

Introduction to Anthropology: Biological

ANTHR1 Section 62726, Fall 2009 M 6:00 – 9:05 pm, Room 431

Instructor: Michelle Y. Merrill

Office: Room 429C

Office Hours: **M** 4:50 - 5:50pm in 429C and 9:05 - 9:15pm in 431 or 429C

Tu 2:15-2:40 pm in 429C **Th** 2:10 - 2:45 pm in 1604 or 429C

F 12:05-12:30pm in 431 or 429C & other times by appointment

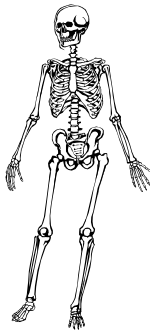
Contact Info: michelle.merrill@cabrillo.edu; <http://www.cabrillo.edu/~mmerrill/>

Phone: 477-3700x1620 (messages only)



COURSE OVERVIEW

Biological Anthropology is the study of humans as biological organisms: our biological diversity, our evolutionary relationships to other organisms, and our origins.

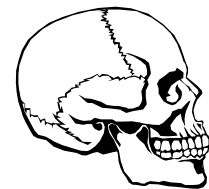


The study of living primates, human variation, and the fossils of human ancestors and related species is a lively endeavor, with new discoveries frequently sparking debates over novel hypotheses about the evolution of our species. Controversy and intrigue season the history of this fascinating discipline.

The material in this course is divided into three parts. Part I covers the basics of evolution and natural selection, as well as the fundamental genetics necessary for understanding the mechanisms of inheritance. Part II introduces our closest living relatives, the primates, and presents an evolutionary framework for the study of ecology and social behavior in humans and other animals. Part III covers the hard evidence of primate and human evolution (the fossils and artifacts that record the history of our species), and reviews the extent and origins of modern human diversity. Each section of the course contributes to an overall understanding of human biology, human origins, and the process of evolution.

Like any introduction to a natural science, this course can be very challenging for some students. There is a lot of new vocabulary to absorb. Grasping important concepts and recalling key information may seem difficult. However, I believe that each of you can be a successful student in this course.

To succeed, you must keep up with the readings and study at home, ask clarifying questions when you are confused by material in the readings and lecture, listen carefully, participate in class, and exercise your critical thinking skills. While it is not my role to make the class easy for you, it is my responsibility and my privilege to help you rise to the challenges that the class may present, and to enjoy the journey of



discovery you will share with your classmates. I cannot guarantee you will come to love this field as much as I do, but I assure you that what you learn in this class will provide you with an important framework for looking at your fellow humans, how we came to be the way we are, and how we fit into the natural world.

Course Objectives

Like Cabrillo College itself, this course seeks to honor the core values of “**academic freedom, critical and independent thinking, and respect for all people and cultures.**” In upholding these values, we will explore the basics of Biological Anthropology as a discipline. Specifically, students will learn to:

1. apply the basic theories of evolution and evolutionary processes
2. accurately employ the terms and theories used in Mendelian genetics
3. identify the major divisions in primate evolutionary, taxonomic, locomotor, behavioral, ecological and social variation
4. present the differences and similarities between human and non-human primates
5. explain how studies of modern primates can illuminate our understanding of human evolution
6. describe the fossil evidence for primate evolution, especially human evolution, and identify key fossil species
7. assess important techniques and technology used in the study of fossils
8. critique contrasting models of human evolution
9. explain modern human variation and its relevance to culture and social conditions

Learning Strategies

Class Discussion and Lectures

Preparing for and participating in class discussions are keys to success in this class (and in most college classes). I prefer to make class interactive when possible. I urge you to do the readings for the week and review your notes from the previous lecture before coming to class. **Ask questions** in class, via email, on Blackboard or during office hours about anything that is unclear!

Common Courtesy and Common Sense

Students frequently discover that not everyone shares their personal beliefs, experiences, and convictions. Respect for many points of view is required in this class. Disagreements are healthy and help us to learn, and in fact are essential to the process of science, but students must maintain a respectful attitude and courteous conversation at all times. My goal as an instructor is not to convince you to hold a particular opinion on controversial issues, but to encourage you to think critically and with an open mind about the facts, evidence, ideas and theories presented in class.

Classroom etiquette regarding portable electronic devices is not unlike takeoff and landing on an airplane – they should be turned off and stowed away. Cell phones and pagers should be **OFF** at all times (an exception may be made for caretakers who can keep their phones/pagers on vibrate for emergency situations, provided the instructor is notified ahead of time). You should have nothing in your ears other than hearing aid devices if needed.

You may use a recorder for lectures, as long as it is unobtrusive (though in my experience, paying attention and taking notes during lecture is more useful). Calculators, PDAs, and laptop computers are permitted during lectures provided they aren't making much noise; such devices are neither needed nor permitted during in-class quizzes or exams.

Other behavioral norms are expected to minimize classroom disruptions and avoid disturbing your fellow students. Arrive on time for class. Do not begin packing your things and preparing to leave until the instructor has indicated class is actually finished. Do not interrupt the instructor or your classmates while they are speaking, but by all means **DO** raise your hand when you have a question or comment. Basically, use a little common sense, try to imagine what is likely to annoy your instructor or your classmates, and then avoid doing those things if you wish to remain in class.

Using Website and Blackboard

While this is a traditional “lecture” class, we will be using web resources and Blackboard (some call this “blended learning”). There are three main goals motivating this requirement: 1. to allow you to develop and practice your skills online (as a crucial aspect of professional development for most jobs requiring a college degree), 2. to provide a venue for sharing learning experiences with classmates outside of the limited time of lectures, and 3. to maximize the learning experience during lectures, by providing more time for face-to-face interaction with the instructor and your classmates. (Trust me, Blackboard does not save me a whole lot of time as an instructor – it’s definitely not for my benefit.)

I have used Blackboard, WebCT and Moodle for previous classes, but this will be the first semester where I will be using it for quizzes and exams, and making more use of its interactive features. Please do review the student tutorials available on your “My Blackboard” page (in the bookmark list to the right). Please be patient if there are glitches – just let me know right away if you encounter problems once you are logged onto the Blackboard site.

You can access Blackboard from the Cabrillo homepage or from my standard website (<http://www.cabrillo.edu/~mmerrill/anthro1.htm>). I may continue to use my standard website for posting some non-interactive materials – be sure to check it also.

Grading

I believe that the grade a student receives should accurately reflect their comprehension of the material and their completion of course objectives. While I would be overjoyed if this meant that all of you would receive “A” grades, and would be happy to award them if you genuinely demonstrated you deserve them, I suspect that there will be a range of grades in this course that will reflect the efforts of each individual student. Some of you may fail, but I will have given you opportunities to succeed if you are willing to take responsibility and put in genuine effort. It is **your responsibility** as a college student to talk with me about options or strategies for improving your performance in the course.

Your grade will be based on your performance on quizzes, mid-term objective and essay tests, a final project and a final exam (see descriptions below). I do not wish to stack the deck against those who have test anxiety or weak writing skills. Therefore, your mid-terms will be weighted toward whichever portion of the exam (objective or take-home essay) was your best performance for that section. For instance, if your objective mid-term for Part I was 80%, but your essay score for Part I was 60%, you would get 12 points (80% of 15) on the objective and 6 points (60% of 10) on the essay for a total of 19 points (out of a possible 25). Similarly, if your in-class (finals week) final was 60% and your final project scored

95%, you would receive 6 points on the in-class final and 19 points on the project for a total of 25 points (out of 30). Grades on course components will be calculated as follows:

Quizzes and Participation	20 points total
2 Objective Exam and Essay Mid-Term Tests	25 points each (combined as described above)
Final Project	10-20 points (see above)
Cumulative Final Exam	10-20 points (see above)
	100 points total

100-90 points = A
89-80 points = B
79-70 points = C
69-60 points = D
59-0 points = F

Note that my approach to grading is not managed well by Blackboard (do not take the Blackboard "My Grades" total as accurate). Contact me if you want to verify your progress in the class.

Course grades may be reduced by one letter grade for each four tardies, each three early departures or major disruptions, and/or each two absences (e.g. If you are late 5 times, are disruptive 5 times and are absent twice, you could be dropped 3 whole letter grades).

Academic Honesty

Cheating on any class work or test, including plagiarizing on essays or projects, is grounds for an immediate failing grade in the class. Plagiarism is simply defined as presenting someone else's writing or ideas as if they were your own. To learn about what plagiarism means and how to avoid it, please see the description at:

<http://www.cabrillo.edu/~sholt/MITPlagiarism.pdf> or

http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/what_is_plagiarism.html and review the links provided by the Cabrillo College Library at

<http://libwww.cabrillo.edu/depts/libraryinstruction.html>.

Make-Up and Extra Credit Work

Make-up and extra credit work, in the form of outside reading and essays or other projects, may be available provided the student requests it **no later than November 23rd**. Extra credit essay questions about fossil hominins will also be provided. All extra credit work must be received by the start of class on **November 30th**. The assignments and their value are entirely up to the discretion of the instructor (whiners will receive less credit). *If you have had difficulty on a test, I recommend you meet with me immediately after the essay portion has been graded to discuss extra-credit options.* I expect to give exams on Blackboard this term, so you will be able to take them on your own schedule. You will have at least five days to take the exam. Should we need to do in-class exams, there will be no make-ups without a verifiable excuse (e.g. note from doctor's office; if an exam takes place on a religious holiday, you must notify me at least one week in advance).

Quizzes and Participation

There will be a quiz based on the reading assignment nearly every week. Any changes to the reading assignment for a given day will be posted at least one week ahead. Any online quizzes will be available for at least five days – these are of course “open book” quizzes, and will usually consist of only a few short questions. There may also be in-class “pop” quizzes of one or two questions. While you are not directly graded on attendance, please bear in mind that quizzes and participation account for one-fifth of your class grade (this includes both in-class and online activities). In-class quizzes are unannounced, and usually begin right at the scheduled beginning of class time. They are based on the readings that are due by that date. You get at least half-credit on each quiz simply for taking it, and additional credit for correct answers. There are no make-ups on pop quizzes, so it is essential that you arrive on-time and keep up with the reading for every class.

You will also be expected to participate in online discussions and class activities. Failure to participate in these will be noted and result in lost participation points.

Objective Mid-Term Tests and Final Exam

The objective portion of the mid-term tests will be a mix of matching, true/false, multiple-choice, short answer, fill-in and definition questions. They will focus on the material covered in the most recent part of the course (including information presented in lecture, readings, and movies). However, some questions may require you to apply concepts and use vocabulary learned in earlier course sections.

The final exam will be similarly structured. It will emphasize the last section of the course, but will also cover the important concepts from all three sections of the class.

Mid-Term Essay Tests

You will also receive a set of essay questions based on the most recent part of the course. Short essays in response to those questions must be written independently by each student, but you will have access to your book and any other research material you wish. Direct quotes or copying are not allowed. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the essays, and may result in a failing grade for the class (see above). The essays will be due by the start of class on the due date: I will not accept late essay exams.

Final Project

Final projects may be paintings, poems, presentations, sculptures, songs, stories, websites or any other appropriate expression of some facet of Biological Anthropology that you find interesting. Team projects are possible: you will be required to discuss this with the instructor and submit peer evaluations for team participation.

You will submit a brief description (1-5 sentences, including the medium and the anthropological theme) of your planned work a few weeks before the final project itself is due.

Projects will be graded based on the effort and quality of the work, plus the relevance and understanding of the anthropological concept expressed. You will also submit a cover sheet

with an abstract and references. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the project, and may result in a failing grade for the class (see above). Due dates will be announced in class and posted on the course website. Late projects will lose one letter grade for each day they are late.

Tentative Course Schedule

Please note that these dates and assignments are subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course website. It is **your responsibility** to make sure you are aware of any revisions. **Readings and online quizzes should be completed before arriving in class** on the date listed, so you are prepared for any in-class quizzes or discussion. In-class quizzes are not pre-scheduled, and may happen at any time; they may include information on the chapter assigned for that date and any previous chapters.

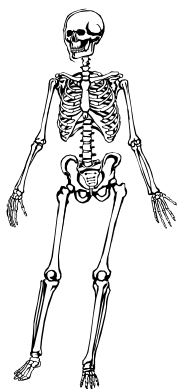
The textbook *Essentials of Physical Anthropology* by Jurmain et al. is **optional**. I do recommend this or any other introductory textbook in biological/physical anthropology, particularly if you have had difficulties with biology courses in the past, or have not had a class that covered basic (Mendelian) genetics and evolutionary concepts recently.

Required readings are from:

Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology 09/10. (2009) Elvio Angeloni (editor), McGraw Hill, Boston

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Lecture Topic/Notes</i>	<i>Required Reading</i>
1	31-Aug	Introduction, Darwin	Syllabus
2	7-Sept	Labor Day – NO CLASS	
3	14-Sept	Evolution and Natural Selection	1. "The Facts of Evolution" Shermer; 2. "Evolution in Action" Weiner (Optional : 6. "Why Should Students Learn Evolution?" Alters & Alters)
4	21-Sept	Genetics	4. "You Can Blame It on Mom" Chiu; 8. "The 2% Difference" Sapolsky; 40. "The Curse and Blessing of the Ghetto" Diamond; 41. "Ironing it Out" Moalem (Recommended : http://anthro.palomar.edu/mendel/mendel_1.htm)
5	28-Sept	The Modern Synthesis	3. "How the Dog Got Its Curly Tail" Wilson; 7. "Designer Thinking" Blumberg; 39. "Dr. Darwin" Oliwenstein
6	5-Oct	Speciation and Phylogeny	5. "15 Answers to Creationist Nonsense" Rennie; 21. "The Salamander's Tale" Dawkins
7	12-Oct	Introduction to the Primates, Primate Diversity	Mid-Term Exam 1: Evolutionary Theory & Genetics and Mid-Term 1 Essays Due 11. "Dim Forest, Bright Chimps" Boesch & Boesch-Achermann; 15. "Are We in Anthropodenial?" de Waal
8	19-Oct	Primate Ecology and Mating Systems	14. "How Animals Do Business" de Waal; 17. "What Are Friends For?" Smuts; 18. "What's Love Got to Do with It?" Small

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Lecture Topic/Notes</i>	<i>Required Reading</i>
9	26-Oct	Primate Social Behavior and Intelligence	19. "Apes of Wrath" Smuts; 20. "Mothers and Others" Hrdy; 9. "The Mind of the Chimpanzee" Goodall; 12. "Thinking Like a Monkey" Adler
10	2-Nov	The Evolution of Language and Culture; Primate Conservation	10. "Got Culture?" Stanford; 16. "A Telling Difference" Anderson; 13. "Why Are Some Animals So Smart?" van Schaik; 43. "Guerrillas in Their Midst" Raffaele; 44. "Who Will Survive?" Whitty
11	9-Nov	Veterans' Day – NO CLASS	
12	16-Nov	Introduction to Paleontology and The Geologic Timescale	Mid-Term Exam 2: Living Primates and Mid-Term 2 Essays Due 22. "Hunting the First Hominid" Shipman Final Project Description Due Wed. Nov 18th
13	23-Nov	Early hominins	23. "Made in Savannahstan" Kohn; 24. "Scavenger Hunt" Shipman; 26. "Man the Hunted" Hart & Sussman;
14	30-Nov	Genus <i>Homo</i> (Pleistocene hominins)	Extra Credit Due; 25. "The Scavenging of Peking Man" Boaz & Ciochon; 31. "The Littlest Human" Wong; 27. "Hard Times Among the Neanderthals" Trinkaus; 28. "Rethinking Neanderthals" Alper
15	7-Dec	Origins of Modern Humans, Modern Human Diversity	Final Project Due; 30. "Mysterious Migrations" Bower; 32. "Skin Deep" Jablonski & Chaplin 33. "Born Gay?" Abrams; 34. "How Real Is Race?" Mukhopadhyay & Henze; 35. "Does Race Exist?" Gill; 36. "The Tall and the Short of It" Bogin
Finals	14-Dec	FINAL EXAM 6:00 pm-8:50 pm, Monday Dec 14th - Attendance is Mandatory (Final Projects returned, additional Presentations)	



Thanks to Kristin Wilson and Jim Funaro for their contributions to and assistance in preparing earlier versions of this syllabus.

