

COURSE SYLLABUS

Discipline: Anthropology
Human Origins (ANTH 2810)
Lower Division
Faculty Name: Alexander J. Martín

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores human and primate biology from an evolutionary perspective with the purpose of conducting a critical review of the biological basis of human development and behaviour. It introduces students to the most important concepts and subfields in human evolutionary theory including: natural and sexual selection, genetic drift and flow, population genetics, primate evolution, paleoanthropology, behavioural ecology, socio-biology, and human variation and adaptation. Through discussion and critical analysis, these topics are used to enrich our understanding of how our daily lives are influenced by our own unique evolutionary history.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Throughout the semester we will be working towards achieving various class goals. By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Discuss evolutionary theory from a biological perspective.
2. Apply the principles of evolutionary theory to describe the natural world.
3. Identify the morphological and behavioural similarities and differences of each primate group including hominids and humans.
4. Outline the past seven million years of hominid evolution.
5. Evaluate the progression of human evolution through the examination of modern human variation and adaptation.
6. Evaluate the degree to which biology or culture play a role in how humans behave.
7. Evaluate whether or not humans are still evolving, and how.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Boyd, Robert and Joan B. Silk
TITLE: *How Humans Evolved* (preferably the downloadable pdf version)
PUBLISHER: W.W. Norton & Company, New York.
ISBN #: 978-0-393-93271-3
DATE/EDITION: 2009 (fifth edition)
COST: \$ 84.00 (downloadable version 42.00)

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Session	Date	Topic
0. Intro		<u>Why Study Human Evolution?</u>
1		<u>Adaptation by Natural Selection</u> -Chapter 1
2		<u>Genetics</u> How do the mechanics of evolution work? - Chapter 2
3		<u>The Modern Synthesis</u> - Chapter 3
5		<u>Speciation and Phylogeny</u> How are new species created? How are they defined? - Chapter 4
5		<u>Primate Diversity and Ecology</u> - Chapter 5
6		<u>Primate Mating Systems</u> What is “sexual selection” and how does it differ from “natural selection.” - Chapter 6
7		<u>The Evolution of Cooperation</u> Why do we do good things for others? Are there altruists in the animal kingdom? - Chapter 7
8		<u>Primate Life Histories and the Evolution of Intelligence</u> How does our brain fit into our own unique evolution? - Chapter 8
9		<u>From Tree Shrew to Ape</u> - Chapter 9
10		<u>From Hominoid to Hominin</u> - Chapter 10
11		<u>Oldowan Toolmaker and the Origin of Human Life History</u> - Chapter 11

- 12 From Hominin to Homo
- Chapter 12
- 13 Homo Sapiens and the Evolution of Human Behavior
- Chapter 13
- 14 Human Genetic Variation
- Chapter 14
- 15 The Evolution of Human Behavior
- Chapter 15
- 16 Human Mate Choice and Parenting
- Chapter 16

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS (*Twenty percent of the contact hours for each course is provided by field work.*) Together, these three typed field notes, will constitute 30% of the grade.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- 1) Exams.....**60%**
 - Mid-Term Exam (February 15-16th) **30%**
 - Final Exam (April 20-21st) **30%**
- 2) Typed Field Notes.....**30%**
 - See ‘Field Assignments’ section above.
- 3) Attendance.....**10%**

Exams

Two exams will be given during the course of the semester that will test students on the information provided in readings, class discussions, and lectures. Each exam will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Each exam will be non-cumulative.

Grading Policy

Handing in exercises late will result in losing 10% for each day. Grades will be assigned according to the percentage of total points scored on the combined exams, typed field notes, and attendance. 97% and above = A+, 93-96% = A, 90-92% = A-, 87-89% = B+, 83-86% = B, 80-82% = B-, 77-79% = C+, 73-76% = C, 70-72% = C-, 67-69% = D+, 63-66% = D, 60-62% = D-, 59% and below = F.