

# HBIO 306: Primate Social Behavior and Ecology

## Spring 2019

Human and Evolutionary Biology  
University of Southern California

Class Time: M/W 2:00 PM - 3:20 PM

Class Location: Room AHF B10

**Instructor:** Dr. Caitlin O'Connell

**Email:** [ocon233@usc.edu](mailto:ocon233@usc.edu)

Office hours: By appointment T/Th: 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the behavior of wild primates and the ecological models that attempt to explain the evolution of these behaviors. The evolution and taxonomy of primates will be reviewed and you will learn how we distinguish a monkey from an ape, how you might be able to tell where a particular species is from, and other characteristics that allow us to group primates into different categories. We will then explore primate behavior through theoretical frameworks ranging from socioecological theory to sexual selection. Topics discussed include, but are not limited to, socioecology, aggression, kinship, cooperation, reproductive strategies, cognition, and conservation.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

*Primate Behavioral Ecology* by Karen Strier, 5th Edition

*Primate Ethnographies* by Karen Strier (editor), 2017 (1<sup>st</sup> edition)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explain the history and motives behind primate studies in terms of understanding human evolution and species variation.
- Recognize features and hypotheses associated with the origin of the primate pattern
- Identify primate taxonomy and characteristics unique to each taxonomic group.
- Distinguish between the different elements of primate socio-ecology, social groups, and factors that contribute to group variation, including male and female reproductive strategies and their influence on social organization.
- Describe the principles of natural selection and sexual selection
- Discuss characteristics associated with stages of the primate lifecycle.
- Identify threats to primate populations and organizations involved in the development of conservation policies.

## ATTENDANCE AND COURSE MATERIALS

- Students will need to attend class to do well in this course! The textbook material is related and complementary to lecture material. However, lectures will not be tightly tied to the format of the textbook and both need to be mastered to do well on exams. Please read the text to understand broad ideas, theories, definitions, and to learn which primate groups and species are associated with learned concepts. The text provides different examples than what is covered in class to supplement your learning and to help to clarify concepts. We will also read journal articles and popular articles – posted on Blackboard - related to the topics we are discussing in class and spend time talking about them on catch-up/discussion days.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Exam 1 (25%):** This test will be multiple choice and short answer format and will cover all preceding lecture materials, videos, and textbook readings.
- **Exam 2 (25%):** This test will be multiple choice and short answer format and will cover all preceding lecture materials, videos, and textbook readings covered since Term Test One.
- **Research Project (25%):** Focused literary research on a specific topic or species, 5-7-page paper using 6 primary references. Project check in required Week 12
- **Zoo project (15%):** Visit any zoo or primate facility to evaluate a primate species with regards to their welfare. You will use interviews, signage, and behavioral methods to make your final assessments using the knowledge gained in this course. 2-page report on animal welfare in a zoo setting
- **Class participation (10%):** Students are expected to actively engage in class discussions.

## 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/>. 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 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 [sarc@usc.edu](mailto: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](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.

If you are having a problem that is getting in the way of your academics, Student Support and Advocacy can help you devise a plan. Housed in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, **Student Support and Advocacy** serves to enhance the quality of service offered to all USC students. Problem solving: (213) 821-4710. Crisis Management: (213) 740-2421. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/ssa-what-we-d/>

### **MISSED EXAMS**

Missed tests automatically receive a score of zero. In the event of an emergency or illness, you **MUST** notify the instructor **BEFORE** the exam by email, and documentation may be requested before or at the time of the scheduled make-up test. Make-up tests may differ in form and content from the original exam.

### **COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE**

- Please use your university account for all correspondence. Emails from other accounts (e.g. gmail) may not be replied to.
- Use a clear subject line that includes the course name/section and the topic of the email such as "HBIO 306 Question about journal article"

- Show that you have made an effort to find the answer first in the text and lecture material (or even an outside source). State what you know in relation to what you are having a difficult time understanding.
- Include your full name in the signature of your email.
- **Please note: I may choose not to respond to emails that do not follow the format outlined above** so please be thorough and respectful when addressing me with a concern and in return, I will try my very best to get back to you as soon as possible to accommodate your needs.

## **SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS**

**\*May be subject to modifications**

### **Week 1: Introduction, Strier 1**

M Jan 7 Class 1: Introduction to the course, introduction to primate studies, *Ethno 1*

W Jan 9 Class 2: What is a Primate? *Ethno 2,3,5*

### **Week 2: Primate taxonomy and distribution, Strier 2, 3**

M Jan 14 Class 3: Strepsirrhines & platyrrhines, *Ethno 4*

W Jan 16 Class 4: Catarrhines, *Ethno 10*

### **Week 3: Evolution and Sociality, Strier 4**

M Jan 21 No Class MLK Day

W Jan 23 Class 5: Evolution and social behavior, kinship, altruism

### **Week 4: Mating, Strier 5**

M Jan 28 Class 6: Sexual selection

W Jan 30 Class 7: Mating systems and strategies, \*Article on Blackboard

### **Week 5: Foraging, Strier 6**

M Feb 4 Class 8: Sexual Coercion, Infanticide

W Feb 6 Class 9: Foraging, *Ethno 13*

### **Week 6: Socioecology Strier 6, 7, 8**

M Feb 11 Class 10: Ecology of female relationships, *Ethno 17*

W Feb 13 Class 11: Ecology of male relationships, *Ethno 16, 18*

### **Week 7: Development and Life History Strier 9**

M Feb 18 No Class President's Day

W Feb 20 Class 12: Exam 1

### **Week 8: Learning and Culture I Dugatkin 5, Strier 10**

M Feb 25 Class 13: Life history and demography, *Ethno 15*

W Feb 27 Class 14: Parental care and development, *Ethno* 6

**Week 9: Learning and Culture II Dugatkin 6, Strier 10**

M Mar 4 Class 15: Learning and cultural transmission,

W Mar 6 Class 16: Cultural transmission cont...

**Week 10: Spring Break**

**Week 11: Cooperation and Aggression Dugatkin 10, 15**

M Mar 18 Class 17: Cooperation

W Mar 20 Class 18: Agonism and aggression, *Ethno* 9

**Week 12: Communication and Play Dugatkin 16, Strier 10**

M Mar 25 Class 19: Communication, *Ethno* 12

W Mar 27 Class 20: Rise of the Warrior Apes

**Week 13: Personalities Dugatkin 17**

M Apr 1 Class 21: Play

W Apr 3 Class 22: Personality and Behavior

**Week 14: Community Ecology Strier 11**

M Apr 8 Class 23: Ethograms, *Ethno* 9,14

W Apr 10 Class 24: Community Ecology

**Week 15: Primate Conservation Strier 12**

M Apr 15 Class 25: Primate conservation I

W Apr 17 Class 26: Primate conservation II, *Ethno* 20, 21

**Week 16**

M Apr 22 Class 27: Article discussion, article TBD

W Apr 24 Class 28: Research project discussion

**Final Exam:** Monday May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

