

Instructor: Dr. Bridget Alex

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Office hours: by appointment, MCZ 533E

Course time and location: T/Th 1-2:30 pm, Peabody Museum 52H

Course description: Over the past 100,000 years why did modern humans survive while other human lineages went extinct? This seminar will center on comparing modern humans to Neanderthals using the genetic, fossil, and archaeological records. Areas of comparison will include anatomy, genomes, life history, technology, diet, symbolic behavior, and demographic history. We will also discuss other known or proposed humans from this period - Denisovans, *Homo floresiensis*, and super-archaics - as well as the evidence for interbreeding between the groups.

Prereqs: SLS 16 or HEB 97 or permission of the instructor.

Fulfills HEB subfield requirement for human evolution.

Course objectives:

- Broad understanding of the fossil, archaeological, and genetic records pertaining to Neanderthals and other extinct humans
- Evaluation of extinction hypotheses from an evolutionary perspective
- Synthesis and critique of primary literature
- Develop skills of independent scholarship
- Improve oral and written communication

Assignments/evaluation summary: 200 points

40% Class participation (80 points total)

Introduction meeting (10 pts)

Discussion leader (30 pts)

Regular participation (40 pts)

60% Written assignments (120 points total)

News & Views 1 (draft and revisions 15 pts)

News & Views 2 (draft, comments, revisions 20 pts)

News & Views 3 (final 20 pts - or can lead discussion a second time)

Midterm response paper (25 pts)

Final research proposal and presentation (40 pts)

Assignment details

The course will include both instructor-led lectures and student-led discussions. *In both cases, you should come to class prepared to discuss readings assigned that day.* The reading load is manageable so that you will have time to carefully read what is assigned. *You are expected to do any outside reading necessary to understand the assigned articles* (by consulting references, searching article archives, asking the instructor).

On discussion days, one student will serve as discussion leader. At least 2 days prior, that student will assign the class one additional reading pertinent to the day's topic. The discussion leader will begin the class meeting by giving a short presentation that summarizes the articles. The discussion leader will then facilitate and moderate group discussion for the rest of the class meeting.

1) Introduction meeting:

Students must complete a brief (15 minute) introductory meeting with the instructor within the first two weeks of class (10 points). During this meeting we can choose which class meeting the student will lead.

2) Discussion leader:

Students serve as discussion leaders for class meetings. Responsibilities include: assigning one additional reading relevant to the theme two days before class; providing a 10-15 minute summary of the readings and major themes at the beginning of class; moderating the discussion throughout class and stimulating discussion (30 points).

3) Regular participation:

Students prepare for and participate in class meetings. Instructor permission required for absences (40 points).

4) News and Views stories:

Students will write three News and Views style articles. These are 600-800 word stories, written for the general educated public, that discuss a specific research paper. The goal is to summarize and contextual research for non-specialists. References should follow the style of *Science* or *Nature*.

For News & Views 1 students will turn in a draft (5 points), receive feedback from the instructor, and turn in a revised graded version (10 points).

For News & Views 2 students will turn in a draft to a classmate (5 points), provide comments on a classmate's draft (5 points), and turn in a revised graded version (10 points).

For News & Views 3 students will submit one graded version (20 points).

5) Midterm response paper:

Students will be given an essay prompt and must submit a response paper written for academic specialists within 5 days of the assignment (25 points).

6) Final research proposal:

Students will write a mock research proposal that addresses topics of the course. The proposal should have a clear research question, background information, study design, and realistic budget. Students should imagine that they have access to any materials, sites, laboratory facilities, and expertise. The proposal text should be no more than 2 pages single-spaced (but references, tables, figures, and budget can exceed the 2 pages)*. Students will submit one draft to the instructor for feedback. By Sunday of the last week of classes students will post the final version of their proposal on the course website. Students will read each other's proposals before the final two class meetings, and during those meetings each student will pitch their proposal. The class will choose which proposals to "fund" (10 points written draft, 10 points oral pitch, 20 points final written proposal).

*Format is flexible if students wish to prepare proposal for real grant for which they are applying.

Late assignments

In most cases extensions will be granted *provided students request extensions at least 3 days prior to the assignment due date*. Late submissions without prior permission will be penalized.

Academic Integrity Policy

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic.

You are encouraged and at times required to exchange written assignments with your classmates for feedback. Their comments should be documented (using track changes or different color pens/text) and submitted to the instructor along with the final version. You must list anyone who has provided feedback on your work, including outside additional resources (BSC, tutors, etc).

You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work.

Textbooks:

There are no required textbooks for the course but two books have been put on reserve at Tozzer library. These may be helpful if you want more background on a topic or while preparing to be Discussion leader.

Thin on the ground: Neandertal biology, archeology, and ecology by Steven Churchill, Wiley Blackwell 2014.

The Human Career. Third Edition by Richard Klein. University of Chicago Press 2009.