**PSY 480 ANIMAL COGNITION**

**FALL 2020**

**WEEK 2 Discussion Questions so far**

Tyson (2012) article:

1. Why did dogs evolve to have turbinates, but humans did not? Is it because we "outsourced" the need by domesticating dogs & using them for tasks necessitating scent tracking and odor discrimination/detection?
2. Do dogs' turbinates grow/adjust to accommodate/recognize new manmade chemical odors?
3. Were dogs always going to be such efficient sniffers, or did the slits and dual pathways develop as a result of certain breeding practices by humans?
4. If floppy ears help stir up odors, why do so many dog breeds (and wolves) not have them? Could it be as "straight forward" as sounds being more important to their survival (hence upright, open ears) than odor detection?
5. What evolutionary benefit do you think there is for the sex-specific lateral biases seen in some species (including dogs)? Why did it show up in dogs' sense of smell too?

Wagman et al. Dog affordances paper.

1. Do you think the results of this paper provide strong evidence that dogs can perceive affordances like humans can or do you think these conclusions suffer from anthropocentricism?
2. Affordances are described as the possibilities for behavior that are determined by action capabilities and the environmental properties during a task. Do you think affordances have a function? (Think of last week's discussion on why dogs bark at the mailman, it might help. Or think of the methods and conclusion of this paper.)

Unconditioned lever pressing in rats and hamsters article:

1. The article briefly discussed how humans engage in similar affordance behavior (i.e. climbing stairs or children exploring their surroundings), but do you think humans also engage in similar behavior not only when physically doing something but also mentally planning something (evaluating effort and pay off, like a list of pros and cons)?
2. Do you think the behavior of using the lever for exploratory support is planned by the rat/hamster before performing the behavior, or just consequently happens as they engage in regular exploratory behaviors?
3. Are there other factors that could influence the lever pressing besides the height of the animal? (like animals who commonly use thier tail or some other extra limb for exploration)