

PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Sample Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

***Advisory: ENGL 035 or ENLA 100 or appropriate assessment; READ 023 or appropriate assessment*

***Transfers to: UC (credit limit*), CSU (*Students will receive credit from UC for only one of the following courses: ANTH 101 or ANTH 101H)*

In this course, people are investigated from the perspective of evolutionary theory. Students will learn about the process of natural selection and related issues including patterns of inheritance. Also included will be an examination of the closest living relatives to humans, primates, with an emphasis on behavior and ape societies. An extensive survey of human ancestors will trace the origins of various life forms and recount how ape-like creatures evolved into modern humans. Students will also discover how natural selection can be used as a tool to understand patterns of human variation. This course is designed for anthropology majors, those with an interest in anthropology, or anyone with a desire to further their understanding of humans from an evolutionary perspective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- A. Describe how the process of evolution by natural selection can lead to adaptation.
- B. Identify the major processes underlying independent assortment, particulate inheritance, meiosis, mitosis, protein synthesis, and population genetics.
- C. Describe the processes of sexual selection, kin selection, and reciprocal altruism.
- D. Identify the distinguishing features of the major primate groups.
- E. Identify key features of all ape societies.
- F. Describe the major developments of life forms on Earth.
- G. Identify the major milestones in hominid evolution.
- H. Describe why race is a meaningless concept from a biological perspective.
- I. Identify the relationship between human adaptations and various environments.
- J. Describe how natural selection has shaped human morphology, physiology, and behavior.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will be able to describe the process of natural selection.
2. Students will be able to identify the major processes associated with inheritance and variation.
3. Students will be able to identify the significant features of the major primate groups.
4. Students will be able to identify the major milestones in human evolution.
5. Students will be able to describe the relationship between human adaptations and various environments.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: *Essentials of Physical Anthropology* by Jurmain, Kilgore, and Trevathan. 9th Edition. Wadsworth Publishing. It is available for purchase in the college bookstore and in online bookstores. You may also purchase the eBook edition, if interested. Additionally, be aware that this textbook has an Online Learning Center for students at <http://www.wadsworth.com>. And, yes,

"required" means mandatory, necessary, etc. You will not successfully complete this course without it so be sure to purchase it early on in the class, or even better, before the class begins. That said, if you absolutely cannot purchase the text, know that there is one available in the college's library on reserves. It can be checked out by a student for use for a couple hours at a time, but must remain in the library.

COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE: This schedule serves as a guide for the course. It is subject to change as the instructor so deems necessary. If the schedule or content of the class is to be altered, you will be notified as a class. Any graded activities related to a lesson must be completed by the end date/time to receive credit.

INTRODUCTION:

-Course and Instructor Introductions

LESSON 1:

-Introduction to Anthropology

-Epistemology

LESSON 2:

-Origin of the World and Humankind: From Creation Stories to Darwin to Today

LESSON 3:

-The Beginnings of Modern Evolutionary Theory: Cellular Biology, DNA, and Inheritance

LESSON 4:

-Neo-Evolutionism: Theories, Factors, and Mechanisms

EXAM #1 WEEK

LESSON 5:

-Mammalian and Primate Macroevolution

LESSON 6:

-Primate Taxonomy and Characteristics

LESSON 7:

-Primate Behavior

EXAM #2 WEEK

LESSON 8:

-Hominid Origins: Basal Hominids, Australopithecines, and *H. habilis*

LESSON 9:

-Hominid Origins: *Homo erectus*

LESSON 10:

-Hominid Origins: Archaic *Homo sapiens* and Neandertals

LESSON 11:

-Hominid Origins: Modern *Homo sapiens*

Lesson 12:

-Modern Human Variation and Adaptation

EXAM #3 WEEK

COURSE GRADES: In addition to completing the required reading for each lesson, during the course of the class, three exams and two, 3-5 page writing assignments will be assigned. Your grades will, thus, consist of the following:

EXAMS (3 exams; 100 points each): **300 points**

The exams will have a combination of multiple choice and short answer (paragraph style) questions. You will receive a study guide for each exam that you may choose to complete prior to taking the exam. **You will have one class period to complete each exam. Each exam is due upon the completion or deadline date for that exam--no excuses.**

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (2 writing assignments; 50 pts each): **100 points**

During the course, I will require that you submit two, 3-5 page writing assignments in response to topics or questions that I pose to the class. The due dates are staggered throughout the semester so as to not encourage too much procrastination (see below), and you will be given a minimum of 4 weeks to prepare each of the written assignments.

Total Points Possible and Grading Guidelines:

There are a total of 400 points available in the class, not including extra credit. The letter grade equivalencies are:

A=89% and above

B=79% and above

C=69% and above

D=59% and above

F=Anything at or below 58% of the course total.

EXTRA CREDIT: Extra credit will be made available for you to take advantage of. A total of 50 points of

extra credit can be earned by completing outside, extra credit assignments agreed upon by both the student and professor. Any extra credit points earned will go toward your point total.

Regarding these "outside" assignments:

1. You can watch a movie or TV show related to the course content (it can be fact or fiction). Then, write a 3 page paper that summarizes the content of the show and compares/contrasts it to what you've learned in class. This effort is worth 20 points.

2. You can visit a zoological or museological exhibit related to the course content. You can visit such things as the primate section of a zoo or the human evolution/genographic project exhibits at Museum of Man in San Diego. Then, write a 3 page paper that summarizes what you learned at the exhibit and compare/contrast it to what you've learned in class. This effort is worth 30 points.

Additionally, sometimes I will offer extra credit within an exam. If offered, this extra credit will be in addition to the 50 points of extra credit discussed above.

Remember, all extra credit is due to me by the last day of class.
