

Anthropology 101: Human Biological Evolution (0264)

West Los Angeles College, Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Snyder

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Office hours: Tuesday 11-11:30; in the courtyard outside SC101

Course Description

This course explores the field of physical anthropology emphasizing the evolution of the human species. Topics include human heredity, mechanisms of evolutionary change, human variation, and the reconstruction of human evolutionary history through the study of the fossil record and the study of our closest biological relatives, the living monkeys and apes. The philosophy of science and scientific method serve as foundations for this course.

Understanding how humans evolved is a good first step toward understanding why humans are such a unique species. Trying to understand human physiology and behavior without understanding evolution is like trying to understand planetary orbits without understanding gravity. The course is divided into four major parts: (1) the mechanics of biological evolution; (2) primate behavior and ecology; (3) the history of the human lineage; and (4) the evolution of modern humans.

Student Learning Outcomes: This course will help students achieve the following

Course-level SLO:

- (1) Explain how hereditary traits are transferred between generations and conclude how this relates to evolution by natural selection.
- (2) Recall and define anthropological terms and concepts that deal with the fossil record.

Institutional SLOs:

Critical thinking: Analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using evidence, and using sound reasoning to specify multiple solutions and their consequences. Students will apply critical thinking to investigate and interpret the influences of heredity and environment upon human beings.

Cultural diversity: Respectfully engage with other cultures in an effort to understand them. Students will participate in activities designed to elicit discussion and understanding of the biological variation among *Homo sapiens*.

Required Textbook: R. Jurmain, L. Kilgore, & W. Trevathon (2013). *Essentials of Physical Anthropology*, 9th edition. Wadsworth, Belmont. (ISBN 978-1-111-83718-1)

What to Expect:

This course will consist primarily of lectures accompanied by a power-point presentation. Slides are detailed and PDF copies of the lecture slides will be posted on the course website – this will make preparing for exams and taking notes easier for you.

In addition to exams, the course will also include homework, in-class assignments, and practice quizzes. Homework, in-class assignments, and practice quizzes are three tools intended to meet your needs and help you achieve the learning objectives. Your learning needs, as a class, will be assessed on a week-to-week basis and homework, in-class assignments, and practice quizzes will be planned accordingly. That means that in-class assignments and practice quizzes will not necessarily be announced in advance.

Attendance Policy

IMPORTANT: You will be dropped/excluded from the course if you miss two classes or more in the first two weeks. Attendance is mandatory but does not contribute toward your grade. Homework assignments will be infrequent and will be announced on a week-to-week basis AND in-class assignments and practice quizzes will not necessarily be announced in advance. **You are responsible for all material presented in class, including announcements and handouts whether or not you attend.**

Course Difficulty

This is a very demanding course. Please notice that your textbook is just over 400 pages long and we will be covering most of the material. In order to succeed in this course you will need to do a great deal of memorization and understand

concepts that many students find quite challenging. The best ways to deal with this challenge is to do all the assigned readings, attend all lectures, and study.

Course Grade

Format: Quizzes and exams will consist of multiple choice (sometimes true/false or fill in the blank) and a question (or questions) requiring a short-answer. The format of homework and in-class assignments will vary – sometimes short answer and sometimes math calculations.

Grading: EVERY ASSIGNMENT AND EXAM WILL BE ASSIGNED A PERCENTAGE GRADE (100% or lower)

Homework, in-class assignments, and quizzes: 10% of your final grade for the course. There may be weeks that have multiple assignments but only one of these per week will be graded. It is possible but unlikely that there are no assignments for a certain week. Your lowest grade will be dropped, an average for all assignments will be calculated and multiplied by .10 (10%)

Tests: there will be three exams (not including the final exam). Each test is worth 20% of your final grade.

Final exam: The final exam is worth 30% of your course grade.

Grades in Sum:

Quizzes and in-class assignments = 10%

Three exams = 20%, each

Final Exam = 30%

Grading Scale:

"A" at least 90% on all graded work.

"B" 80-89% on all graded work

"C" 70-79% on all graded work

"D" 60-69% on all graded work

"F" below 60 %

ALL GRADES ARE FINAL UNLESS A CLERICAL ERROR WAS MADE. Grades are not assigned on the basis of need.

Make-up exams and assignments will only be given in the event of an emergency at my discretion when I have received some formal documentation of your hardship. In the event of an emergency, contact me by email as soon as possible (within 32 hours). With an excused absence, assignments or exams must be made up no later than one week after the due date.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to understand and abide by university policies regarding academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Know the WLAC policies regarding academic integrity and consequences of academic dishonesty. Students will receive a grade of a zero on the exam, quiz, or assignment that involved academic dishonesty. Further action may be taken.

Accommodations/Disability Statement:

If you are a student with a disability and require accommodations, please contact the Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSP&S) Office. The DSP&S Office provides special assistance in areas including: registration assistance specialized tutoring, academic and career guidance counseling, instructor liaison, special instruction and testing assistance.

For more information:

DSPS page <http://www.wlac.edu/dsps/>

Office Location, Student Services Building (SSB 320)

Telephone (310) 287-4450

Department Email - dsps@wlac.edu

Course Schedule and Exam Dates

NOTE: Lecture schedule and reading assignments are subject to minor changes.

PART I: The mechanics of biological evolution

Week 1 (February 10 & 12):

- Review of Course Policies and Introductions
- Overview of Anthropology
Chapter 1

Week 2 (February 17 & 19)

- Natural Selection
Chapter 2

Week 3 (February 24 & 26):

- Basics of biology
Chapter 3

Week 4 (March 3 & 5)

- Mendelian Genetics
Chapter 4

Week 5 (March 10 & 12)

- Speciation & Macroevolution
- Chapter 5
- **EXAM 1, MARCH 12th**

PART II: Primates; taxonomy, behavior, and ecology

Week 6 (March 17 & 19)

- Primates
Chapter 6

Week 7 (March 24 & 26):

- Primate Ecology and Mating
Chapter 7 (NOTICE: THERE WILL ALSO BE HANDOUTS FOR MATERIAL NOT COVERED IN THE TEXTBOOK)

Week 8 (April 2):

- **HOLIDAY: TUESDAY MARCH 31**
- Primate Cooperation
HANDOUT FOR MATERIAL NOT COVERED IN THE TEXTBOOK

SPRING BREAK: OFF APRIL 7 & 9

Week 9 (April 14 & 16)

- Primate Intelligence
HANDOUT FOR MATERIAL NOT COVERED IN THE TEXTBOOK
- **EXAM 2, APRIL 16TH**

PART III: The history of the human lineage

Week 10 (April 21 & 23)

- From tree shrew to early hominins
Chapter 8
- Early hominins continued

Week 11 (April 28 & 30)

- Evolution of genus *Homo*
Chapter 9 -10

Week 12 (May 5 & 7)

- Evolution of genus *Homo*
Chapter 9-10
- **EXAM 3, MAY 7TH**

PART IV: The evolution of modern humans

Week 13 (May 12 & 14)

- Origin and Dispersal of Modern Humans
Chapter 11
- Modern Humans & Human variation
Chapter 12

Week 14 (May 19 & 21)

- Human variation
Chapter 12

Week 15 (May 26 & 28)

- Culture, human, behavior, mating and parenting
Chapter 13

Final Exam: Tuesday, June 2nd; 10:15a.m.-12:15p.m.