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 story of our evolutionary journey), 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

ADA COMPLIANCE
Students needing accommodations should contact the instructor immediately. As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), accommodations are provided to insure equal opportunity for students with verified disabilities. If you need assistance with an accommodation, please contact Disabled Student Services, Room 810, (479-6379) or Learning Skills Program, Room 1073, (479-6220).

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.

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" or a "web enhanced" class). 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 will be using Blackboard for assignments, quizzes and exams, and making 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 (http://cabrillo.edu/~mmerrill/anthro1.htm) or from my standard website. Contact or visit the Computer Technology Center for assistance logging in to Blackboard. Please do review the student tutorials available on your "My Blackboard" page (in the bookmark list to the right), especially if this is your first time using the system. 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.

**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://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.
**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, assignments and participation (including online and in-class discussions and activities), two mid-term exams, and a final exam (see descriptions below). Assignments and participation may include class discussions, online discussions and blogs on Blackboard and one or more group projects and presentations. Grades on course components will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments and Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam 1: Evolutionary Theory &amp; Genetics</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam 2: Living Primates</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Note that my approach to grading is not always 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).

**Quizzes and Participation**

There will be frequent online quizzes based on the reading assignments and course content (expect one every week). Any new quizzes or online assignments will be posted on Blackboard at least one week before they are due - it is your responsibility to log in and check for new assignments at least once per week.

Quizzes are "open-book" and will usually consist of only a few short questions, but you will have limited time to complete the quiz once you start, so you should do all of the reading before beginning a quiz.

Assignments may include things like short essay question responses. You will also be expected to participate in online discussions with some regularity (some of these will be specifically graded and treated as assignments). Failure to participate will be noted and result in lost participation points.

**Mid-Term and Final Exams**

The mid-term exams are online. These 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 four sections of the class.
You are welcome to use your book and notes on exams. Many students benefit from studying with others; however, you are expected to take the exam on your own (the questions you get may not be the same as the questions another gets).

**MAKE-UP AND EXTRA CREDIT WORK**

Make-up and extra credit work may be available provided the student requests it no later than the 10th week of class. All extra credit work must be received by the 12th week of class. 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 contact me immediately after it has been graded to discuss extra-credit options.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: SPRING 2012**

Due dates for reading assignments and related quizzes are listed below. Please note that these dates and assignments are subject to change. Changes will be mentioned in class and posted on Blackboard with at least one week's advance notice. It is your responsibility to make sure you are aware of any revisions; check Blackboard regularly.

Required readings are from:


Optional readings are from the above and:


There may be additional required readings or other materials made available online. *Optional readings noted in italics.*

The reading quizzes are due by midnight on the date listed. This is generally before the lecture when we will be focusing on that topic. [Cabrillo College Critical Dates](#) are available online.

First Quiz (read Syllabus & review Blackboard): due 2/14

Posting to Welcome and Introductions Discussion Board by 2/14, with follow-up post by 2/21

Part I: Evolutionary Theory & Genetics

1. Evolution and Natural Selection: due 2/21
2. Genetics: due 2/28

Posting to Part I: Evolutionary Theory & Genetics Discussion Board by 3/6

Mid-Term Exam I: Evolutionary Theory & Genetics available 3/7 - 3/13

Part II: The Living Primates

1. Introduction to the Primates, Primate Diversity and Conservation: due 3/20
3. Primate Social Behavior and Strategies: due 4/3
4. Primate Intelligence: due 4/17

Posting to Part II: The Living Primates Discussion Board and first contribution to team project 4/17

Mid-Term Exam II: The Living Primates available 4/18 - 4/24
Part III: Hominins
1. Intro to Paleoanthropology: due 5/1
2. Early Hominins: due 5/8
3. Neanderthals and Homo sapiens: due 5/15
4. Homo sapiens: due 5/22

Posting to Part III: Hominins Discussion Board and all contributions to team project by 5/22
Final Exam available online 5/23-6/1; Team Presentations during Finals Week 5/29-6/1

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS IN THIS CLASS
I am personally very concerned about sustainability, and Cabrillo College is increasing its efforts to operate sustainably (particularly in those ways that also save the college money for operations, thereby making more money available for offering classes). I have instituted several policies and practices to make this class more environmentally-friendly and cost-effective:

- **minimal handouts and printing**: most informational materials are available online and/or will be displayed onscreen during class, to reduce paper use/waste and copying costs; I will double-side any materials I do need to distribute. Assignments will be submitted online.

Please do the following to help Cabrillo College meet our sustainability goals (and save the college money so that we can direct it to classes and student services!):

- **responsible printing**: If you must print or copy something, please double-side it. If not, consider printing on the blank backs of paper that has already been used once (e.g. drafts of homework or used handouts from other classes - avoid anything with personal information you do not want seen by your classmates).

- **recycle properly**: Almost all Cabrillo classrooms have three waste bins:
  - **bottle/can recycling**: most glass, plastic and juice boxes can go in here
  - **paper recycling**: any clean/dry paper or cardboard (NOT coffee cups or food plates)
  - **waste**: this is the stuff that actually goes to the landfill (remember that Cabrillo has to pay for this, but not for the recycling, so only put it in here if you have to)

- **save energy**: If you notice that the door is open and the heat is running, please close the door (let the instructor know if it gets too warm - we can contact M&O if the classroom is consistently too warm). If you are the last person to leave the room, please turn off all lights and close the door.

- **reduce your commute impact**: Bike, bus, or see if you can find classmates for carpooling. (I bike or bus nearly every day, and if I can do it, almost anyone can.) Over half of Cabrillo College’s carbon footprint in 2008 was due to commuting, mostly solo trips in cars. Plus, the fewer cars coming to campus, the less we need to build, maintain and monitor parking. Learn more at CabrilloGreenSteps.org!

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