

Palaeolithic Archaeology

Semester: Fall 2014,

Meeting Time and Place : T 4-6 Lisner 130

Instructor: Prof. David Braun (Office: X Building 203, 2112 G Street NW)

Contact information: david_braun@gwu.edu

Anthropology 6801 is a graduate seminar that will provide both a basic introduction to the evolution of human behavior and an advanced level of knowledge and skills related to this topic. While we will emphasize the actual record of past human activities derived from Palaeolithic archaeology, discussions will also include behavioral information that be inferred from human fossil morphology, genetics and comparative neuroscience. Understanding the environmental and chronological context of past human activities will also be crucial. The latter two-thirds of the course will review our knowledge about the development of human cultural behavior and human expansion across the globe, with a focus on current and divergent views on the major milestones in human evolution. The focus of the course will be not only on the material evidence and its interpretation, but also an understanding of the major questions confronting archaeologists, methods of inquiry, and problem solving.

**THIS IS A READING INTENSIVE COURSE
I WILL EXPECT YOU TO HAVE DONE ALL THE READING**

Learning Objectives: By the end of the class, students should be able to:

- Understand how the evidence of the distant human past is collected, analyzed and interpreted,
- Construct and evaluate models for early human societies, based on studies of present-day primate and human societies
- Understand the basic chronological, environmental and geographical framework of early human cultures, and be able to develop a plan for establishing the age and associations of a new Pliocene- or Pleistocene-age archaeological site,
- Analyze the basis for divergent points of view on some of the major questions concerning the origins of human culture
- Analyze and evaluate both the scholarly and popular literature on the evolution of human behavior,
- Write a one-page (or two-paragraph) review and evaluation of a scholarly paper,
- Think creatively about ways to understand how the behavior and natural history of our species evolved: e.g. our ecology, diet, life history, ranging behavior, group structure and intragroup relationships, intergroup relationships, communication, and technology,
- Think creatively about ways to understand the evolution of the human brain and cognition, and its behavioral correlates,
- Research and compile anthropological literature relevant to a topic in human behavioral evolution through online databases and library resources,
- Construct a sound hypothesis, and prepare a research proposal
- Prepare an abstract and write an evidence-based research paper on an anthropological topic, using appropriate anthropological citation formats
- Prepare and present a poster and understand how this activity differs both from writing a research paper and from giving a formal oral presentation at a scholarly meeting.

Attendance at lectures in Human Cultural Beginnings is Recommended If You have No Prior Paleolithic Archaeology Experience.

Requirements

1. Weekly class reports on the readings and reading response papers
3. A poster, which can be based on a related topic to the term paper.
 - Prospectus due October 7th
 - Draft due November 4th,
 - Final presentation in class due November 25th
4. A 15-page term paper based as an extension of your poster topic
 - Draft due November 18th
 - Final Due Dec 2nd

This class will have a take home exam, for the students of the Hominid Paleobiology Program this exam will constitute one of your qualifying exams.

Grading

The grades will be calculated as follows:

1. Class participation, including reading responses and presentations – 20%
2. Poster – 10%
3. Poster presentation 10%
4. Term paper – 30%
5. Final exam – 30%

PLEASE USE THE GMAIL ADDRESS WHEN SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS AND PAPERS

It is expected that all students will work individually on all assignments and that they will adhere to the GW code of academic integrity (<http://www.gwu.edu/~integrity/code.html>).

The Paper and Poster:

You will be writing a research paper and preparing a poster for this course on a topic of your choosing within the context of the palaeolithic. The instructor, however, must approve all topics. Excellent advice on critical thinking and the process of writing an academic paper may be found at the following website: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/student/toc.shtml>. You are strongly advised to read and follow these guidelines.

Your paper/poster topic should come from the class content and should emphasize some aspect of the archaeology (rather than the human paleontology). The paper will be a ca. 20 page (double-spaced, times-roman or equivalent proportionally faced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins) research paper with bibliography (citations should follow the *American Antiquity* or *JHE* format).

The poster can be a condensed or distilled version of the essence of your research paper, or another topic, if the paper does not lend itself to visuals. It should emphasize the graphic or visual elements of your topic and include only enough text to convey the essential elements. For a successful poster, it is very important to follow the suggested guidelines for posters at the SAA meetings (see <http://www.saa.org/meetings/poster.html>). Also, an excellent resource for the presentation quantitative data is The visual display of quantitative information by Edward R. Tufte. Posters will be presented in class on December 7. A power point version of the poster or the poster itself in pdf is should be emailed to address before the start of class on the 25th of November.

TEXTS: (These are not required reading but if you do not have a background in Paleolithic then this is a good idea.)

- Barham, Lawrence and Peter Mitchell (2008). *The First Africans: African Archaeology from the Earliest Toolmakers to Most Recent Foragers*. Cambridge University Press ISBN 978-0-521-61265-4
- Gamble, Clive (1999). *The Palaeolithic Societies of Europe* (1999). Cambridge University Press ISBN: 0-521-24514-1 (NB there are copies available from Amazon.com if the GW bookstore is out).
- Klein, R. (2009). *The Human Career: Human Biological and Cultural Origins*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press (3rd Ed.).

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to know and adhere to the University's policies on academic integrity and academic dishonesty, the latter defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. This includes use of materials found on the internet! Further information may be found at: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

Support For Students Outside The Classroom

Disability Support Services (DSS) (see also above under "Exams")

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

University Counseling Center (UCC) 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

Security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.