

Seconds Ago to Centuries Past: The Reasons for Our Behavior

IDH 2930 Class #: 30711

Class Periods: Monday, Period 7 (1:55 PM - 2:45 PM)

Location: HUME 0119 (Hume Classroom)

Academic Term: Spring 2022

Instructor: Dr. Neil Rowland

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Office Hours: Zoom by appointment

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Office Hours: Zoom by appointment

Course Description

In his book *Behave*, [Dr. Robert Sapolsky](#), a neuroendocrinologist at Stanford University, examines how instances from seconds to centuries before a particular behavior culminate to explain why that behavior occurred. We will explore the neurobiological aspects of decision making (seconds before) followed by discussions of the influence of cognitive and psychological factors (minutes/hours before). The class will then consider the influence of hormones (days/months before) and the effects of upbringing and environmental factors (years/decades). Finally, genetic makeup and evolution will be examined. This totals to ten chapters of Sapolsky's seventeen-chapter book. In the interest of time, we will read and discuss only the first ten chapters.

Each class session will begin with a 7–10-minute Mini Lecture in which we review content from the previous week's readings. This will be followed by a Q&A Session where students can ask questions about the reading assignment. Finally, we will have an open discussion about the reading topics.

This course will discuss a wide spectrum of topics from neuroscience, biology, and psychology. While previous knowledge in these fields is helpful, it is by no means required. Dr. Rowland and his peer instructor will use the Mini Lecture, Q&A Session, and discussion to facilitate understanding of key concepts from the reading.

Required Textbook:

Sapolsky, Robert M. *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst*. Penguin Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781594205071.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (1/3/22)	No class (semester begins on 1/5/22)
Week 2 (1/10/22)	Course Introduction (no reading due)
Week 3 (1/17/22)	No class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)
Week 4 (1/24/22)	Chapter 1: The Behavior Chapter 2: One Second Before (up to page 54 or The Obligatory Declaration of the Falseness of the Dichotomy Between Cognition and Emotion)
Week 5 (1/31/22)	Chapter 2: One Second Before (rest of chapter)
Week 6 (2/7/22)	Chapter 3: Seconds to Minutes Before
Week 7 (2/14/22)	Chapter 4: Hours to Days Before
Week 8 (2/21/22)	Chapter 5: Days to Months Before
Week 9 (2/28/22)	Chapter 6: Adolescence; or, Dude, Where's My Frontal Cortex?
Week 10 (3/7/22)	No class (Spring Break)
Week 11 (3/14/22)	Chapter 7: Back to the Crib, Back to the Womb
Week 12 (3/21/22)	Chapter 8: Back to When You Were Just a Fertilized Egg
Week 13 (3/28/22)	Chapter 9: Centuries to Millennia Before

Week 14 (4/4/22)	Chapter 10: The Evolution of Behavior (up to page 354 or Standing on Three Legs)
Week 15 (4/11/22)	Chapter 10: The Evolution of Behavior (rest of chapter)
Week 16 (4/18/22)	Tying it All Together

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. If you are unable to attend a class session, please email the Peer Instructor at least 24 hours before the class start time.

Evaluation of Grades

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Percentage of Final Grade</i>
Participation	70	70%
End-of-Semester Paper	30	30%
	100	100%

Participation:

To receive full points for participation, students must be active in each weekly discussion or ask at least one question during each Q&A Session.

End-of-Semester Paper:

The central tenet of Dr. Sapolsky's book is that examining any phenomenon via one perspective paints an incomplete picture of that phenomenon. Therefore, we need to make conscious efforts to break our natural tendency to think in terms of distinct 'ideological buckets'. It is for this reason that Dr. Sapolsky examines the phenomenon of behavior through so many lenses. For the end-of-semester paper, students will apply this interdisciplinary approach to a topic they are familiar with. Students will pick five lenses/perspectives through which they will examine their topic of interest and write a paragraph discussing how that lens influences their understanding of that topic. For example, perhaps a student is familiar with the world of professional ballet performance. They could consider the aesthetics of the art form (ex. the beauty and gracefulness of a pirouette). Then, they could consider the economics of being a professional ballet dancer (toe and ballet shoes are very expensive, yet these artists make relatively little money). Perhaps they can think how ballet dancers' education is impacted by their careers (dancers showing promise start intensive training around early middle school and the hectic schedule that comes with it often causes schooling to go on the backburner). And so on. Additional details will be posted on Canvas.

Grading Policy

<i>Percent</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Grade Points</i>
90.0 - 100.0	A	4.00
87.0 - 89.9	A-	3.67
84.0 - 86.9	B+	3.33
81.0 - 83.9	B	3.00
78.0 - 80.9	B-	2.67
75.0 - 79.9	C+	2.33
72.0 - 74.9	C	2.00
69.0 - 71.9	C-	1.67
66.0 - 68.9	D+	1.33
63.0 - 65.9	D	1.00
60.0 - 62.9	D-	0.67
0 - 59.9	E	0.00

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here](#).

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” [The Honor Code](#) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Software Use

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

Student Privacy

There are federal laws protecting your privacy with regards to grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the [Notification to Students of FERPA Rights](#).

Campus Resources:

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: counseling.ufl.edu/cwc, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or police.ufl.edu.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu.

Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling.

Library Support, Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#), 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

[Student Complaints Campus](#)

[On-Line Students Complaints](#)