Animal cognition
3 hp, HT 2019 (1st of Sept - 31st of Nov)

Teacher
Hanne Løvlie.

Main area
Biology.

Educational level
MSc- and PhD-course.

Pre-requisites
Background in evolutionary biology, ethology or psychology.

Course content
Cognition (i.e. how individuals perceive, store and respond to cues in their environment) is fundamental to the lives of individuals. The course will be based on the seminal book by Settleworth, complemented by chapters from Pearce’s book, which will cover animal cognition broadly, including key cognitive processes such as perception, learning (discriminant, social), memory, and aspects of how to measure cognition scientifically.

Learning goals
The course aims to give a relatively broad understanding of causes and processes explaining aspects of animal cognition, both in a comparative and within-species context. Focus will be on the processes perception and learning. After the course, students should be able to:
- Identify and define a range of cognitive processes.
- Improved understanding of how to design behavioural tests targeting or avoiding bias in aspects of cognition.
- Have improved knowledge on cognitive mechanisms and processes, and aspects that may explain differences in such, both between and within species.

Teaching form
Literature seminars, discussion, and oral presentations.

Course literature
Pearce John, 2013, Animal learning and cognition.
A large part of Shettleworth (ca 12 chapters, 500 pages) and a smaller part of Pearce (ca 3 chapters), will be used, and complemented with scientific articles if needed.

Examination
Active participation in group discussions, oral presentation, own search and presentation of complementary literature. Pass/Fail. Examiner: Hanne Løvlie.

Generic schedule
Weekly meetings, 12 seminars á 2 hrs. Preparations at home ca 6 hrs per seminar, + literature search.