

BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Spring 2021

Sections: 4086, 4099 Online

Instructor: Kent Wisniewski, Ph.D.

Instructor Contact

You can contact me directly through email or the Canvas message interface. I respond to emails within 2 business days (Monday through Friday).

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Office Hours: no physical office hours Spring 2021

To set up a phone appointment outside of physical office hours, please send me an email with your phone number and preferred contact time and we will find a time that is convenient for both of us.

Syllabus

This syllabus is your guide to course requirements and policies. Please read the entire syllabus and keep on top of course announcements when posted. This course requires you to keep up with weekly assignments and readings and follow the course directions.

This course requires about three hours of work for each Module/Unit in addition to reading the course texts. Each Module/Unit may include video lectures with PowerPoint slides, supplementary readings, videos, and websites.

If this is your first-time using Canvas or the first time you are using certain features, please click on the link below for a wealth of information about how to get started:

[How to use Canvas for Students](#)

Course Description:

In this course, we will survey the human fossil record, primate social behavior and comparative anatomy, human biology, and genetics as well as human diversity more generally. We will also explore the impact of human evolution on early and future global environments and examine issues surrounding the future adaptation of our species. We will do this through lectures, readings, and documentary films.

Course Texts:

Our Origins: Discovering Physical Anthropology (5th edition) by Clark Spencer Larsen is the main text for the course and it offers a comprehensive and informative introduction to the core concepts of biological (physical) anthropology. It is available at the SRJC campus bookstores. There will also be several additional required readings listed on the course schedule and these will be available in electronic form via the Canvas Modules.

Supplemental Readings: There are also required supplementary readings as listed on the course schedule that will form the basis for discussions and some quiz questions. These readings are available in electronic form in the course Canvas Modules when required.

Course Requirements

Final grades will depend on full participation in weekly class activities including discussions, quizzes, and timely completion of required essays.

With an online class you **must pace yourself
and keep up with weekly requirements to be successful!**

A friendly warning:

If you are a procrastinator this may not be the best course delivery method for you.

The requirements **total 1000 points** and break down as follows:

- 600 pts.: 4 Exams (including Final Exam) at 150 points each.
- 120 pts.: 6 Discussions
- 120 pts.: 6 Activity Quizzes
- 160 pts.: Article Review Paper

Grades will be based on the following scale:

- A = 90% and above
- B = 80% to 89%
- C = 70% to 79%
- D = 60% to 69%
- F = 59% or less

Course Modules and Assignments

This course follows a modules format, and each module will contain explicit instructions on what is required, when it is due, and where to find the necessary materials to complete the unit

successful. Reading and following the instructions carefully for each module and each assignment is fundamental to success in this course.

Exams

We have four major Exams in the course including the Final Exam. Each Exam will cover three or four chapters from the Larsen text. You will be provided with a study guide for each Exam and the Exams will consist of 40 to 50 multiple choice questions plus two brief extra credit essay questions. The Exams are timed and only you have only one opportunity to take each Exam. If you miss an Exam, you will receive a score of zero for that Exam. Exams may not be taken late or retaken for any reason. When taking an Exam, you are on your honor and **you must not:**

- Share any information with anyone about the Exam.
- Take photos or recordings of the Exam.
- Use course materials, notes, or a textbook during an Exam.
- Take the Exam with another person

If you fail to follow these instructions, you may receive a zero for the Exam in question and a second violation may result in a failing grade for the course.

You will have 90 seconds per question on all Exams. Once you begin an Exam, you must finish it. The Exams are timed, and it may be helpful to set a timer, so you can pace yourself.

Activity Quizzes: The Activity Quizzes will take a similar format to the Exams with the same kinds of parameters. However, the Activity Quizzes are meant to help you learn the topic of the week better and therefore you will have two chances for each Activity Quiz. The Activity Quizzes must be completed when they are open. I will not allow for late Activity Quizzes.

Discussions

Many of the course units include a discussion based on the unit topic and may include supplementary readings or films. For these discussions, you will respond to a short series of questions and then respond to other students' posts for a possible total of 20 points per discussion. These discussions require two posts for full credit: 15 points for your original post and 5 points for responding to another student within 48 hours of the discussion due date. If necessary, you may make your original post after the due date, but not later than 48 hours after. In other words, all posts must be made before the discussion closes to receive credit.

Purpose of the Assignment:

These assignments test your understanding of the course material for the week and allow you to explore these topics in more depth by responding to other students' posts and perspectives.

See the Canvas guide:

[**How do I reply to a discussion as a student? \(Links to an external site.\)**](#)

Netiquette:

When posting on discussion boards:

- Be kind and respectful to others;
- Use full sentences;
- Avoid jargon and acronyms; and
- Use language that supports others.

**As a measure of insurance, it is a good idea to
save all your discussion posts on your computer.**

Rarely, student posts are not submitted properly and are then lost if not already saved separately.

Article Review Paper (worth 160 points): Your assignment is to choose, read, and write a review of a **scholarly, research-based** article that covers a topic of interest to physical anthropologists (and of interest to you!). Topics include (but are not limited to):

1. Human biological variation (genetics) past and present
2. The study of living and fossil primates as our closest evolutionary relatives.
3. The theories of human evolutionary origins.
4. The biological and cultural adaptations of our hominin ancestors and early modern humans.
5. Human forensic science.

The list of possible topics is truly long. Looking through the textbook or doing an internet search might help you find an interesting topic. However, once you identify a topic that holds your interest, **the SRJC libraries website is the best place to start**. There you can access a large number of powerful electronic databases that you can use to locate a **scholarly, research-based article** on your topic of interest. A good place to start your search is the database called *Academic Search Complete*.

A scholarly, researched-based article must come from a **peer-reviewed journal** and **not** a popular magazine (For example: *National Geographic*, *Scientific American*, and *Discover Magazine* are great science magazines, but they are **not** peer-reviewed journals). If you are not certain if an article qualifies check with me. You can send it to me as an email attachment or show it to me in office hours for prior approval.

I will provide a video that describes in detail how to find a suitable article via the SRJC Library website during Week 9 of the course.

Paper Structure: The purpose of your paper is NOT to simply rewrite what is already stated. Instead, your paper should do the following:

1. Introduce the article by stating the title and the authors' names at some point and then briefly describe how the topic is relevant to the field of biological anthropology.
2. Identify the central or critical problem(s) or issue(s) addressed by the authors of the article.

3. Identify and evaluate the kinds of evidence that the authors use to support their arguments. In other words, what kinds of data are they using to support their conclusions?

4. Evaluate the author's conclusions (Are you convinced by their arguments?) AND describe **the value** of the article to the field of biological anthropology (Is this information important? Why? Or Why not?). In this section, give your opinion based on what has been presented to you in the article.

Note: For this assignment, do not use extensive quotes from authors. Write in your own words.

Paper Format:

1. Papers will be **typed, double-spaced, with numbered pages** (do not use fonts greater than 12 point).
2. The **text length** of your paper will be a **minimum of three pages**.
3. You are to upload an electronic copy of the article you review on the Canvas site along with your paper. A link to the article is NOT acceptable. Since you are providing a copy of the article, no "Works Cited" page is necessary.

Due Dates: The Article Review Paper is due on Canvas, W 11/25 by 11:59 pm. You will find the full assignment prompt in the Week 15 Module of the course as well.

Grading: Papers will be graded on how well the above instructions are followed in both **TOPIC** and **FORMAT**. Failure to follow instructions will result in a lower or failing grade.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism will not be tolerated! **Your work must be your own!**

- You will not use or copy other students' work, nor do you offer your work to another student.
- You will not copy authors' statements and use them as your own. What you write must be in your own words.

Plagiarism will result in a **failing grade! Due Dates and Grading for Each Assignment**

The due dates and times for each writing assignment are clearly listed on the course schedule on the Canvas site. Papers will be graded on how well the instructions are followed in both **TOPIC** and **FORMAT** as indicated by the assignment prompt. Failure to follow instructions will result in a lower or failing grade.

NOTE: I will accept late essays up to one week after the due date, but they will only be eligible to earn a maximum of 90% of the total points for the assignment.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated!

Your work must be your own!

- You will not use or copy other students' work, nor do you offer your work to another student.

- You will not copy authors' statements and use them as your own. What you write must be in your own words.
- Plagiarism will result in a **failing grade!**

Announcements

I use the Announcements on Canvas as an important communication tool for this course. Please check the Announcements page frequently and / or set up your Canvas notification preferences to alert you to new announcements so you do not miss any important communications from me.

Classroom Expectations and Policies

Students at SRJC are required to abide by the SRJC Conduct Standards. Violation of the standards have serious consequences including possible dismissal from class or from the college. Please visit the [Student Contact Policies \(Policy 8.2.8\)](#) page for complete information.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to abide by the code of ethics established by SRJC which states, ***"Academic dishonesty is regarded as any act of deception, benign or malicious in nature, in the completion of any academic exercise. Examples of academic dishonesty include cheating, plagiarism, impersonation, misrepresentation of idea or fact for the purpose of defrauding, use of unauthorized aids or devices, falsifying attendance records, violation of testing protocol, inappropriate course assignment collaboration, and any other acts that are prohibited by the instructor of record."***

Students caught doing any of the above will receive a failing grade for the affected assignment or exam. Any further violations of this policy will result in a failing grade for the course.

Attendance

At SRJC it is expected that students will attend every class session and be on time for the courses in which they are enrolled. For face-to-face classes, students who do not attend the initial class meeting may be dropped by the instructor. For, online classes, students who do not log on to Canvas and initiate participation by 11:59 pm Pacific Time of the first day of class may be dropped by the instructor. If you decide this class is not for you, it is your responsibility to officially drop it. SRJC policy states that instructors may drop students whose absences exceed 10% of the total hours of class time (for online courses the computer records your activity). If you fall behind and start missing assignments in this course, contact me as soon as possible to see if it is possible to avoid be dropped from the course.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Please provide the Authorization for Academic Accommodations letter from the DRD to me as soon as possible if you need a disability-related accommodation for this class.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss the fundamental concepts of evolutionary theory, including the various mechanisms of evolution, including natural selection, genetic mutation, gene flow, genetic drift, and emerging studies of epigenetic influences.
2. Apply anthropological vocabulary and concepts to evaluate alternate phylogenies of ancient primates within a framework of evolutionary theory.
3. Analyze contemporary issues of primate evolution and survival; human health and medicine; human impacts on environments and future primate adaptations.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (W 1/20 to F 1/22) Course Introduction

Readings: Syllabus and How to use Canvas tutorials and Larsen, Chapter 1

Discussion #1: Introduce yourself

Lecture: What is Anthropology?

Extra Credit Quiz on the Syllabus

Week 2 (M 1/25 to F 1/29) Darwin and The Scientific Theory of Evolution

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 2 and *Shermer, "The Facts of Evolution"*

Lecture: *The Scientific Theory of Evolution*

Discussion #2: *Shermer, "The Facts of Evolution"*

Week 3 (M 2/1 to 2/5) Mendel and Biological Inheritance

Readings: Finish Chap. 2 Larsen

Lecture: Mendel and Biological Inheritance

Watch video: Peas in a Pod

Activity Quiz #1 on Mendel's Work

Week 4 (M 2/8 to F 2/12) DNA, Genes, and Human Variation

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 3 and *Plumer et al., "A Simple Guide to CRISPR, One of the Biggest Science Stories of the Decade"*

Lectures: "Cell Biology and Human Genetics" and "Human Genetics and Genetic Frontiers"

Week 5 (M 2/15 to F 2/19) DNA, Epigenetics, and Genetic Frontiers / Exam #1

Video: BBC Panorama on Genetic Frontiers

Discussion #3 on Genetic Frontiers

Exam #1 on Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Week 6 (M 2/22 to F 2/26) Population Genetics

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 4

Lecture: "Population Genetics"

Activity Quiz #2 General Map Knowledge

Week 7 (M 3/1 to F 3/5) Biology and Living People

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 6 and Marks, "Black, White, Other"

Lecture: "Human Biological Variation"

Discussion #4: on "Black, White, Other"

Week 8 (M 3/8 to F 3/12) Biology and Other Primates / Primate Social Behavior

Readings: Larsen, Chapters 6 and 7

Lectures: "Primates and "Primate Social Organization"

Activity Quiz #3 on Primates

Week 9 (M 3/15 to F 3/19) Exam #2 / Understanding the Fossil Record

Exam #2 on Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7

Readings: Larsen, Chapter 8

Lectures: "Understanding the Fossil Record" and "How to find a scholarly article for your Article Review Paper"

Week 10 (M 3/22 to F 3/26) Spring Break!

Week 11 (M 3/29 to F 4/2) Dating the Past / Primate Origins and Evolution

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 9

Lectures: "Primate Origins and Evolution"

Week 12 (M 4/5 to F 4/9) Hominin Origins and Evolution

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 10

Lecture: "Hominin Origins and Evolution"

Video: "Becoming Human Part 1"

Activity Quiz #4 on Early Hominins

Week 13 (M 4/12 to F 4/16) Homo Origins and Evolution

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 11

Lecture: "Homo Origins and Evolution"

Watch video: "Becoming Human Part 2"

Activity Quiz #5 on Early Homo

Week 14 (M 4/19 to F 4/23) Exam #3 / Modern Human Origins

Exam #3 on Chapters 8, 9, 10, and 11

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 12

Lecture: "Archaic and Modern Humans"

Week 15 (M 4/26 to F 4/30) Modern People: Origins and Evolution

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 12 continued

Lectures: "Peopling of the World"

Video: "Decoding Neanderthals"

Discussion #5 on "Decoding Neanderthals"

Week 16 (M 5/3 to F 5/7) Farming and its Consequences / Article Review Paper due

Readings: Larsen, Chap. 13

Lecture: "Agricultural Revolution"

Activity Quiz #6: The Consequences of Farming

Article Review Paper: due F 5/7 by 11:59 pm

Week 17 (M 5/10 to F 5/14) Humans and the Future

Readings due: Finish Larsen, Chap. 14

Lecture: "Humans and the Future"

Discussion #6: "Humans and the Future"

Week 18 (M 5/17 to F 5/21) Course Conclusion

Assignment: Study for the Final Exam

Final Exam Week (M 5/24 to F 5/28)

Final Exam on Chapters 12, 13, and 14 due F 5/28 by 11:59 pm