

May 5, 2004

To: St. Olaf College Faculty
Fr: CEPC
Re: New Course Proposal (CEPC 03/04-10)

At the May faculty meeting CEPC will move that the seven day rule be waived, and then move the approval of the following new course.

Biology 386: Animal Behavior

Catalog description:

This seminar approaches the study of animal behavior from the blended viewpoints of evolutionary behavioral ecology and comparative psychology. Mechanisms of learning, cognition and development, as well as aggression, territoriality and mating are examined at the organismic and cellular levels. A deeper understanding of the neural and environmental determinants of behavior in a wide variety of species helps us to better understand ourselves and our place in nature. Prerequisites: Biology 126 or Psychology 125. (ORC)

Rationale:

The study of animal behavior, whether from the European natural history perspective, or the American comparative psychology tradition, has in recent years become a well-established science discipline and the two schools have increasingly merged in theory and practice. The proposed course will be supported by both the Psychology and the Biology departments. The Psychology and Biology Departments have long offered such courses to their majors, and the Paracollege long offered a seminar on the topic. With the coming of age of neuroscience, and our initiative to develop a concentration, and perhaps later an interdisciplinary major, in neuroscience, a joint effort on the part of both Departments makes this seminar-level course timely and necessary.

This course will be referenced in the Psychology Department listings. In future it is hoped the course can be cross-listed in the two departments.