

The Evolution of Human Families

Instructor

Dr. Carson Murray
OFFICE HOURS:

Room 302, 2114 G Street
Wednesdays 12 .00 – 1.00 PM or email to schedule another meeting

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Teaching Assistant

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OFFICE HOURS:

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CLASS INFORMATION: Anthropology 3491, special topics in Anthropology
Monday and Wednesday 3.45 – 5.00 PM
1776 G Street, Room 101

Class Synopsis

As any parent can attest, raising human babies requires a lot of work! Across the mammalian taxa, our own species is one of the most dependent. We have evolved some unusual features that allow us to reproduce, including bi-parental care, extended family networks, and allocare by non-parents. In this class, we will explore parental behavior from an evolutionary perspective. We will review parental care across the mammalian taxa and general concepts in parental investment and parent-offspring conflict. We will then focus on parenting in the human lineage, from theories in early hominins to patterns in hunter-gatherers to the modern context. This is an upper level class so the format will be discussion-based and students are responsible for in-class presentations that will supplement the required readings.

Class Objectives

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

- 1) Place human parenting in a comparative perspective;
- 2) Be able to apply evolutionary theory to the evolution of human parenting;
- 3) Explain the physiological basis and outcomes of maternal and paternal behavior;
- 4) Write a comprehensive literature review that is hypothesis-driven;
- 5) Present, discuss, and critique empirical studies on parental care;
- 6) Synthesize course content and draw from theory to answer questions in new contexts.

Class Prerequisites

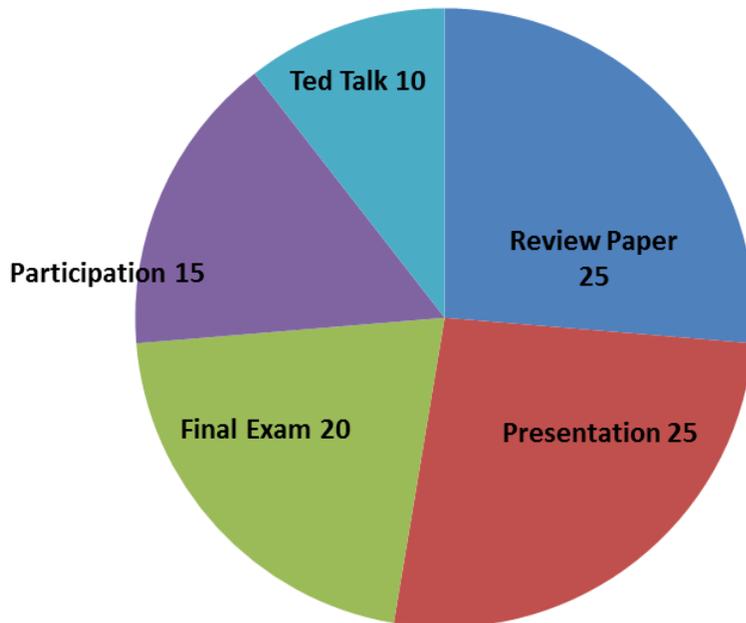
This class does not have any prerequisites but the content is upper-level. We will draw from fields including animal behavior, physiology, and evolutionary psychology. We will cover the germane basic information but students must be prepared and willing to embrace a broad, scientific approach to our class.

Required Texts and Reading

This course will include primary, peer-reviewed publications that are assigned by your Instructor, Teaching Assistant, and colleagues. The first two weeks are outlined on the syllabus and other articles will be chosen one week before the class period in which they will be discussed. In addition, we recommend two texts that are optional but insightful! These books are not available in the George Washington University bookstore but can be purchased if the student wants to have another resource for the class.

1. Mothers and Others. 2009. S. Hrdy. Belknap Press.
2. Fatherhood: Evolution and Human Paternal Behavior. 2010. P. Gray and K. Anderson. Harvard University Press.

Class Assignments
Final Grades



Review Paper (25%)

In lieu of a mid-term, you will prepare a literature review one aspect of human parenting. The literature review will have an underlying hypothesis and assimilate primary literature in non-primates, non-human primates, and humans. The paper will be 5-7 single-spaced pages (not including references) and include a minimum of **25 primary sources**. Students will also give a 15 minute summation of their paper during the week of the mid-term. **They can revise this paper per my comments and submit by December 2, 2013 for a new grade.** Final papers will be circulated in our class so that we all have a thorough review of all topics covered in class.

Presentation (25%)

Class discussions will be led by two student moderators (or three as necessary) each week. Graduate students will moderate alone. Students will sign up for their topic during the first class period. The students will:

- 1) Identify and circulate reading (s) or pertinent multi-media links one week before their class session. These assignments should provide background, empirical studies, and fodder for discussion.
 - a. Students sometimes like to focus on modern humans in their session; this is great but you have freedom to design a class that speaks most to you and your group mates.
- 2) Incorporate out-of-class activities as appropriate that keep us looking at and considering how class topics relate to modern human behavior.
- 3) Meet with the Teaching Assistant **at least one week** before class to review the presentation. Ideally, this will be during office hours. If that does not work, please communicate well in advance to schedule a time during the week before your presentation.
- 4) Give a 45 minute presentation on the topic and facilitate discussion of it and the assigned reading (s) after their presentation for the remaining 30 minutes. I do not expect the conversation to lag, so please be prepared.

- 5) Write two potential questions on their topic for the final exam. THESE ARE DUE ON THE DAY OF YOUR PRESENTATION, BUT CAN BE EDITED BEFORE THE FINAL EXAM.

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be essay-based and comprehensive. It is a **take-home exam** and will be due on the day scheduled for the final. Essays will be focused on how well students can take the course concepts and apply them to theoretical or new situations. There is no “right” answer, but you must draw from the literature correctly and have a clear and cogent rationale behind your response.

Participation (15%)

Your participation grade is determined by both your attendance and active participation in class. The Teaching Assistant will keep track of attendance, conversational participation, and participation in group assignments by your colleagues.

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.

Ted Talk (10%)

Each student will create and give a 10 minute Ted Talk which will be filmed and posted by your Teaching Assistant. Ted Talks can be on any aspect of paternal behavior, but should NOT be the topic on which the student is presenting or writing a literature review. The goal of the Ted Talk is to present one new (within the last year) study and relate it to major class concepts. Remember that your audience is non-experts and that the presenter wants to engage them! Students will sign up for filming times on November 16 (all day), November 18 (11.00 AM to 3.00 PM) and November 22 (all day).

Talks will be posted on November 25, 2013 and students should watch all and post comments and questions. You will be graded both on the talk and the posts.

Class Policies

Attendance

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

Office Hours

I am here as a resource both in and outside of class! Come see me if you have questions, during my regularly scheduled office hours. If you cannot make them, please write me in advance to schedule another time, but please understand that we all have busy schedules so I 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.

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 me no later **September 4, 2013** of your intention to be absent from class on the day(s) of religious observance. Please also schedule your presentations around any days on which you have religious holidays.

Academic Integrity

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

Class Topics and Schedule

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS	MODERATOR
1 (8/26 & 8/28)	PARENTAL CARE SYSTEMS OVERVIEW, PARENTAL CARE IN PRIMATES	Chapter 2, Evolution of Parental Care	Instructor (W)
2 (9/4)	PARENTAL INVESTMENT THEORY, BIRTH SEX RATIO	Silk & Brown, 2008; Martin &	Instructor (W)
3 (9/9 & 9/11)	MATERNAL EFFECTS: INFANT OUTCOMES		Instructor (M), Teaching Assistant (W)
4 (9/16 & 9/18)	TRANSMISSION OF MATERNAL BEHAVIOR		Instructor (M), Students (W)
5 (9/23 & 9/25)	MATERNAL CARE IN HOMININS AND CULTURAL VARIATION IN MATERNAL BEHAVIOR		Instructor (M), Students (W)
6 (9/30 & 10/2)	ECOLOGY AND MATERNAL BEHAVIOR		Instructor (M), Students (W)
7 (10/7 & 10/9)	HORMONES AND MATERNAL BEHAVIOR	REVIEW PAPERS DUE BY 5 PM ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 7	Instructor (M), Students (W)
8 (10/14 & 10/16)	PATERNAL CARE IN PRIMATES AND HUMANS, CROSS-CULTURAL VARIATION		Instructor (M), Students (W)
9 (10/21 & 10/23)	HORMONES AND PATERNAL BEHAVIOR		Instructor (M), Students (W)
10 (10/28 & 10/30)	ALLO-PARENTING IN VERTEBRATES AND HUMANS		Instructor (M), Students (W)
11 (11/4 & 11/6)	PARENT-OFFSPRING CONFLICT, PARENTS AND OFFSPRING ACROSS THE LIFESPAN		Instructor (M), Students (W)
12 (11/11 & 11/13)	INFLUENCE OF EARLY ENVIRONMENT TO ADULT OUTCOMES: BEHAVIOR AND PHYSIOLOGY	FILMING ON SAT, NOVEMBER 16	Instructor (M), Students (W)
13 (11/18 & 11/20)	INFLUENCE OF EARLY ENVIRONMENT TO ADULT OUTCOMES: PSYCHOLOGY	FILMING ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18 AND FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22	Instructor (M), Students (W)
14 (11/25)	NO CLASS ON MONDAY	TED TALKS DUE BY 5 PM ON MONDAY, NOV 25	Instructor (M)
15 (12/2 & 12/4)	WRAP UP AND FINAL EXAM GENERATION	FINAL EXAM QUESTIONS	Instructor (M and W)

FINAL EXAMS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2013 AND ARE DUE VIA EMAIL NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2013

REVIEW PAPER REVISIONS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 2, 2013

Evolution of Human Mothering Presentation Rubric:

TOPIC: _____

GROUP MEMBERS: _____

INDIVIDUAL: _____

TOTAL SCORE _____/100

Content _____/50 pts total

- Assign at least one peer-reviewed articles _____ **out of 10**
- Topic fits into the larger scheme of the week and class _____ **out of 10**
- Topic is well researched and primary studies incorporated _____ **out of 10**
- Clear definitions and good use of examples _____ **out of 10**
- Provide insightful questions and effectively lead class discussion _____ **out of 10**

Presentation _____/30 pts total

- Presentation is well timed (including time for discussion) _____ **out of 6**
- Clear articulation and eye contact _____ **out of 6**
- Enthusiastic and engaging presentation _____ **out of 6**
- Aesthetically pleasing (number of words on the slides, etc.) _____ **out of 6**
- Equal participation from all group members _____ **out of 6**

Creativity _____/20 pts total

- Creative topic and overarching question _____ **out of 10**
- Unique/creative way of engaging the class (game, media, etc.) _____ **out of 10**

INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS

Synopsis:

Strengths:

Areas for Improvement: