

University of Southern California Fall 2015
Department of Biological Sciences/Human and Evolutionary Biology
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Office hours Mondays 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
AHF- B10C

HBIO-300: Evolution, Ecology, and Culture

SYLLABUS

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to human biocultural evolution, with a special focus on hunting behavior and its impact on the ecology and social evolution of earlier humans. A secondary and 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. Each student will select a major problem to study, involving topics ranging from the nature of our ape ancestor, to theories of human behavioral ecology that look to large-game hunting as a special evolutionary force, to other theories about Pleistocene foraging strategies, to theories about human behavioral dispositions in the social field which have ecological ramifications, and each student will do a major research project in that a chosen area, culminating in a term paper. The time requirements for this course will be substantial because students will be presenting frequent and detailed Powerpoints on the class reading, and also will engage in producing a major research paper and Powerpoint on that project. The topic will be chosen from a menu provided by the instructor at first class meeting.

Method of Teaching

The class will be based on lectures and Powerpoints on the readings, but also will offer students the chance to develop a single major term paper in three stages, and to give professional oral presentations in class using Powerpoint technology. There will be special time allotted to research guidance on an individual basis in the form of two major personal conferences with the instructor.

Students will report to the class giving a number of Powerpoints on assigned readings, and they also will give a major Powerpoint presentation on their research findings, with class feedback and discussion.

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. When students give Powerpoints, other students will be assigned the role of discussant, and as needed feedback will be given to students making presentations.

The two personal conferences with the instructor are mandatory and will count as class attendance.

Formal Requirements

Students will submit three formal papers. The first is an assessment of theoretical and substantive resources for the topical area selected, 4-6 doublespaced pages plus at least 30 relevant references in the tentative bibliography. The second is a preliminary writeup of the entire final paper, 7-10 doublespaced pages with full academic documentation, while the research is still in progress. The third is a substantial term paper (10-15 pages doublespaced plus full and adequate bibliography) which integrates the entire semester's research and fulfills all criteria as a well-documented research paper.

Each student will make a major powerpoint presentation on the major research project to the class at some stage of research, and also will make 3-6 Powerpoint presentations to the class on assigned readings. In addition, students will be assigned the role of discussant for the Powerpoints of others.

Class attendance is formally required. One cut may be taken without penalty. Other absences must involve serious problems of health, family crisis, or religious observance, and must be formally excused in writing by a professional. The work missed must be made up.

Points for student evaluation/grading are as follows:

class participation and attendance, general.....400 points

first paper (bibliographic survey).....100 points

class presentations.....200 points

second paper.....100 points

term paper.....200 points

Honesty

Scholarly care is to be taken in giving credit to others through citations and footnotes, etc. This is an important aspect of training in research methods.

Any extra assistance in writing papers must be acknowledged in writing. Flagrant violations such as purchasing term papers or having other people write them will result in a grade of F.

REQUIRED READING FOR HBIO-300

[Note: the books by Klein and Stanford and Bunn are expensive, but they are basic reference books you will need for your papers. I suggest that you purchase them used from Amazon]

Boehm, Christopher

1999 Hierarchy in the Forest: The Evolution of Egalitarian Behavior. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Durham, William H.

1981 Coevolution: Genes, Culture, and Human Diversity. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Klein, Richard G.

1999 The Human Career: Human Biological and Cultural Origins. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mithen, Steven J.

1990 Thoughtful Foragers: A Study of Prehistoric Decision Making. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stanford, Craig B. and Henry T. Bunn, editors

2000 Meat-Eating and Human Evolution. New York: Oxford University Press.

Wrangham, Richard and Dale Peterson

Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Wrangham, Richard

2010 Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human. New York: Basic Books.

Statement 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>. 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>.

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/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety of the 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> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage <http://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>, 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 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> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.