

Sample questions for Exam II are posted on the Files page.

## Instructor

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## Shopping week

Information sessions will be held via Zoom from 3:00pm to 4:15pm (ET) on Tuesday, August 18 and Thursday, August 20. Links for these Zoom meetings are on the Zoom page of the course website. Questions and/or requests for individual meetings may be submitted to the instructor via email at any time.

## Course description

This course will present a survey of human (especially female) life history physiology and the role of hormones in orchestrating key life course transitions, in allocating energy to optimize fitness, and in determining health and disease. This semester, we will use this framework as a basis for discussion of critical real-world issues, including racial disparities in reproductive outcomes and in the tempo of growth and development and also questions concerning fertility and infertility.

## Recommended preparation

There is no formal prerequisite, but some prior coursework in the area of endocrinology (e.g., LS 2, HEB 1418, or a relevant OEB or SCRB course) will be helpful in approaching this material effectively. All students must get instructor permission to enroll.

## Course format

The course will be a hybrid of lectures and seminar discussions. Readings for lectures include chapters from the book *On Fertile Ground* and selected papers from the primary literature. Readings for seminar discussions include articles from both popular press and academic publications. Students will take turns leading seminar discussions, but all class members are expected to come to class having read *and thought about* the readings and to *actively engage* in class discussions.

While the format will be generally similar to previous times the course has been offered, there will be two notable differences:

1. Seminar discussions this semester, rather than focusing on issues of academic debate, will address real-world issues that impact us individually and as a society. To give you an idea of what we will be discussing, here are links to two articles that we will read: [Roeder 2019.pdf](#) | [Cha 2018.pdf](#)
2. Rather than the instructor posting discussion questions and leading the seminar sessions, students (either individually or with a classmate) will be responsible for taking on these responsibilities.

Ideally, both of these modifications will help to increase our engagement with the material and with each other, something we will need to be more intentional about, given that we will be physically separated.

To encourage less formal interaction, I will normally get on the Zoom meetings before the official class start time and stay on afterwards to chat with anyone who wants to join me and I also intend to arrange an individual get-acquainted meeting with each of you. During the semester, I will hold scheduled office hours via Zoom; in addition, I will always be happy to set up individual meetings.

## Required text

Ellison, PT. 2001. *On Fertile Ground*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Online access to this book is available through HOLLIS (via the Library Reserves page of the course website). Printed copies can be ordered through the Coop (<https://tinyurl.com/F20-HUMA-EVOL-1361-1>) or from other sources.

PDFs of all other assigned readings will be available on the course website.

## Course requirements

All students will be expected to lead at least one seminar discussion, either individually or with a

classmate. This will involve formulating and posting a set of discussion questions in advance and then facilitating the discussion during the seminar session itself. Details will be determined by the class, depending on enrollment and student preferences.

In addition, there will be two assessments in the form of in-class exams, the first on October 8 and the second on November 19. Each exam will consist of a set of short essay questions and will cover material from the lectures and readings. There will be no final exam or term paper.

## Grading

Course grades will be based on:

1. Credit for acting as seminar discussion leader (formulating and posting discussion questions and facilitating class discussion)
2. Scores on the two exams

Normally, acting as seminar discussion leader will be worth 30 points (or 15 points per student if working with a partner) and the combined scores on the two exams will be worth a maximum of 70 points (30 for the first, 40 for the second).

Points for acting as discussion leader will be awarded on a “yes/no” basis that is, you will be given full credit as long as you fulfill the requirements (your performance will not be graded). Exams will be graded as usual.

Depending on enrollment, there may be some flexibility possible in the weighting of these two components that is, if you choose to act as discussion leader more than the required one time, you could increase the proportion of your final point total that would be ungraded. For example, if you lead one discussion individually and one with a partner, you could earn 45 points and your exam grades would then be worth a maximum of 55 points, thereby decreasing the relative weight of the exam grades to your final point total.

This scheme represents my current thinking, but could be subject to modification. The aim is to provide flexibility to accommodate different learning preferences and personal situations.

## Course policies and expectations

Because this will be a small class and because of the importance of class discussions, **all students will be expected to attend the two weekly class meetings** (Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00pm to 4:15pm ET) via Zoom and to come to class having read *and thought about* the readings and to *actively engage* in class discussions. During these class meetings, you will be expected to be fully present, that is, not checking email, social media or other websites. In past years, students have reported that preparation time outside of class averages 3-6 hours per week. That will be greater on the week(s) that you are a discussion leader.

If you must miss a class meeting, I would ask that you notify me in advance, if at all possible. Then, you should make an arrangement with me for a make-up meeting.

Since some of the topics we will be discussing may potentially touch some of us personally and/or evoke emotional reactions, I ask that all group members be respectful of each others’™ feelings and opinions. I am including some of these topics in my teaching for the first time, so I will be learning along with you. You should feel free to give me feedback, either in class or privately, if you think I am not being sufficiently sensitive and/or if you have suggestions for how to improve the class.

## Academic integrity

All students will be expected to abide by the Harvard Honor Code. In-class exams are closed-book, so answers are to be written individually, *without* consulting notes or other references. In other aspects of the course, collaboration between class members is not only allowed, but encouraged that is particularly in preparing for and leading group discussions.

## Accommodations for students with disabilities

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability should present their Faculty Letter from the AEO and speak with me to make any appropriate arrangements.

## Course Calendar

[Course calendar fall 2020 revised.docx](#)