

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the discipline of anthropology: the study of human beings and their evolution through time and across cultures. It offers a survey of human biological and cultural evolution that takes students from the earliest human origins to our large technologically advanced present-day societies. Through this journey, we cover many themes that explore the nature and relevance of anthropological methods, theories, and perspectives. These include, but are not limited to, human origins, evolution and human behavior, gender roles, the relationship between environment and culture, and the links between globalization, consumerism, and environmental degradation. As such, it highlights the potential for anthropological research to address pressing social issues including environmental sustainability, social equity, and more.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify the unique holistic and comparative nature of anthropology across its four main sub-disciplines.
2. Explain the key aspects of human biological evolution and culture change.
3. Analyze the natural and social forces that have shaped varied cultural practices and led to human cultural diversity.
4. Apply anthropological perspectives and questions as tools to think critically about contemporary social issues.

REQUIRED READING

Title: Nisa: The life and words of a !Kung woman

Year: 2000

Author: Shostak, M.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

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| 1. 14 weekly quizzes (10% each) | 70% |
| 2. Final Exam | 30% |
| 3. Participating in discussion | (Bonus points) |

Weekly quizzes

Small multiple-choice or short answer quizzes designed to make sure everyone is keeping up with the lectures. They stem directly from classes, weekly readings, and classroom discussions.

PLEASE NOTE: Quizzes are due when assigned and can only be made up due to an excused absence with proper documentation.

Final

The final exam is cumulative and based on all material covered throughout the semester.

Discussion boards

Participating on discussion boards is not mandatory, but meaningful comments on discussion threads earn you bonus points. These points are on top of your grade, so they don't affect you if you don't post but are doing well elsewhere. As long as it's some kind of meaningful comment, they can be as long or as short as you want. From a couple of sentences to whole paragraphs if you need. You also don't have to reply to others unless you want to. Discussion threads are locked on Sunday at midnight at the end of each module.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit available in this course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Dates	Topic	Assigned readings	Watch
1	Aug 24-30	Introduction Evolution —Natural selection		
2	Aug 31-Sept 6	Evolution (cont.) —Genetics — Speciation	Shostak (NISA): Chapter 1	
3	Sept 8-13 (Sept 7 no classes)	Primates —Features —Primate taxonomy and our place in it. —Therapsids, plesiadapiforms, mammals, and primates. Early hominids: — Evidence for transition to bipedalism at 7mya — Australopithecus Genus	Shostak (NISA): Chapters 2 & 3	
4	Sept 14-20	Late hominids: — Paranthropus Genus — The Genus Homo — <i>Homo erectus</i> — <i>Homo sapiens archaic</i> . Neanderthals	Shostak (NISA): Chapter 4	
5	Sept 21-27	<i>Homo sapiens</i>, the human brain, and culture: — <i>Homo sapiens modern</i> — The human brain — Culture	Shostak (NISA): Chapter 5	
6	Sept 28-Oct 4	Human variation: — The cultural construction of race		Journey of Man: A

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The subspecies concept — Variation in the human species 		Genetic Odyssey
7	Oct 5-11	Sex, reproduction, and gender <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Primate and Human reproductive strategies — Sexual dimorphism in humans — Sex and gender 	Shostak (NISA): Chapters 6 & 7	
8	Oct 12-18	Subsistence strategies (Foragers and Intro to Domestication) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Food collectors: Foraging — Food producers: Domestication 	Shostak (NISA): Chapter 8	Dogs Decoded?
9	Oct 19-25	Subsistence strategies (Horticulture vs Agriculture) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Food producers: Horticulture — Food producers: Agriculture 	Shostak (NISA): Chapter 9	
10	Oct 26-Nov 1	Industrialization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Introduction — Capital accumulation today — Industrialized life — Global production 		The True Cost
11	Nov 2-8	Kinship and the family <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Variations on the family — Kinship — The detachable nuclear family 	Shostak (NISA): Chapters 10 & 11	A Cluttered Life: Middle-class Abundance
12	Nov 9-15	Religion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The basis of religious belief — Shamanism — The “church” — Polytheism to monotheism 	Shostak (NISA): Chapter 12 & 13	
13	Nov 16-22	Cultural systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Biblical food taboos — Warfare among the Dani of New Guinea 	Shostak (NISA): Chapters 14 & 15	
	Nov 23-29 (no classes)			
14	Nov 30-Dec 6	Sustainability and our cultural system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The growth and expansion of our current cultural system 		Minimalism
Finals week	Dec 8-11			