Introduction to Anthropology: Biological

FALL 2010: ANTHR1 Section 68996 ONLINE
Instructor: Michelle Y. Merrill  Office: Room 429C
Office Hours:  **Monday** 11:45 AM – 12:30 PM and ONLINE 5:45 - 6:30 PM
(via Blackboard and Skype: michelle.y.merrill)
**Wednesday** 12:00 – 12:30 PM and 5:30 – 5:50 PM & other times by appointment
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Phone: 477-3700x1620 (messages only)
Overview | Objectives | Learning Strategies | Expectations | Grading | Make-Up Work and Extra Credit | Quizzes & Assignments | Exams | Schedule

**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 coursework, ask clarifying questions when you are confused by course material, 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 ASAP. 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 welcome advice on how best to provide this in an online course. Ask questions via email, on Blackboard or during office hours about anything that is unclear!

Expectations: 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 (especially in online discourse). 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.

**Using Website and Blackboard**

This is an online course that will primarily be using Blackboard. In addition to learning the course materials, this course will allow you to further develop and practice your skills online (as a crucial aspect of professional development for most jobs requiring a college degree), and provide a venue for sharing learning experiences with classmates.

I have used Blackboard, WebCT and Moodle for previous blended-learning classes, but this will be the first semester where I will be teaching a fully online course. I would like your help and suggestions for making more use of online interactive features, particularly if you have experience with previous online courses.

You can access Blackboard from the Cabrillo homepage or from my standard website (http://arana.cabrillo.edu/~mmerrill/anthro1.htm). 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.

**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 online participation, mid-term “objective” tests, and a final exam (see descriptions below). Assignments will usually be short essays, but may include other options. Online participation will be graded based on class discussions and blogs on Blackboard. There are
no requirements to hand-in materials or give presentations for the online course. 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>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments and Online 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>
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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 (the Blackboard “My Grades” total may not be accurate). Contact me if you want to verify your progress in the class.

**Academic Honesty**

Cheating on any class work or test, including plagiarizing on assignments, 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. You must provide proper references if you wish to use someone else’s research, ideas or words. To learn about what plagiarism means and how to avoid it, please read http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_what_is_plagiarism.html (this site also has guidelines about how and when to use citations) and review the links provided by the Cabrillo College Library at http://libwww.cabrillo.edu/depts/libraryinstruction.php#copy. Anthropologists generally use APA style to cite sources (see guidelines at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/ or http://www.apastyle.org/).

**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 19th. All extra credit work must be received by 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 contact me immediately after it has been graded to discuss extra-credit options.

**Quizzes, Assignments and Participation**

There will be quizzes or other online assignments based on the reading assignments and course content. Any new quizzes or assignments will be posted with 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 will 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, where others are more free-form). Failure to participate will be noted and result in lost participation points.

**Objective Mid-Term Tests and Final Exam**

The “objective” 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 in presentations, required 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 Part III of the course, but will also cover the important concepts from all parts of the class.

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**Cabrillo College Critical Dates**

- 6-Sep: Labor Day – Cabrillo closed
- 10-Sep: Add/Drop ends
- 25-Sep: last day to drop without “W”
- 2-Oct: last day to request pass/no pass
- 12-Nov: Veteran’s Day – Cabrillo closed
- 20-Nov: last day to Withdraw (get “W” instead of “F”)
- 25-Nov – 26-Nov: Thanksgiving Holiday – Cabrillo closed
- 13-Dec – 18-Dec: Finals Week

**Tentative Course Schedule & Reading Assignments**

Please note that these dates and assignments are subject to change. Changes will be 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 indicated in italics.

There may be additional required readings or other materials made available online.
Part I: Evolutionary Theory & Genetics

1. Evolution and Natural Selection due 15-Sept
   HHE Prologue “Why Study Human Evolution?”
   HHE 1. “Adaptation by Natural Selection”
   AE4. “Evolution in Action” Weiner
   Optional:
   AE1. “Charles Darwin Was Born…” Siegfried
   AE6. “The Latest Face of Creationism” Branch & Scott

2. Genetics due 22-Sept
   HHE2. “Genetics”
   AE8. “The 2% Difference” Sapolsky
   AE42. “The Curse and Blessing of the Ghetto” Diamond
   Optional:
   http://anthro.palomar.edu/mendel/mendel_1.htm
   AE43. “Ironing It Out” Moalem

3. The Modern Synthesis due 29-Sept
   AE5. “How the Dog Got Its Curly Tail” Wilson
   AE41. “Dr. Darwin” Oliwenstein

4. Speciation and Phylogeny due 6-Oct
   HHE4. “Speciation and Phylogeny”
   AE2. “Was Darwin Wrong?” Quammen

Mid-Term Exam 1: Evolutionary Theory & Genetics available 30-Sept to 11-Oct

Part II: The Living Primates

1. Introduction to the Primates, Primate Diversity due 16-Oct
   HHE5. “Primate Diversity and Ecology”
   AE11. “Dim Forest, Bright Chimps” Boesch & Boesch-Achermann
   AE12. “Thinking Like a Monkey” Adler

   HHE6. “Primate Mating Systems”
   AE16. “What Are Friends For?” Smuts
   AE18. “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” Small
   AE19. “Mothers and Others” Hrdy

3. Primate Social Behavior and Strategies due 27-Oct
   AE17. “Face-Offs of the Female Kind” Cords

4. Primate Intelligence and Conservation due 3-Nov
   HHE8. “Primate Life Histories and the Evolution of Intelligence”
   AE10. “Got Culture?” Stanford
   Optional:
   AE15. “A Telling Difference” Anderson

Mid-Term Exam 2: The Living Primates available 28-Oct to 8-Nov
Part III: Hominins

1. Paleoanthropology and Primate Fossils due 10-Nov
   HHE9. “From Tree Shrew to Ape”
   AE21. “The Woman Who Shook Up Man’s Family Tree” Johanson & Wong
   AE22. “Hunting the First Hominid” Shipman

2. Early Hominins due 17-Nov
   HHE10. “From Hominoid to Hominin”
   HHE11. “Oldowan Toolmakers and the Origin of Human Life History”
   AE23. “Made in Savannahstan” Kohn
   AE24. “Scavenger Hunt” Shipman
   AE32. “The Birth of Childhood” Gibbons

3. Genus Homo due 24-Nov
   HHE12. “From Hominin to Homo”
   AE28. “Rethinking Neanderthals” Alper
   Optional:
   AE27. “Hard Times Among the Neanderthals” Trinkaus
   AE30. “The Littlest Human” Wong

4. Homo sapiens due 1-Dec
   HHE14. “Human Genetic Variation”
   AE29. “The Great Human Migration” Gugliotta
   AE28. “Rethinking Neanderthals” Alper
   AE32. “Skin Deep” Jablonski & Chaplin
   Optional:
   AE34. “How Real Is Race?…” Mukhopadhyay & Henze
   AE36. “The Tall and the Short of It” Bogin

5. Modern Human Behavior due 8-Dec
   HHE15. “Evolution and Human Behavior”
   HHE16. “Human Mate Choice and Parenting”
   AE33. “The Brain” Zimmer
   AE35. “Born Gay?” Abrams

Final Exam available 8-Dec to 15-Dec

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