

PRIMATE BEHAVIORAL ECOLOGY

ANTH 6491

Spring 2018 Syllabus

Wednesdays 1.00 – 2.50 PM

SEH 6845

INSTRUCTOR

Carson M. Murray, Associate Professor of Anthropology

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Hours: Wed 9.30 – 11.00 AM

Please email in advance if at all possible. Please call my office for entry (202.994.4170)

CLASS SYNOPSIS

Primates are exceptionally diverse taxa, with social organizations ranging from solitary to group-living species and occupying a wide range of habitat types. As such, they present an insightful paradigm in which to consider the relationship between social behavior and the environment, despite the practical challenges of studying long-lived animals. Non-human primates also hold special relevance to biological anthropologists given their use as comparative models for understanding human evolution and behavior. This graduate-level class will provide an overview of the behavioral diversity found in primates (both within and between primate species) and investigate how ecology relates to behavior and individual fitness. This course is rooted in behavioral ecology and animal behavior and will present pertinent theoretical models and draw from non-primate examples as appropriate.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, students will:

- (1) Have a working knowledge of the diversity of social systems and behavior in non-human primates;
- (2) Have a solid foundation in major topics in behavioral ecology and animal behavior, including socio-ecology, foraging models, space use, sexual selection, and parental investment theory;
- (3) Understand how primate behavior fits in a larger animal behavior context;
- (4) Be able to formulate hypotheses based on behavioral theory and design studies for testing them in wild populations; and
- (5) Have gained expertise on a topic and species of their choosing.

GRADING

This is a graduate class so I expect all students to work hard and perform well. I also expect that each student will contribute substantially to the content of the course. Grades will be assigned based on the following:

Examinations (60%)

There are two exams: an oral exam midway through the semester and a comprehensive written exam at the end. The oral exam will be during the week of **March 21, 2018**, 30 – 45 minutes in length, and each student will meet with me separately. The final exam will be given on the **assigned final exam date or an earlier date if mutually agreed upon.**

Topic Expert: Presentation and Review Paper (40%)

The field of primate behavior is expansive and no one can be a master of all topics. Each student will select one focus area on which to increase their expertise. Ideally, this will relate in some way to the student's primary research interest. Throughout the semester, the student will read extensively in order to summarize seminal studies and the current state of the field (including methodological tools), and identify future directions. While each student is responsible for topical expertise as it relates to primates, all students should examine the broader literature to understand how primates compare to other animal taxa.

In class presentation and discussion. Students will have 50 minutes to give a short presentation summarizing how primate studies relate to work in non-primates, the current state of the field and future directions and then lead a detailed discussion and critique of related primary studies. Please assign at least 3 articles one week before you are scheduled to present and read them beforehand to ensure that they are best case studies to integrate into your presentation. Please sign up for your topic on the first day of class. Students should work independently.

Comprehensive literature review. Students will prepare a comprehensive review of primate studies in their chosen topic, discuss how primates relate to patterns in other species and discuss how the primate literature informs our understanding of human evolution (or not). These reviews should be 10-20 pages in length, single-spaced. References are not included in the page total. During the week of April 11 students will exchange draft papers for a peer review. Final papers will be compiled and circulated to the class at the end of the semester.

Participation (10%). I would not expect this to be an issue but students should participate in class. I also encourage students to spend a few hours searching the literature before class and come armed with examples that caught their eye.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance

You are expected to attend class each week. Notify me in advance of an absence unless you are incapacitated.

Blackboard

Given the size of this class, we will not use blackboard. Articles will be circulated via email.

Office Hours

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. That is, I need to know you are actually incapacitated.

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 me no later than Feb 1 of your intention to be absent from class on the day(s) of religious observance.

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 specific flow of the class will likely change based on student backgrounds and interest. All readings will be circulated one week in advance. I have already sent out the first three weeks.

DATE	TOPIC	STUDENT PRESENTATION	ASSIGNMENTS & READINGS
22-Jan-18	Introduction to Behavioral Ecology and Primates		
24-Jan-18	Methods in Primatology		
31-Jan-18	Nutritional Ecology	Faunivory	
7-Feb-18	Predation		
14-Feb-18	Spatial Ecology	Kin Selection	
21-Feb-18	Female Strategies	Female Reproductive Ecology	
28-Feb-18	Male Strategies	Cooperation	
7-Mar-18	Sexual Selection and Parental Care	Parental Behavior	
14-Mar-18	NO CLASS		
21-Mar-18	Social Learning	Culture	ORAL EXAMS (Monday - Thursday)
28-Mar-18	Primate Development	Development	
4-Apr-18	Cognition and Communication	Communication	
11-Apr-18	NO CLASS - AAPA - rescheduled on Mon, April 30		PEER REVIEW OF PAPERS
18-Apr-18	Community Ecology	Community Ecology	
25-Apr-18	Conservation	Habitat Fragmentation	COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW DUE
30-Apr-18	Wrap-up		FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED