

The Biological Basis of Human Behavior

ANTH 1005, Fall 2016

Lectures: Tuesday and Thursday 9:35 – 10:50 am

Funger 208

Discussion Sections: Mondays

Instructors

Dr. Carson Murray

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Hours: Tues 11 am – 12 pm; Thur 3 pm – 4 pm

Please call my office for entry (202.994.4170)

Teaching Assistant

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Office: 6th Floor Lounge SEH

Hours: Thurs 11 am – 1 pm

CLASS SYNOPSIS

An exploration of human behavior from an evolutionary perspective drawing from the fields of biological anthropology, evolutionary psychology, and behavioral ecology including the biology and behavior of nonhuman primates. Topics include reproductive behavior, parental behavior, aggression, cooperation, and culture.

CLASS OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- 1) Discuss human behavior from an evolutionary perspective
- 2) Place hallmarks of human behavior in a comparative perspective
- 3) Present, discuss, and critique evolutionary theories of human behavior
- 4) Design studies to test the evolutionary basis of behavior

CLASS PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course. We will cover all germane basic information in class drawing from fields including biological anthropology, behavioral ecology, primatology, and evolutionary psychology.

EXPECTED OUT-OF-CLASS LEARNING

Students are expected to read all assigned readings, work on their group projects, and complete all out-of-class discussion assignments each week. Students should expect to spend an average of 5 hours per week on the aforementioned activities and preparation for exams.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS

This course will include chapters from the required texts and supplemented with a few peer-reviewed publications. Not all chapters from all books are required, but students are encouraged to use unassigned chapters as additional resources for the course.

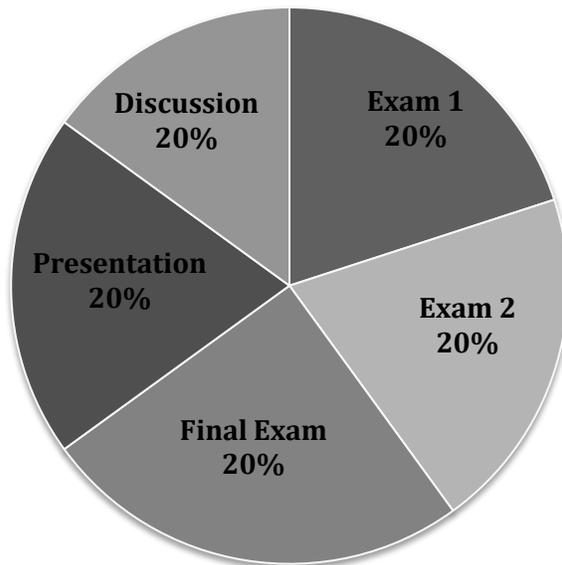
Required Texts

1. Bickerton D. *Adam's Tongue*. 2009. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
2. Lieberman D. *Story of the Human Body*. 2014. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
3. Gray P. & Garcia J. *Evolution & Human Sexual Behavior*. 2013. Harvard University Press.
4. Wade N. *Before the Dawn*. 2006. Penguin.

Required Readings (Available on Blackboard)

1. House, B. R., Silk, J. B., Henrich, J., Barrett, H. C., Scelza, B. A., Boyette, A. H., ... & Laurence, S. 2013. Ontogeny of prosocial behavior across diverse societies. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110: 14586-14591.
2. Mitani, J. C., Watts, D. P., & Amsler, S. J. 2010. Lethal intergroup aggression leads to territorial expansion in wild chimpanzees. *Current Biology*. 20: R507-R508.
3. Silk J. & House B. 2011. Evolutionary foundations of human prosocial sentiments. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. 108: 10910-10917.
4. Tennie C., Call J., & Tomasello M. 2009. Ratcheting up the ratchet: on the evolution of cumulative culture. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*. 364: 2405-2415.
5. Wrangham, R., & Carmody, R. 2010. Human adaptation to the control of fire. *Evolutionary Anthropology: Issues, News, and Reviews*. 19: 187-199.

GRADING



Midterm Exams (40%)

There will be two midterm exams each worth 20% of your grade. The exams will be based on material covered in lecture, discussion section, and readings. Exam format will be a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The second midterm will mostly focus on material covered after the first midterm but since course concepts build on each other, you should be prepared to draw on content from the first midterm as well.

Note that we expect students to be able to design studies and draw theoretical graphs that would demonstrate their predictions. You will have exposure to this throughout lecture and in the discussion, so pay attention.

Presentation (20%)

You will break up into groups of 4-5 during the first discussion section and choose a topic from the list of interesting/distinctive human behaviors related to the material covered in lecture. Periodically, throughout the semester discussion section will be devoted to research the evolutionary basis of your chosen topic and receive feedback from the TA. At the end of the semester each group will present on the topic to the rest of their section. Additionally, students will prepare an op-ed piece on their topic. Your TA will hand out additional information on the presentation and writing assignment during the first discussion section.

Discussion (20%)

Your participation grade is determined by both your attendance in the class and discussion, and by active participation in the discussion section. Throughout the semester, sections will include discussion of course readings, in-class activities, and time for group work. The TA will keep track of attendance, conversational participation, and participation in your group presentation. The most fundamental class ethic is one of respect. You will receive an automatic zero for any comment that fails to maintain the highest level of respect and collegiality.

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be mix of multiple choice and short answer questions. It will be comprehensive drawing from material covered throughout the course.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance

You are expected to attend the discussion session in which you are enrolled each week. If the absence is un-planned, you should write your TA on the day of the absence. More than one missed session without notification will result in a point deducted from your participation grade.

Blackboard

Assigned readings not from the required texts will be made available on blackboard. We will also post lecture slides on blackboard the Friday before each by 8 am before each class; however the exams will cover material mentioned in lecture that is not on the slides (which is substantive) so lecture attendance and note taking will be important.

Office Hours

Both the instructor and the TA are here as a resource both in and outside of class! Come see us if you have questions, during our regularly scheduled office hours. If you cannot make them, please write us in advance to schedule another time, but please understand that we all have busy schedules so we may not be as flexible as you would like.

Make-up Exams and Presentations

No regular make-up exams or presentations will be given. Rescheduling will be considered on an individual basis prior to the exam or presentation date. The dates for the exams are posted on the course schedule, below. Please make travel plans accordingly. If you miss an exam, documentation verifying a medical or other emergency is required.

Note: DO NOT SCHEDULE YOUR TRAVEL PLANS OVER THE FINAL EXAM.

Religious Observance

It is completely acceptable for you to miss class meeting(s) due to observance of a religious holiday, without penalty. However, it is your responsibility to look ahead on the calendar, and notify us no later than Sep 10 of your intention to be absent from class on the day(s) of religious observance.

Academic Integrity

We personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity, and will address violations of this code accordingly. It states: "Academic dishonesty is 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." It is your responsibility to read and understand this and other stipulations of GW's Code of Academic Integrity, and complete all class work in accordance with this code. For the remainder of the code, see: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

Disability Support Services (DSS)

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)

The 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; and confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals. You can reach the UCC at 202-994-5300. For additional information, please refer to

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

SECURITY

In the case of 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 the evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The class schedule is on the following page. We reserve the right to change the schedule as dictated by our class so that we have the most informative and thought-provoking semester possible. We look forward to the semester and learning from each other!

HOT TOPICS will be selected by the students on the first day of class and covered as appropriate in the lectures or discussion section.

QUESTION	WEEK	TOPICS	READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
INTRODUCTION	1 (8/30 & 9/1)	Natural selection; Disciplines studying human evolution	Lieberman Chapter 1 Wade Chapters 1,2
	2 (9/6 & 9/8)	Tools for studying human evolution; The human body	Lieberman Chapters 2-5 Wade Chapters 4 & 5
ARE HUMANS MONOGAMOUS ?	3 (9/13 & 9/15)	Socio-ecology; Sexual selection	Gray & Garcia Chapters 1,2,4,7
	4 (9/20 & 9/22)	Sexual Selection; Mate choice	Gray & Garcia Chapters 3,8,10,11
	5 (9/27 & 9/29)	Cooperative care; Human life history	
ARE HUMANS NICE OR MEAN?	6 (10/4 & 10/6)	Aggression; Costs and benefits of aggression	EXAM 1 (Tues 10/4) Mitani et al. 2010
	7 (10/11 & 10/13)	Mitigation strategies; Interspecies relationships	Wade Chapter 8
	8 (10/18 & 10/20)	Cooperation; Policing; Social norms	Bickerton Chapters 4,7,8 Silk & House 2011; House & Silk 2013
	9 (10/25 & 10/27)	Cognition; Language; Brain size	FALL BREAK (10/25) Wrangham & Carmody 2010
WHY DO HUMANS HAVE CULTURE?	10 (11/1 & 11/3)	Cultural anthropology; Definition of culture	Wade Chapters 6,7
	11 (11/8 & 11/10)	Cultural transmission; Culture in other species	Wade Chapter 9 Tennie et al. 2009
	12 (11/15 & 11/17)	Cumulative culture	EXAM 2 (11/17)
ARE HUMANS WELL SUITED TO MODERN LIVING?	13 (11/22 & 11/24)	Cultural evolution	THANKSGIVING (11/24)
	14 (11/29 & 12/1)	Mismatch theory	Lieberman Chapters 7-13
	15 (12/6 & 12/8)	Group presentations & Wrap-up	