



ANSC 3315

Applied Animal Behavior & Welfare

Fall 2025

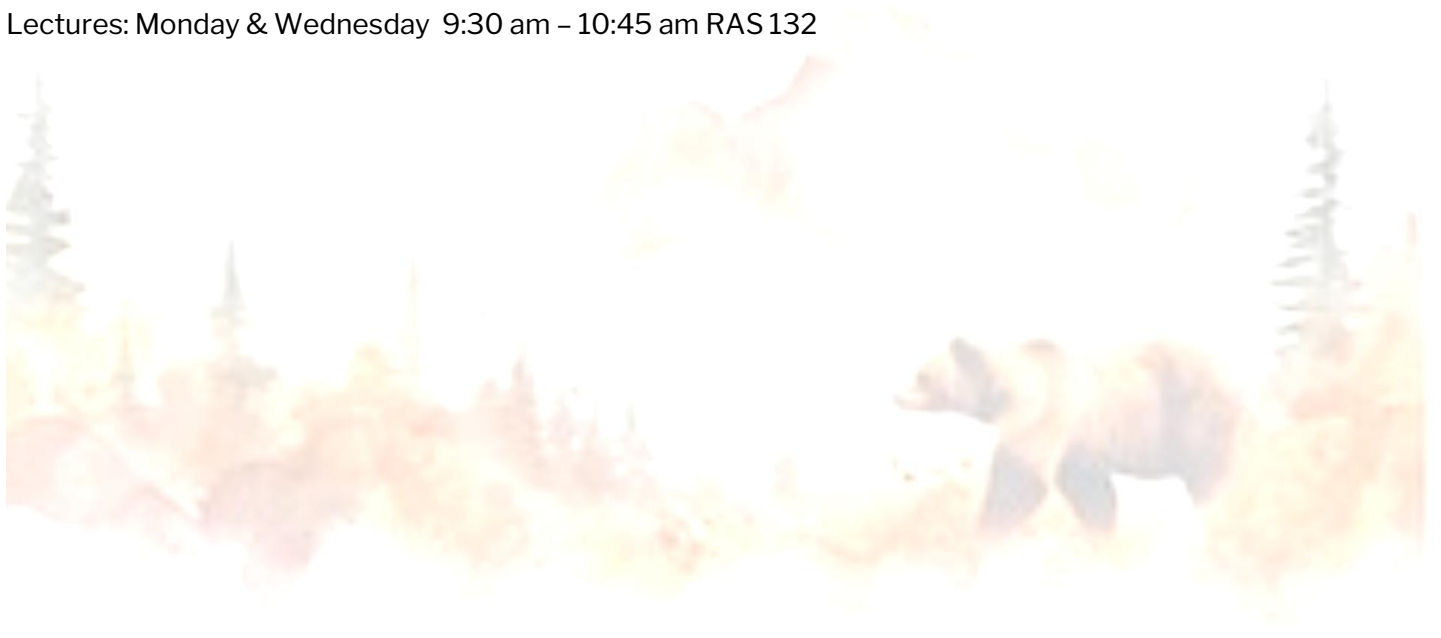
Department: Agriculture & Industry

Length: 16 Weeks

Instructor: Felipe Padilha, DVM, PhD

Email: felipe.gomesferreirapadilha@sulross.edu

Lectures: Monday & Wednesday 9:30 am – 10:45 am RAS 132



Course Description

This course provides an in-depth examination of the principles of animal behavior and their application in evaluating and promoting animal welfare in agricultural, companion, research, and captive wildlife settings. Drawing from ethology, physiology, neuroscience, and animal management practices, students will learn to interpret behavior as a scientific tool for assessing welfare and improving animal care systems. Topics will include the evolutionary basis of behavior, motivation, learning and cognition, social structures, communication, abnormal behaviors (e.g., stereotypies, aggression), and species-specific behavior patterns in common domestic and captive animals (including cattle, horses, pigs, poultry, dogs, cats, and zoo animals). Special emphasis will be placed on human-animal interactions and the ethical, cultural, and legal frameworks that shape welfare standards globally. Students will gain practical experience in behavior observation techniques, welfare assessments, and problem-solving through lab activities, fieldwork, case studies, and group projects. Current research and international welfare frameworks, such as the Five Domains Model and OIE (World Organisation for Animal Health) guidelines, will be integrated into class discussions.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Explain the biological and evolutionary foundations of animal behavior**, including key mechanisms such as motivation, learning, perception, and communication.
- **Identify species-specific behavioral patterns** in domestic and captive animals, and distinguish between normal and abnormal behaviors across a range of species.
- **Apply scientific observation and data collection methods** to assess animal behavior and welfare in real-world settings (e.g., farms, shelters, zoos, or research facilities).
- **Evaluate environmental, social, and management factors** that influence animal behavior and welfare, and propose evidence-based improvements to enhance well-being.
- **Interpret and apply major animal welfare frameworks** (e.g., Five Freedoms, Five Domains Model, OIE standards) to assess and improve welfare practices.
- **Critically assess animal welfare legislation, guidelines, and ethical considerations**, both within the U.S. and internationally, and articulate informed positions on current welfare issues.
- **Demonstrate professional communication and reasoning skills** by presenting welfare assessments, writing behavior reports, and discussing ethical dilemmas in animal management.

Animal Science Marketable Skills

- Knowledge of animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
- Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem solving and decision-making.
- Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.

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- Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions. Communicating in both oral and written form at a level appropriate for the needs of the audience.

Instructor Expectations from Students:

- The instructor will provide weekly opportunities for communication with the class through announcements and reminders as well as office hours (by appointment).
- Class correspondence will be in person during class hours, through Blackboard or student's SRSU email account.
- Instructor will provide email responses within 48-hours of receipt during the hours of 9:00AM-4:00PM, Monday- Friday. Emails sent after hours and during the weekend will be replied to within this timeframe.
- Instructor will provide grades to assignments and projects within 72h after the respective due date.
- The instructor will provide clear and concise instructions on how to complete the course requirements.
- Instructor will provide a range of opportunities to engage in the course content in a meaningful way utilizing diverse multimedia resources to enrich the student's experience and foster curiosity. Students are not mandated but encouraged to ask questions on course content.

Professor Expectations of Students:

- Successful students will familiarize themselves with the course syllabus, policies, assessments, evaluation, grading criteria, and course schedule.
- Successful students will complete all coursework on the assigned due date. The student is responsible for arranging the allowed make-up of any missed work, given a university-approved excuse such as (but not limited to) serious illness, accident, or death in the immediate family or participation in a university-sponsored activity provided that, prior to the absence, the student makes arrangement to complete all missed work.
- Successful students will engage in the course, with their peers, and the instructor and with open communication and active participation and should be diligent to use both oral and written communication that respects peers and instructors.
- Students should respond to instructor's communication requests regarding course progress and for general inquiries in a timely manner. The deadline for responding to communication requests will be 72 hours after the communication was sent by the instructor.
- Successful students will not plagiarize the work of other or use the work of their peers and claim it as their own. Students accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials may undergo academic disciplinary procedures.
- Successful students will pre-plan for testing situations and ensure they are able to access the internet to complete the exam during its assigned date and time, and prior to the due date.

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- Students will be proactive and resourceful to solve problems in case of internet or technical issues. Further resources for technical support are available through Lobo IT or Blackboard.

Animal Science Learning Outcomes (ASLO)

- - Demonstrate the ability to interpret and apply scientific research.
- - Apply critical thinking and ethical reasoning in problem-solving.
- - Communicate effectively using discipline-appropriate formats.
- - Demonstrate the basic skills of interpreting research data gathered in an agricultural context.
- - Apply critical thinking skills to mitigate potential challenges in diverse animal sciences and related agricultural industries.
- - Demonstrate the ability to communicate through written, spoken, and graphical methods.

Course Schedule (16 Weeks)

Week	Day 1	Day 2	Quizzes
1	The science of animal behavior and welfare: global perspective (8/25)	The science of animal behavior and welfare: global perspective (8/27)	NONE
2	NONE (LABOR DAY HOLIDAY) (9/01)	Course Introduction, History of Animal Behavior & Welfare (9/03)	NONE
3	Intro to Observation Methods, Ethograms, Facility Tour (9/08)	Motivation, Behavioral Needs, and Drives (9/10)	NONE
4	Evolution & Natural Selection in Behavior (9/15)	Animal Learning: Habituation, Classical & Operant Conditioning (9/17)	Quiz 1
5	Training Demo / Application in Companion or Farm Animals (9/22)	Animal Cognition, Perception & Emotions (9/24)	Quiz 2

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Week	Day 1	Day 2	Quizzes
6	Behavioral Testing Methods: Preference & Motivation Tests (9/29)	Communication: Visual, Vocal, Olfactory (10/01)	Quiz 3
7	Social Behavior, Dominance, Affiliative Interactions (10/06)	Observation Lab: Herd or Pack Social Dynamics (10/08)	Quiz 4
8	Human-Animal Interactions & Handling Stress (10/13)	Ethics Foundations (10/15)	Quiz 5
9	MIDTERM EXAM (Written) (10/20)	Hands-On Handling and HAI Assessment (10/22)	NONE
10	Abnormal Behavior: Stereotypies, Aggression, Self-Injury (10/27)	Video Analysis – Temple Grandin (10/29)	Quiz 6
11	Welfare Assessment Tools: Indicators, QBA, BCS, etc. (11/03)	Facility Audit Preparation – Scoring Practice (11/05)	Quiz 7
12	Housing Systems and Welfare (Livestock & Companion) (11/10)	Enrichment: Design Principles for Welfare (11/12)	Quiz 8
13	NONE (11/17)	Welfare Frameworks: Five Freedoms, Five Domains, OIE (11/19)	Quiz 9
14	Group reunion (on-line) (11/24)	NONE (THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY) (11/26)	Quiz 10
15	Final Presentations (12/01)	NONE (DEAD DAY) (12/03)	NONE
16	FINAL EXAM (Written)		NONE

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Week**Day 1****Day 2****Quizzes**

(12/08)

Project:

As a pair, students will choose a species and a specific housing environment (e.g., farm, zoo, shelter, lab, or sanctuary) and design a comprehensive enrichment plan based on the behavioral and psychological needs of that species. The final deliverable will be a written report and an engaging in-class presentation.

Assessment & Grading

Assessment Components:

- Discussion Board Participation (Monthly - 25 points/Month) – 100 points
- Project – 100 points
- Midterm Exam (Week 9) – 100 points
- Final Exam (Week 16) – 100 points

Total: 400 points

Percentage	Letter Grade	Meaning	Points
90% - 100%	A	Excellent	4
80% - 89%	B	Good	3
70% - 79%	C	Average	2
60% - 69%	D	Poor	1
Below 60%	F	Failure	0

Required and Recommended Literature

Senger, P.L. (2012). Pathways to Pregnancy and Parturition. Current Conceptions Inc. 3rd edition. It is encouraged that you find and reference a reasonably priced used textbook.

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Course Goals

- **Introduce students to foundational principles of animal behavior**
Students will gain an understanding of the biological, evolutionary, and environmental influences on animal behavior, including motivation, learning, communication, and social organization across species.
- **Develop students' ability to observe and interpret animal behavior scientifically**
Through structured behavioral observations, students will learn how to record, analyze, and evaluate animal behavior as a tool for assessing welfare and management practices.
- **Explore the relationship between behavior and animal welfare**
The course will demonstrate how behavior serves as a key indicator of physical and psychological well-being, and how it is influenced by environmental conditions, handling, housing, and human interaction.
- **Provide a strong foundation in animal welfare science, frameworks, and assessment tools**
Students will examine welfare assessment methodologies (e.g., Five Freedoms, Five Domains, Qualitative Behavioral Assessment), and learn to critically apply them in various contexts.
- **Foster ethical reasoning and critical thinking on animal use and care**
Students will explore cultural, ethical, and legal perspectives surrounding animal welfare, and learn to assess management practices through both scientific and ethical lenses.
- **Equip students with practical skills to design welfare-improving strategies**
Using real-world examples and enrichment design projects, students will develop applied skills in modifying environments, husbandry, and management practices to enhance animal welfare.
- **Prepare students to communicate effectively about animal behavior and welfare**
Through written reports, presentations, and class discussions, students will build confidence and clarity in explaining scientific concepts, making welfare assessments, and proposing practical solutions.

Accommodations

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz Grisham, M.Ed., LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email mschwartz@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

ADA Statement

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Student Responsibilities Quiz

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize him/herself with the requirements of such laws.

SRSU Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website.

Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

Counseling

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/srsu). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.

Libraries

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu.

Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate

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academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Classroom Climate of Respect

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Supportive Statement

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

Tutoring Center

The Lobo Den Tutoring Center offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help!

Important Information:

- Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments: Flexible options to fit your needs.
- Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- Workshops: Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty.
- Location: BWML Room 128.
- Contact Us: For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

Looking for additional support?

- Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors.

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- Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere.

Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. We look forward to helping you succeed



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