Human Biology (HBIO) 300 Evolution, Ecology, and Culture

Details: Monday 4:00 – 6:50pm, AHF B10 Seminar room

Professor: Dr. Stephanie Bogart
Office: AHF (Hancock), Jane Goodall Center, B10-B*
Email: sbogart@usc.edu
Office Hours: Mondays 2-3pm, Tuesdays 11am-12:30pm, or by appointment

* Enter Hancock, walk down the corridor to the right. Take the stairwell (second set of stairs just past the elevator) to the basement and turn left where you will see the Jane Goodall Center. My office is the first one on the right. E-mail is always the best way to reach me for questions or an appointment.

Course Content: This course provides a comprehensive overview of how biological and cultural influences interact in making us human. It considers the extent to which we can use Darwinian theory in achieving a better understanding of human behavior. We begin with a fundamental premise: that human social behavior is the outcome of a complex interplay between our biology, molded by millennia of natural selection, mediated by the environment to which we have adapted at various stages during our evolution, and filtered through a complex web of cultural factors. We cannot truly separate the intricate braid of human biology and human culture. We can, however, ask what the causes and consequences of this interplay maybe. This can be done not only for people living in traditional hunter-gatherer societies, but also for ourselves in contemporary western culture. We will examine several topics for background material: the evidence for human origins, fossils and the social behavior and culture in some of our closest relatives. Turning to human societies, we will consider the biological and cultural underpinnings of the human diet, society and ecology, evolutionary psychology, disease, and culture.

A major goal of the course is to teach students how to create and present a professional Powerpoint lecture, a skill useful to any career, and how to write a thoroughly researched and well-documented academic paper, a skill that is particularly important for a research career. The time requirements for this course will be substantial because students will be reading and presenting on the class readings, and also will engage in producing a major research paper and Powerpoint. Because taking interest in other students' ideas and findings through discussion is felt to be an important aspect of learning in a class that is devoted to research, a very heavy weighting will be placed on daily class attendance, participation in discussion, and efforts to make Powerpoint presentations interesting and clear.

Required Textbooks:
2. *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, by Jared Diamond, revised edition
3. *Not By Genes Alone*, by Richardson, 2006

Recommended:
- *Evolution for Everyone*, by Wilson, 2007
Grading:

15% - Class participation
10% - Book preparation/review
25% - Moderation of Book Discussion
50% - Final Paper/Presentation
   5% - Meetings, approval, participation
   10% - Status update and bibliographic review
   20% - Paper
   15% - Presentation

Book Discussions: Five books (2-6 above) will be split among six groups of 2-3 people between weeks 7-13. Your group will be responsible for discussing, teaching, and disseminating the message of the book. All students are expected to come prepared to contribute to the book discussion by reading each book. Book discussion sessions have three components. Each group should prepare a (1) preparation/review sheet that will be provided to the class before discussions. This one-two page assignment can have discussion questions, a brief overview of the book, bullet points of information, etc. These will be due by the Friday evening (I will post on blackboard) before your scheduled Monday discussion. During your scheduled Monday discussion your group will (2) moderate discussion and teach the class about your book. You should offer your critical evaluations of the reading. If you like, you can take time at the beginning of class to present material (a brief “lecture”) or you can present it during the course of the discussion. Finally, everyone will be graded on their (3) participation during discussions.

Final Paper/Presentation: The majority of your grade is based on your research project. You will be required to have a one-on-one meeting with Dr. Bogart to discuss your areas of interest and plan out what you would like to research. Group projects/papers are acceptable (within reason and with my permission, and particularly with projects that involve field work). No more than three people to a group. Topics must relate to human evolution, ecology, or culture. Topic choice is due by week four. The final paper will be more of a pop perspective on the topics that will be covered in class, and will engage more intimately with contemporary cultural understandings of our evolutionary history and how it should does have an impact on our contemporary behavior as humans. A few examples: the branding, marketing, and accuracy of the paleo-diet; dissection of Internet dating; or evaluation of the recent ebola crisis. This does not simply have to be a research paper (it can be, but where’s the fun in that?). Actual engagement (field work) with the cultural phenomena in question is encouraged. Given the examples above, you could: interview Internet dating participants; try out the paleo-diet, interview its proponents, or join a group that is dedicated to that lifestyle and ask them about their own understanding of why the diet is relevant. The purpose of this paper is to dig into our culture and see where the biology (perhaps) shines through.

In addition to some outside research, I expect this paper to be well researched and for citations to be well documented. Please use MLA style citations of primary sources (use Google Scholar and the university library to find these). Due to the nature of this assignment, secondary sources such as popular magazine or newspaper articles are also acceptable, as long as you engage with them critically from the perspective of a biological anthropologist. You are strongly encouraged to use course texts in grounding your arguments, but are equally encouraged to seek out pertinent references in the specific field you’re investigating. Please note: Wikipedia can be helpful but is not a reference; rather, it is crowd-sourced secondary article that should never be cited as a primary source of information. If you find something on Wikipedia that seems helpful, follow links to the primary reference, read that reference, and decide if it is something reputable
enough to cite. A bibliographic review of literature and status update will be due after spring break. This will prepare you for a second meeting with me to check on your progress and address your concerns and questions regarding your research.

Final presentations should be no longer than 10 minutes, depending on the size of your group, and should include some relevant slides (1 per minute is standard, we will discuss appropriate presentation style in class). Final papers should be between 5 and 10 pages (not including references), typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides. You should include at least 10 pertinent references.

**USC’s Statements on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* [https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/](https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, [http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/).

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* [http://equity.usc.edu/](http://equity.usc.edu/) or to the *Department of Public Safety* [http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us](http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us). This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The *Center for Women and Men* [http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/](http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/) provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

**Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* [http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali/](http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali/), which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The *Office of Disability Services and Programs* [http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html](http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html) provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* [http://emergency.usc.edu/](http://emergency.usc.edu/) will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.
# SCHEDULE (Subject to revision)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>Introduction: Evolution</td>
<td>SHB 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>No Class - MLK Day</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Human Origins</td>
<td>SHB 2-3</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Human body and Hunter-Gatherers</td>
<td>SHB 4-6</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Cultivation and diet</td>
<td>SHB 7-9</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>No Class – Presidents’ Day</td>
<td><strong>DUE WED:</strong> Topic Approval</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Human diet</td>
<td><em>Paleofantasy</em></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Society and Environment</td>
<td><em>Collapse</em></td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>Society and Environment</td>
<td><em>Collapse</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Spring Break – NO CLASS</td>
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| 11    | Mar 23  | Evolutionary Psychology                         | *Why Sex Matters*  
|       |         |                                                 | **DUE:** Status and bibliography |
| 12    | Mar 30  | Darwinian Medicine                              | *Why We Get Sick* |
| 13    | Apr 6   | Culture                                         | *Not by Genes Alone* |
| 14    | Apr 13  | Future                                          | SHB 10-13      |
| 15    | Apr 20  | No Class – prep time                            | **DUE WED:** Paper |
| 16    | Apr 27  | Student Presentations                           | **DUE:** Presentation |

SHB = *The Story of the Human Body*