

**Anthropology 101: Human Biological Evolution (0265)**  
West Los Angeles College, Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Snyder  
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Office hours: Tuesday 11-11:30; in the courtyard outside SC101

**Course Description**

This course explores the field of physical anthropology emphasizing the evolution of the human species. Topics include human heredity, mechanisms of evolutionary change, human variation, and the reconstruction of human evolutionary history through the study of the fossil record and the study of our closest biological relatives, the living monkeys and apes. The philosophy of science and scientific method serve as foundations for this course.

Understanding how humans evolved is a good first step toward understanding why humans are such a unique species. Trying to understand human physiology and behavior without understanding evolution is like trying to understand planetary orbits without understanding gravity. The course is divided into four major parts: (1) the mechanics of biological evolution; (2) primate behavior and ecology; (3) the history of the human lineage; and (4) the evolution of modern humans.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** This course will help students achieve the following

Course-level SLO:

Explain how hereditary traits are transferred between generations and conclude how this relates to evolution by natural selection.

Institutional SLOs:

Critical thinking: Analyze problems by differentiating fact from opinions, using evidence, and using sound reasoning to specify multiple solutions and their consequences. Students will apply critical thinking to investigate and interpret the influences of heredity and environment upon human beings.

Cultural diversity: Respectfully engage with other cultures in an effort to understand them. Students will participate in activities designed to elicit discussion and understanding of the biological variation among *Homo sapiens*.

Required Textbook: R. Jurmain, L. Kilgore, & W. Trevathon (2013). *Essentials of Physical Anthropology, 9<sup>th</sup> edition*. Wadsworth, Belmont. (ISBN 978-1-111-83718-1)

**What to Expect:**

This course will consist primarily of lectures accompanied by a power-point presentation. Slides are detailed and PDF copies of the lecture slides will be posted on the course website – this will make preparing for exams and taking notes easier for you.

In addition to exams, the course will also include homework, in-class assignments, and practice quizzes. Homework, in-class assignments, and practice quizzes are three tools intended to meet your needs and help you achieve the learning objectives. Your learning needs, as a class, will be assessed on a week-to-week basis and homework, in-class assignments, and practice quizzes will be planned accordingly. That means that in-class assignments and practice quizzes will not necessarily be announced in advance.

**Course Difficulty**

This is a very demanding course. Please notice that your textbook is just over 400 pages long and we will be covering most of the material. In order to succeed in this course you will need to do a great deal of memorization and understand concepts that many students find quite challenging. The best ways to deal with this challenge is to do all the assigned readings and attend all lectures.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory but does not contribute toward your grade. Homework assignments will be infrequent and will be announced on a week-to-week basis AND in-class assignments and practice quizzes will not necessarily be announced in advance. **You are responsible for all material presented in class, including announcements and handouts whether or not you attend.**

### **Course Grade**

Format: Quizzes and exams will consist of multiple choice (sometimes true/false or fill in the blank) and a question (or questions) requiring a short-answer. The format of homework and in-class assignments will vary – sometimes short answer and sometimes math calculations.

Grading: EVERY ASSIGNMENT AND EXAM WILL BE ASSIGNED A PERCENTAGE GRADE (100% or lower)

Homework, in-class assignments, and quizzes: 10% of your final grade for the course. There may be weeks that have multiple assignments but only one of these per week will be graded. It is possible but unlikely that there are no assignments for a certain week. Your lowest grade will be dropped, an average for all assignments will be calculated and multiplied by .10 (10%)

Tests: there will be three exams (not including the final exam). Each test is worth 20% of your final grade.

Final exam: The final exam is worth 30% of your course grade.

### **Grades in Sum:**

Quizzes and in-class assignments = 10%

Three exams = 20%, each

Final Exam = 30%

**Grading Scale:** "A" at least 90% on all graded work.

"B" 80-89% on all graded work

"C" 70-79% on all graded work

"D" 60-69% on all graded work

"F" below 60 %

**ALL GRADES ARE FINAL UNLESS A CLERICAL ERROR WAS MADE. Grades are not assigned on the basis of need.**

**Make-up exams and assignments will only be given in the event of an emergency at my discretion when I have received some formal documentation of your hardship. In the event of an emergency, contact me by email as soon as possible. With an excused absence, assignments or exams must be made up no later than one week after the due date.**

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to understand and abide by university policies regarding academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Know the WLAC policies regarding academic integrity and consequences of academic dishonesty. Students will receive a grade of a zero on the exam, quiz, or assignment that involved academic dishonesty. Further action may be taken.

## Course Schedule and Exam Dates

\*\*NOTE: Lecture schedule and reading assignments are subject to minor changes.\*\*

### PART I: The mechanics of biological evolution

Week 1 (September 2 & 4):

- Review of Course Policies and Introductions
- Overview of Anthropology  
Chapter 1

Week 2 (September 9 & 11)

- Natural Selection  
Chapter 2

Week 3 (September 16 & 18):

- Basics of biology  
Chapter 3

Week 4 (September 23 & 25)

- Mendelian Genetics  
Chapter 4

Week 5 (September 30 & October 2)

- Speciation & Macroevolution
- Chapter 5
- **EXAM 1, OCTOBER 2<sup>nd</sup>**

### PART II: Primates; taxonomy, behavior, and ecology

Week 6 (October 7 & 9)

- Primates  
Chapter 6

Week 7 (October 14 & 16):

- Primate Ecology and Mating  
Chapter 7 (NOTICE: THERE WILL ALSO BE HANDOUTS FOR MATERIAL NOT COVERED IN THE TEXTBOOK)  
Chapter 7

Week 8 (October 21 & 23):

- Cooperation and Primate intelligence  
HANDOUTS FOR MATERIAL NOT COVERED IN THE TEXTBOOK

Week 9 (October 28 & 30)

- **EXAM 2, OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup>**

### The history of the human lineage

- From tree shrew to early hominins  
Chapter 8

Week 10 (November 4 & 6)

- Early hominins continued
- Evolution of genus *Homo*  
Chapter 9

Week 11 (November 11 & 13)

- **HOLIDAY: TUESDAY NOVEMBER 11**
- Evolution of genus *Homo*

Week 12 (November 18 & 20)

- **EXAM 3, NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**PART IV: The evolution of modern humans**

- Origin and Dispersal of Modern Humans  
Chapter 11

Week 13 (November 25 & 27)

- **HOLIDAY: THURSDAY NOVEMBER 27**
- Modern Humans & Human variation
- Chapter 12

Week 14 (December 2 & 4)

- Human variation

Week 15 (December 9 & 11)

- Culture, human, behavior, mating and parenting
- Chapter 13

**Final Exam: Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>; 10:15a.m.-12:15p.m.**