Biology Seminar

12:30 - 1:30 pm
Friday, November 13, 2026
BGS 0165



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Vocal bonding in the monogamous prairie vole

Strong social attachments, or ‘bonds’, have substantial benefits for fitness and survival in many gregarious species. How adult social bonds develop, and what sustains them, is not well understood. Acoustic signals, like vocalizations, are one of the primary ways that vertebrates communicate. It is hypothesized that vocal communication plays a critical role in social bonding. In this seminar, I will talk about some of our lab’s research on the socially monogamous prairie vole (*Microtus ochrogaster*), a small North American rodent known for its unique pair-bonding behavior. Unlike most other mammals, prairie voles develop long-term selective preferences for their mating partner. I will touch on work that begins to tackle core questions – who, what, when, where, why, and how – about vocal communication in the context of pair bonding. Collectively, this line of research provides novel insights into the evolution of behaviors that facilitate social bonding in adulthood.