

Animal weaponry

Paper analysis and presentation

Before Class

You will be assigned to either 'Group 1', 'Group 2' or 'Group 3'. Read the paper that your group has been given, make some notes on the main points in each of the sections in the paper, look up any terminology which may be new to you, and note anything that is unclear.

During Class

Meet up with your group and start by discussing the main points of the paper. Identify the main question(s) trying to be answered, why they are interested in this question, what they expected the answer to be (hypothesis), how they tried to answer it, what the answer was, and why anyone would care about the answer. After or whilst doing this, talk about anything that was unclear to you as a group and think about how it could be improved. Also identify things that you think the authors did particularly well.

After you are happy that you all have a good understanding of the paper, start preparing a short presentation on the research done. Typically at scientific conferences you will have **12 minutes to present your work and 3 minutes to answer questions** from the audience so that is what we will aim for here. Make sure you answer the what, why and how questions asked in the paragraph above. If you choose to highlight some limitations of the study, you must be clear about why you consider it a problem and give suggestions on how they could realistically be improved. Try to keep your slides simple (images, diagrams and graphs are your friend). If you need inspiration, think about the slides and presentation style of a lecturer that you enjoy listening to. If you have time, a practice run is a great idea to give yourself some confidence and to check you can stick to the time limit.

After Class

Listen to Season 1, Episode 4 of The Animal Behavior Podcast, in which Amy speak with [Ted Stankowich](#) who is an author on all of these papers.



Group 1 – How did the zebra get its stripes?

[Caro, T., Izzo, A., Reiner, B., Walker, H., Stankowich, T. 2014. The function of zebra stripes. Nature Communications, 5, 3535.](#)

Group 2 – How did the panda get its patches?

[Caro, T., Walker, H., Rossman, Z., Hendrix, M. & Stankowich, T. 2017. Why is the giant panda black and white? Behavioral Ecology, 28\(3\), 657-667.](#)

Group 3 – How did the skunk get its streaks?

[Caro, T., Stankowich, T., Kiffner, C., Hunter, J. 2013. Are spotted skunks conspicuous or cryptic? Ethology, Ecology & Evolution, 25\(2\), 144-160.](#)

