
Anthropology 140

EVOLUTIONARY ANTHROPOLOGY

Tuesday & Thursday 10:00am – 11:15am

Fall Semester, 2005

Instructor: Dr. Wendy Dirks

Office: Language 102

Office Hours: MWF 10:30 – 11:30 or by appointment. I will be very flexible in scheduling appointments, so please feel free to come and see me with any concern or question.

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Textbooks:

Hamer, Dean (2004) *The God Gene: How Faith Is Hardwired into Our Genes*. New York: Doubleday

Hrdy, Sarah Blaffer (1999) *Mother Nature: A History of Mothers, Infants, and Natural Selection*. New York: Pantheon.

Marks, Jonathan (2002) *What It Means to Be 98% Chimpanzee*. Berkely: University of California Press.

Palumbi, Stephen R. (2001) *The Evolution Explosion: How Humans Cause Rapid Evolutionary Change*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Goals of the Course:

The primary goal of this course is to develop skills in critical thinking through reading a number of controversial books that purport to explain who we are because we are biological organisms. The basic premise of this course is that we have evolved, as has all of life. What does that mean in terms of our biology and behavior? Are we naturally violent? Is “mother love” an instinct? Is the need for a spiritual life a genetic trait? What is the relationship between genes and behavior? Each book we read will take a different stance. Our goal is to critically evaluate the arguments presented by each author, which can differ considerably. Critical thinking can be applied to anything we read, in any discipline, for the rest of our lives, so we want to cultivate it here in this class.

Student Requirements for Completing the Course:

1. Each student will create a personal page on the Blackboard site for the course, similar to a blog on the Internet. Students will post responses to the readings before each class. In addition, students are encouraged to post websites, articles, pictures, and anything else relevant to the topics covered in class by a deadline, usually Sunday and Tuesday nights by midnight. Students are encouraged to be as creative as possible. The night before class, I will post common threads on the discussion board for everyone to look at before the class discussion. These postings will be 40% of the final grade.

2. Each student will have a turn to be a discussion leader and post the common threads on the discussion board before class. Participation in class discussion, attendance, and performance as discussion leader will be 30% of the final grade.
3. The final posting for the semester will be a reflection on all the material that we have read, going back and critically reevaluating what she or he has written on each book. This will be equivalent to the final exam, and will be 30% of the final grade.
4. The grading scale is A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C-, D+, D, F

Course policies: All students are expected to be familiar with, and abide by, the Oxford College Honor Code. The material posted is expected to be students' own work or properly cited. Discussion with other students outside of class and on the Blackboard site is encouraged, but acknowledgement of other students' ideas should be made in the postings. If any student has any questions about the application of the Honor Code to the work in this course, it is that student's responsibility to contact me immediately.

Class Outline

Date:	Assignments and Special Events	Reading
Sep 6		Palumbi, Chapters 1-3
Sep 8		Palumbi, Chapters 4-5
Sep 13		Palumbi, Chapters 6-8
Sep 15		Palumbi, Chapters 9-10
Sep 20	Film on Human Evolution	
Sep 22	Film on Chimpanzees	
Sep 27		Wrangham & Peterson, Ch. 1-4
Sep 29		Wrangham & Peterson, Ch. 5-7
Oct 4		Wrangham & Peterson, Ch. 8-10
Oct 6		Wrangham & Peterson, Ch. 11-13
Oct 11	Fall Break	
Oct 13	Film on Gorillas	Hrady, Chapters 1-3
Oct 18		Hrady, Chapters 4-6
Oct 20	Film on Baboons	
Oct 25		Hrady, Chapters 7-9
Oct 27		Hrady, Chapters 10-12
Nov 1		Hrady, Chapters 13-15
Nov 3		Hrady, Chapters 16-18
Nov 8		Hrady, Chapters 19-21
Nov 10		Hrady, Chapters 22-24
Nov 15		Hamer, Chapters 1-3
Nov 17		Hamer, Chapters 4-5
Nov 22		Hamer, Chapters 6-8
Nov 24	Thanksgiving	
Nov 29		Hamer, Chapters 9-11
Dec 1		Marks, Chapters 1-3
Dec 6		Marks, Chapters 4-7
Dec 8		Marks, Chapters 8-9
Dec 13		Marks, Chapters 10-12
Dec 15	Final posting due by 2:00pm	