

ANTHROPOLOGY 342
Human Behavior and Evolution
Fall 2019
TR 3:05-4:20, ECTR 113

Dr. Hector Qirko
Office Hours: MW 9:30 am -12:00 pm,
TR 1:00-2:00 pm, and by appointment

88 Wentworth, room 105
953-8185 (office), -5738 (dept.)
qirkoh@cofc.edu

Course description

“People are animals,” Darwinian anthropologist Laura Betzig claimed, and so our behavior is to some degree properly subject to evolutionary explanations- but is this accurate? Haven’t our intelligence, consciousness and, above all, capacity for culture created a difference in kind, and not just degree, between us and other species on the earth? Wasn’t Alfred Kroeber right when he characterized culture as “extra-somatic” and “superorganic?” Are we unduly reducing humanity when we appeal to evolutionary theory to explain it, or are we unduly privileging humanity by divorcing it from the forces that affect all other living things?

This course explores the degree to which Darwinian evolutionary theory might inform aspects of human behavior that in anthropology have generally been understood as primarily cultural. It is designed to present an overview of the use of evolutionary theory in anthropology (meaning primarily cultural anthropology, but including some archaeology), as well as to evaluate some relevant evolutionary-minded literature from other fields (biology, psychology, philosophy, economics) for its applicability to anthropological inquiry. Throughout, research on specific areas of human behavior will be used as case studies, and the final section of the course focuses on some of these areas in more detail.

General course objectives- To examine, through readings, links, video, discussion, and research:

- fundamental evolutionary concepts and models as applied (or misapplied) in the study of human behavior;
- specific domains of human behavior (e.g., mate choice, parenting, warfare, religious and moral systems, art, etc.) and evolutionary-minded research in those domains; and
- important debates (e.g., reductionism, levels of selection, "pure" altruism, the demographic transition, etc.) in the application of evolutionary theory to human cultural behavior.

Specific student learning outcomes- You should:

- learn the three main approaches to the evolutionary analysis of human behavior—human behavioral ecology, evolutionary psychology, and gene-culture coevolution;
- be able to critique evolutionary research on specific human behavioral domains from the perspective of one or more of the three main approaches, as well as from more traditional anthropological theory;
- understand major debates concerning relevance of evolutionary theory to understanding human behavior; and
- improve critical thinking, effective writing, and oral discussion skills.

Course structure

Class periods will consist of lectures, discussion of topics, readings, links, and occasional video.

Graded work

Exam I	20%
Exam II	20%
Exam III	20%
Research project	30%
Participation	10%

Grade scale

A 92-100%; A- 90-91; B+ 88-89; B 82-87; B- 80-81; C+ 78-79; C 72-77; C- 70-71; D+ 68-69; D 62-67; D- 60-61; F 59 or below.

Readings

All readings will be available through our OAKS page; assigned readings in pdfs and links should be completed prior to assigned dates (see course outline and links list below it). Additional materials will be assigned later in the semester, with the course syllabus updated accordingly.

Exams (20% each, on 9/24, 10/22, 12/5)

There will be three in-class, medium-length identification/essay exams designed to ensure course engagement and understanding of materials covered in the lectures, readings, additional materials, and class discussion. In addition to fundamental terms, concepts and illustrations, you will be expected to identify specific research as discussed in the course. Study guides will be provided prior to each exam. Exams missed due to excused and documented absences can be made-up on 12/3 (Reading Day) at 10:00 a.m., location TBA. You **must** contact me prior to that date if you plan on taking a make-up exam.

Research project (30%- see below for due dates for each graded step)

In addition, you will conduct library research on a particular area of interest for a research paper. A topic choice, including 3-5 citations of preliminary sources, should be submitted for approval no later than 9/26 (10% of project final grade). Topics must in some sense explore the intersection of cultural patterning and evolutionary-minded research. Project materials (notes/drafts) are due no later than 10/31 (10% of project final grade). However, drafts may also be submitted for ungraded feedback at any time up to two days prior to final paper due date. Final research papers (due 11/26) should be 10-12 pages of text (12 pt font, double spaced) in length, plus however many pages of references are necessary.

Class participation

Class engagement and participation are essential for success in this course, as much of the material on exams will stem directly from lectures, films, and class discussion. Your participation grade will be based on general attendance and engagement, discussion (written or oral), as well as a brief presentation of your research project at the end of the semester. The grade will be based on two assessments by both you and I at two points in the semester. While daily attendance will not be taken, you are responsible for all information disseminated and discussed in the course. If you must miss a class, obtain notes from classmates and feel free to email or meet with me to go over them prior to the relevant exam. I will not provide lecture notes, although I will post guidelines, power points, links, study guides, etc. as relevant.

For absences that require documentation (exam and assignment due dates, as well as extended absences related to health, personal or emergency situations), you **must** complete and turn in the appropriate forms to 67 George St. (more information and downloadable forms at <http://studenthealth.cofc.edu/absence-memo/index.php>).

Honor code

Violations of the honor code will be taken seriously. If you need reminding, you can find the complete code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>. As plagiarism is a common (and sometimes unintentional) infraction, I recommend that you watch the “You quote it, you note it” tutorial video (http://www.sunywcc.edu/cms/wp-content/uploads/2013/library_files/flash/) and/or read the material from the Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/is_it_plagiarism.html).

Special needs

If you have a documented disability and have been approved to receive accommodations through SNAP Services (<http://disabilityservices.cofc.edu/>), please bring me the required PNL form as soon as possible, and feel free to discuss related issues with me at any time during office hours or by appointment.

COURSE OUTLINE

(Subject to revision, and will be updated periodically during the semester; assigned **readings** are stored on our OAKS page by author last name and year of publication- note that Laland & Brown 2011, from which we will use several chapters, is referred to as L&B. Assigned **links** are found below this outline)

Basics:

- 8/20 introduction to course
- 8/22 introduction to topic: people are animals (or are we?) [Betzig 97; L&B chpt 1]
- 8/27 evolution(s)- genes, memes [Tibell & Harms 17; Brown 96; Link 1]
- 8/29 selection [Endler 92; Low 96; Link 2]
- 9/3 fitness, reproductive success [Link 3; Ramsey & de Block 15]
- 9/5 adaptation [Link 3; Irons 96; Williams 66]
- 9/10 neo-Darwinian “altruism”- inclusive fitness [Stewart Williams 07, Link 4]
- 9/12 n-D “altruism”- reciprocity [Theelen & Bohm 16; Nowak & Sigmund 05; Mujcic & Leibrandt 18]
- 9/17 n-D “altruism”- costly signaling [Zahavi & Zahavi 97; Soler 12]
- 9/19 pure altruism? special case theories [Link 5; Link 6, parts 1 and 2]
- 9/24 **Exam 1**

The three main approaches:

- 9/26 human behavioral ecology 1 [**research topic choice due**]

10/1	human behavioral ecology 2
10/3	evolutionary psychology 1
10/8	evolutionary psychology 2
10/10	dual inheritance/new group selection 1
10/15	Fall break
10/17	dual inheritance/new group selection 2
10/22	Exam 2
	Specific research areas:
10/24	language
10/29	mating
10/31	parenting [research draft/notes due]
11/5	kinship
11/7	morality
11/12	cooperation
11/14	aggression
11/19	arts
11/21	discussion of research projects 1
11/26	discussion of research projects 2 [research papers due]
12/5	Exam 3 (4-7 pm)

NOTE: Final exam day/time may not be changed unless you have too many exams scheduled on the same day (as defined by the College).

LINKS

1. **Competition between genes and memes-**
<http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/MEMGEN.html>
2. **Evolution & Natural Selection, Anthropologically! (Antrosio 2011)-**
<https://www.livinganthropologically.com/biological-anthropology/evolution-natural-selection/>
3. **Adaptation: biology and physiology**

- <https://www.britannica.com/science/adaptation-biology-and-physiology>
4. **Cultural inclusive fitness?**
<http://philosophyofbrains.com/2017/11/03/5-cultural-inclusive-fitness.aspx>
 5. **How are humans unique?**
<https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/25/magazine/25wwln-essay-t.html>
 6. **Are humans special? Pt 1**
Part 1: <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20150706-humans-are-not-unique-or-special>
Part 2: <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20150706-the-small-list-of-things-that-make-humans-unique>

ADDITIONAL ONLINE RESOURCES (FYI, not required)

There are many good online articles on critical skills helpful to navigating this course and others. For example,

Critical thinking

http://www.criticalthinking.org/files/Concepts_Tools.pdf

Active reading

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/active-reading.html>

<http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/advanced-reading.html>

Critical reading

http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_reading.htm

Effective writing

http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/kingch/How_to_Write_a_Research_Paper.htm

And don't forget that you can always make use of the walk-in labs and individualized tutoring for working on your study, writing, and presentation skills at the Center for Student Learning (<http://csl.cofc.edu/about-the-CSL/index.php>).