

HEB 1440: PERCEPTIONS OF PRIMATES

Fall Semester 2016

Thursday 1:00-4:00
Geological Museum Rm. 103A

Instructor: Dr. Lara



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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00 or by appointment; Peabody Museum 53A

****Please review this syllabus carefully. You are responsible for understanding course policies.****

Course Description: Fill in the blank: Everything I know about monkeys and apes, I learned from _____. *Curious George*? *King Kong*? The local zoo? The Internet? For many people, perceptions of primates (and other scientific subjects) are formed largely by way of films and TV shows, news reports on scientific studies, and headlines on social media. In this seminar, students will examine the workings and impact of science communication by exploring how primates are portrayed in popular culture, and will consider how media influences the science of primatology and public understanding of that science.

Pre-Requisite: Some background in primatology (e.g. HEB 1300 or HEB 1330) or permission of instructor

Course Aims – you should learn:

- How studies of primates and human evolution intersect with media, society, and pop culture
- The goals and scope of science communication
- To critically evaluate science in the media
- Skills and strategies to improve your written and oral science communication

Grading: Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Weekly assignments:	40%
Participation in class discussions:	20%
Guest blog post:	10%
Final project:	30%

Weekly assignments: Each week you will have an assignment that requires you to apply the information/skills discussed in that week's class meeting and/or asks you to complete an activity to prepare for the following week. Completed assignments must be uploaded to the course website prior to the next class meeting.

Participation: Each of you will be expected to regularly participate in class discussions. Your weekly participation will be evaluated as follows (score out of 3 points per class):

0 = not present

1 = present, but not engaged in discussion and exercises

2 = engaged in discussion and exercises, but comments are only somewhat relevant to, or indicate a superficial understanding of, the materials

3 = actively engaged in discussion and exercises; comments are insightful and indicate clear understanding of materials

Guest blog post: Each of you will write a guest post for the personal blog I maintain. Further details will be provided during the semester.

Final project: For your final project, you will write a long-form piece about a topic of your choice, with the intention of submitting it as an article to a popular science magazine. You will also give a talk on your finished article at our class #scicomm conference on the last day of class. Further details about this assignment will be provided during the semester.

Late Work Policy:

5% will automatically be deducted from the grade for written work that is turned in within 24 hours after the due date. 15% will automatically be deducted for work that is turned in within 48 hours. 25% will automatically be deducted for work that is turned in within 72 hours. Written work will not be accepted more than 72 hours after the due date.

Honor Code: All students are required to adhere to the Harvard College Honor Code. To review the honor code, visit <http://honor.fas.harvard.edu>. Further details about the Academic Integrity Policy of this course are available on the course website.

Course Schedule:

Materials are available on the course website unless otherwise noted.

- Reading and viewing assignments should be completed for the day they are listed.
- The weekly assignment listed is due by the beginning of class the following week.

More detailed information about weekly assignments will be given in class each week.

September 1: Introduction & overview of class goals, requirements, and expectations; History of primate perceptions

Required reading:

1. Russon (2004) Aristotle's Rubicon.
2. Hill & Webber (2010) Perceptions of nonhuman primates in human-wildlife conflict scenarios. *American Journal of Primatology*.

September 8: Modern perceptions of primates; Intro to science communication

Required reading:

1. de Waal (1997) Are we in anthropodenial? *Discover*.
2. Wynne (2007) What are animals? Why anthropomorphism is still not a scientific approach to behavior. *Comparative Cognition and Behavior Reviews*.
3. Burns et al (2003) Science communication: a contemporary perspective. *Public Understanding of Science*

Weekly assignment: Administer survey; Listen to and comment on RadioLab segments

September 15: Kids' literature and programming; Relationship between early science education and science communication

Required reading:

1. Ottaviani (2013) Primates: The fearless science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Birute Galdikas. First Second publishing. [on reserve at Lamont Library]

Required viewing:

1. Wild Kratts episode: "*Lemur Stink Fight*"
2. The Cat in the Hat episode: "*Aye Aye!*"

Weekly assignment: Children's book evaluation

September 22: Movies and TV: Fiction

Required reading:

1. Barnett et al (2006) The impact of science fiction film on student understanding of science. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*.

Required viewing:

1. *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* [20th Century Fox Film, 2011]

Weekly assignment: Ape aggression: cinema vs. reality

September 29: Movies and TV: Documentary; Guest speaker Peter Reuell (Harvard Communication Office)

Required reading:

1. Dingwall and Aldridge (2006) Television wildlife programming as a source of popular scientific information: a case study of evolution. *Public Understanding of Science*.
2. Russo (2013) Wildlife documentaries or dramatic science? *PLOS Blogs*.

Required viewing:

1. *Romeo and Juliet: A Monkey's Tale* [Animal Planet, 2006] OR *Chimpanzee* [Disneynature, 2012]

Weekly assignment: TBD

October 6: Scientific Reporting in the Popular Press I (short form); Guest speaker Dr. Alex Rosati (HEB)

Required reading:

1. Mehr (2015) Miscommunication of science: music cognition research in the popular press. *Frontiers in Psychology*.
2. Corbyn (2010) Trial by error. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*.

Required viewing:

1. Last Week Tonight segment on scientific studies

Weekly assignment: Press release assignment

October 13: Scientific Reporting in the Popular Press II (long form)

Required reading:

1. Excerpt from *In the Shadow of Man*

Weekly assignment: Topic for final project

October 20: Social Media and the Internet I

Required reading:

1. Wilcox (2012) It's time to e-evolve: Taking responsibility for science communication in a digital age. *The Biological Bulletin*.

2. Brossard (2013) New media landscapes and the science information consumer. *PNAS*

Weekly assignment: Comparing media formats

October 27: Social Media and the Internet II; Guest speaker Dr. Barbara King

Required reading:

1. Bombaci et al (2015) Using Twitter to communicate conservation science from a professional conference. *Conservation Biology*.
2. Groshek & Bronda (2016) How social media can distort and misinform when communicating science. *The Conversation*.

Weekly assignment: Twitter hashtag assignment

November 3: Zoos and Conservation

Required reading:

1. Bowler 2012 AND/OR Waller et al 2012
2. Hill (2002) Primate conservation and local communities – ethical issues and debates. *American Anthropologist*.
3. Schroepfer et al (2011) Use of ‘entertainment’ chimpanzees in commercials distorts public perception regarding their conservation status. *PLOS One*.
4. Chapter from *Primate Tourism*

Required viewing:

1. *Orangutan Island* (“*New Beginnings*”) [Animal Planet, 2007]

Weekly assignment: Zoo signage and/or other suggested activities

November 10: Medical Research and Primates’ Legal Rights

Required reading:

1. Gagneux et al (2005) The ethics of research on great apes. *Nature*, **437**, 27-29.
2. Vandeberg & Zola (2005) A unique biomedical resource at risk. *Nature*, **437**, 30-32.

Required viewing:

- 1 *Project Nim* [Red Box Films, 2011] OR *Project X* [Amercent Films, 1987]

Weekly assignment: Position paper

November 17: Perceptions of Human Evolution: Guest speaker Dr. Bridget Alex

Required reading:

1. Scott (2010) The pleasures and pitfalls of teaching human evolution in a museum.
Evolution: Education and Outreach.
2. Excerpt from *From Primitives to Primates*

Required viewing: TBD

Weekly assignment: Museum activity

November 24 – NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING RECESS

December 1: Presentations