

COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction to Physical Anthropology

Thursdays 6:00 – 8:30, WWPH 5201

Instructor: Alexander J. Martín; Email: ajm37@pitt.edu

Office Hours: 3106B WWPH, 2:00-3:00pm Wednesdays, or by appointment. (Note: Office hours are not for going over material that you have missed because of an absence, but rather to clarify concepts or get help with exercises that you had trouble with during regular class time).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores human and primate biology from an evolutionary perspective with the aim of critically reviewing the biological basis of human development and behavior. 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, behavioral 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 behavioral 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*

PUBLISHER: W.W. Norton & Company, New York.

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Date	Topic
Jan 9	<u>Adaptation by Natural Selection</u> -Chapter 1
Jan 16	<u>Genetics</u> How do the mechanics of evolution work? - Chapter 2 -MOVIE: NOVA: Dogs Decoded
Jan 23	<u>The Modern Synthesis</u> - Chapter 3
Jan 30	<u>Speciation and Phylogeny</u> How are new species created? How are they defined? - Chapter 4
Feb 6	<u>Primate Diversity and Ecology</u> - Chapter 5
Feb 13	<u>Primate Mating Systems</u> What is "sexual selection" and how does it differ from "natural selection?" - Chapter 6 -MOVIE: SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL: Decoding Immortality
Feb 20	<u>The Evolution of Cooperation</u> Why do we do good things for others? Are there altruists in the animal kingdom? - Chapter 7
Feb 27	<u>Primate Life Histories and the Evolution of Intelligence</u> How does our brain fit into our own unique evolution? - Chapter 8
March 6	MIDTERM <u>From Tree Shrew to Ape</u> - Chapter 9
March 13	SPRING BREAK

March 20	<u>From Hominoid to Hominin</u> - Chapter 10 <u>Oldowan Toolmaker and the Origin of Human Life History</u> - Chapter 11
March 27	<u>From Hominin to Homo</u> - Chapter 12 <u>Homo Sapiens and the Evolution of Human Behavior</u> - Chapter 13
April 3	<u>Human Genetic Variation</u> - Chapter 14 - MOVIE: Journey of Man.
April 10	<u>The Evolution of Human Behavior</u> - Chapter 15
April 17	<u>Human Mate Choice and Parenting</u> - Chapter 16
April 24	FINAL

METHODS OF EVALUATION

- 1) Exams.....**70%**
 Mid-Term Exam (March 12th) **35%**
 Final Exam (April 23rd) **35%**
- 2) Typed Notes.....**20%**
- 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.

SHORT ESSAYS Together, two typed short essays constitute 30% of the grade.

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.

Study Guides and PowerPoint Presentations:

Attending class regularly, paying close attention to lectures, and taking good notes in order to prepare for exams are important components of your college preparation in general, and of this class in particular. For this reason, study guides for exams and the class PowerPoint presentations are not provided.

Absences:

With very rare exceptions, the only excused absences are medical in nature. A doctor's note is required if you would like a missed class to be excused. It is not necessary to contact the instructor prior to missing a class, just bring the doctor's note the following time you attend. However, remember that you are fully responsible for any material missed. Also note that since office hours are limited, they cannot be used for going over an entire class missed. They can, however, be used to clarify specific concepts which might still be unclear after reading the material in the book.

Academic Integrity:

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

Disabilities:

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and the [Disability Resources and Services](#) no later than the 2nd week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 140 William Pitt Union.