

Anthropology 2742
Human Evolution
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
11:00 AM to 11:50 AM

Classroom: 1165 Blair Hall
Office: 3153 Blair Hall
Office Hours:
8:00-9:00 AM; T (Starbucks)
12:00-1:00 PM; M, F (3153 Blair Hall)
2:00-3:00 PM; M, W (3153 Blair Hall)

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Course Description

Everyone is interested in origins. Indeed, the fact that every society in the world has an origin myth suggests that understanding how things came to be (including us) is of universal interest. Typically people have turned to their own religious traditions, and more recently western science, for the answer to the origin question. Taking the latter approach, this course explores human origins, evolution, and the course of cultural development as it is revealed in the archaeological and paleoanthropological record. We will also attempt to tackle the more difficult matter of human nature—like what it is. And can living primates teach us anything about it or our ancestors’ “nature(s)”? Finally, we will spend some time pondering our current physical and cultural state and the future course of human evolution.

Introduction

Covering over six million years of human evolution and history in a single semester is no easy feat. If, for instance, we divided human history equally over the course of the semester we would have to address some 150,000 years of human pre/history in each class—about 3,000 years a minute—to cover the full span of human “history” in one semester. So it’s necessary to condense things a bit.

One can not understand human origins without first understanding evolution. Accordingly, we will begin our journey by addressing some basic evolutionary principles. Subsequently we will move on to the primates (both living and long extinct), and then follow the fossil record from the dawn of humanity to the emergence and global dominance of homo sapiens sapiens. We’ll end our journey by pondering the state (and fate) of the human condition.

I’ve assigned two books for this course, both of which address the question of human nature. There’s a lot to think about (and potentially critique) in each, and we’ll have the opportunity to do this in the form of several “roundtables” and other organized class discussions. In addition to the roundtables, some days will be devoted to in-class activities (workshops, quizzes, short essays). Don’t miss these events; your participation makes for a better class, and oh yea, they count toward your final grade in the class too.

Aims

- to introduce you to basic evolutionary principles and their application to understanding the human story
- to have you think critically about specific theories of hominid and primate evolution and behavior
- to introduce you to the archaeological, paleoanthropological, and genetic evidence for human evolution
- to give you the opportunity to reflect on human nature, our relationship to the living primates, and the course of human evolution.

Assessment

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage of Grade</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Exam 1	30%	2/23
Exam 2	30%	4/15
Activities & Small Quizzes	1-2% pts each (10% total)	see schedule
Essay (3 pages)	20%	5/1
Final Quiz	10%	5/7 (10:15AM)

Assignment Guidelines

► Two exams and a “final quiz” will be administered during the course. The exams and the quiz will cover any material presented in class (films, lectures, discussions) and/or assigned in the readings. Exams and the final quiz typically consist of essay, short answer, and multiple-choice questions. Each exam is weighed equally (30% of grade). The final quiz is worth 10%.

► There are a number of small assignments, activities and quizzes scattered throughout the semester (see class schedule for dates). Activities may require your participation (discussion or “lab” work) or involve short writing assignments and quizzes. Together, these activities are worth 10% of your final grade.

► You are required to write one short essay (3 pages) for this course. The essay will address a question that I’ll pose to the class near the end of the semester. The essay should incorporate material covered in class and outside research is always welcome, but I want your essay to take the form of a position paper. In short, make an original argument, but one that is informed by class discussions, content, theory/logic and readings. Do not simply restate what you read or heard in class. I will not accept late papers.



Required Readings

Wilson, Edward O.

2004 *On Human Nature*. Harvard University Press [read entire book by exam 1]

Goldschmidt, Walter

2006 *The Bridge to Humanity*. Oxford University Press [read entire book by exam 2]

Policies

Exams & Assignments

Exams must be taken on the date specified in the syllabus. Failure to take the exam on the assigned date without forewarning or documented excuse will result in a 10% penalty on the make up. Don't miss the final.

All writing assignments must be typed and double-spaced, employ a standard 10-12 size font, and run the required amount of pages (see specific assignment) not including the bibliography. All cited information must be referenced in a bibliography following the body of the document. I prefer that you use the American Anthropological Association's citation style (see http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm).

All papers are due on the date specified. *I will not accept late papers in this class.* All papers should be handed directly to me or to the department secretary on the due date. Emailed papers will not be accepted; please hand me a hard copy. Save a copy!

The paper must represent an original piece of work by the student. I do not tolerate plagiarism; if you are unsure how to properly cite or reference a piece of work please come and see me.

I do not give extra credit.

Classroom Environment

A significant portion of the exams is based on material presented and discussed in class. As such, I could not imagine how a student could do well in the course without regularly attending class. More importantly, your presence and active participation simply makes for a better course. Your classmates and I are counting on you. I also encourage you to come see me during office hours. This time has been set aside for you. You are also welcome to drop by my office outside of office hours. Feel free to come with questions and concerns or simply to chat. I can also be reached on my office phone (typically on class days) or through email (although I'd prefer to talk with you in person). Don't be a stranger!

Disabilities Statement

Students with documented disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) if they wish to discuss any necessary academic accommodations.

Medical Emergency Statement

For medical emergencies, go to the nearest phone and call 911. All faculty offices have telephones and during normal business hours (8-12 & 1-4:30), the Sociology Office (Blair 3170) is open. Be sure to state the floor and room number of the emergency to the 911 operator. If possible, someone should go to the central entrance of Blair Hall to direct EMS personnel to the medical emergency scene. If the medical emergency is on the second or third floor, someone should hold the elevator on the first floor for EMS use.

Tornado Statement

In case of a tornado warning, proceed to the center of the hallway on the first floor, near the posted severe weather signs. Under no circumstances should you attempt to leave the building.

Building Fire Statement

In case of fire, activate the fire alarm and exit the building. When a fire alarm sounds, everyone must exit the building and cannot re-enter the building until allowed by the building coordinator or fire department official. Fire alarms are located at the north and south ends of the corridors just inside the fire doors. The closes exits for all classrooms in Blair are on the north and south ends of the building. Under no circumstance should the elevator be used. Group assembly areas for all classes in Blair are either on the patio area between Blair and Old Main or on the southeast corner of the North Quad. As you exit the building, continue moving well away from the exits so that you do not impede the egress of other students or the work of fire officials. Move a safe distance away from the building.

Class Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic & Assignment</u>
12 January	our origin and nature
14 January	before darwin
16 January	darwin
19 January	no class: MLK Jr.s' birthday
21 January	mendel, mendel rediscovered
23 January	origins of variation [<u>2 pt quiz</u>]
26 January	evolution without natural selection
28 January	evolution workshop I [<u>1 pt for participation</u>]
30 January	evolution workshop II [<u>1 pt for participation</u>]
2 February	sociobiology
4 February	roundtable discussion: evolution [<u>1 pt for participation</u>]
6 February	primate taxonomy
9 February	the apes
11 February	<i>film: primates</i> ; <u>essay question handed out</u>
13 February	no class: Lincoln's birthday
16 February	discussion: how human are primates? [<u>2 pt essay collected</u>]
18 February	primate origins
20 February	planet of the apes
23 February	exam I (finish "on human nature" before exam)
25 February	discussion: <i>on human nature</i>
27 February	dawn
2 March	australopithecines I (S. Africa)
4 March	interpreting australopithecines I: man the hunter?
6 March	australopithecines II (E. Africa)
9 March	<i>film: the ape that took over the world</i>
11 March	interpreting australopithecines II: bipedalism
13 March	handy scavenger
16-20 March	no class: spring break
23 March	homo erectus I
25 March	homo erectus II
27 March	the hobbit?
30 March	cave men
1 April	language
3 April	no class: Central States Anthropological Society meetings (in Champaign)
6 April	cave man "culture"
8 April	modern human origins
10 April	no class (come to my office): essay questions distributed
13 April	big picture workshop [<u>2 pt in-class project</u>]
15 April	exam II (finish "bridge to humanity" before exam)
17 April	book discussion: <i>bridge to humanity</i>
20 April	the niche thief
22 April	race
24 April	our bodies, explained
27 April	what kills us makes us stronger & <u>evaluations</u>
29 April	picturing prehistory
1 May	our fate & nature; essays due (late papers not accepted) [<u>1 pt for participation</u>]
7 May	final quiz (10:15 AM)