal cognition. The laboratory component consists of working in pairs to train your rat every day to play one-on-one basketball.

Grading: Honors, Pass, or Fail

Attendance: Wofford College has a standing policy that class attendance is required. In the case of excused absences, every reasonable effort will be made to help you make up the missed work. But in every case of absence, you are still responsible for the reading, daily homework sheet, and experiences covered in class during the absence. Regular attendance is important, expected, and critical to performing well. More than 2 unexcused absences will result in an automatic Fail for the course. Arriving to class late or sleeping also count as unexcused absences. If you think you might miss class, please contact me by phone or email as early as possible. If this is not possible, then contact me as soon as possible after class so we can discuss how you might make up the missed experience.

Class participation includes being prepared for class and contributing to class discussions. Students will have daily reading assignments and must complete and turn in a typed homework sheet, based on the homework template provided on the website. Classes will be more understandable and enjoyable for everyone if you have completed the assigned readings and thought about them before class. Because this is a seminar, all students are expected to engage actively in class discussion by making insightful comments, asking questions, and responding to other students’ questions in a respectful manner.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to exhibit honesty in all academic endeavors and adhere to the College Honor Code. Any instance of cheating/plagiarism on assignments will be reported. All work you complete and submit must be your own. This explicitly includes the details you will provide each day on the homework template.

Cell Phone and Text Messaging: The use of a cell phone and/or text messaging during class is strictly prohibited. Any student using any of these during class will be asked to leave the class immediately, and an unexcused absence will be recorded for that class.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): The ADA requires that all qualified persons have equal opportunity and access to education, regardless of the presence of any disabling conditions. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain the necessary documentation from Health Services and to inform the instructor of any special accommodations needed.

This syllabus is subject to change upon notification.