

HBIO 308 – Origins and Evolution of Human Behavior  
Fall 2023  
TTH 3:30 – 4:50 pm  
LVL 13

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Instructor: Dr Chrisandra Kufeldt

Pronouns: she/her

Email: [kufeldt@usc.edu](mailto:kufeldt@usc.edu)

Office: AHF B10C

Office hours: Tuesday 12:00 – 2:00 pm; Thursday 1:00 – 2:00 pm

Class period: Tuesday & Thursday 3:30 – 4:50 pm

Classroom: LVL 13

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## Course Overview

This course is about how our biology – our genes and environment – shape and impact our behavior. There are many aspects that help define who we are as humans, being large-brained bipeds, genetic similarities and differences, the ways we are raised, the climates we grow up in, and the culture we feel most familiar with. This course will provide background and knowledge for students to evaluate the complexity of human civilization — how is it that the way we evolved has defined who we are, but also how our ability to think differently than all other organisms on this planet has defined our species.

## Learning Objectives

This is a lecture-based, active-learning course for students with a background in anthropology, biology, and psychology with a focus on evolution and behavior. This course will provide students with:

1. Gain expert knowledge on the biology and evolution of humans
2. Improve ability to discern the unique aspects of human behavior
3. Training in reading and interpreting scholarly research articles
4. Practice constructing presentations and presenting arguments in debate format

## Classroom policies

This is an active-learning course, and most of the course will be discussion-based. Students are expected to contribute to the discussion in every class and should be familiar with the assigned readings. Like all research, some aspects of this course will be collaborative. The goal of team-based activities is to provide students with an opportunity for clarifying their own thoughts on course material, for synthesizing multiple opinions, and for accessing more information than can be accomplished alone. The instructor will determine small groups by assignment in the second week of the course.

A few ground rules are expected to promote full participation.

- Students will silence all cell phones/tablets/laptops during class. These items are only permitted for the taking of notes and accessing course material via the course website; any other use may result in a loss of this privilege.
- To promote a respectful, professional, and productive classroom environment, the following expectations will be maintained during all class sessions
  - Do not interrupt when someone else is speaking
  - You can criticize ideas, but not each other
  - Avoid inflammatory language
  - Support assertions with evidence from lectures or readings or speak from personal experience
  - Do not dominate the discussion
  - Make a single point each time you speak, rather than making a series

## Contacting the Instructor and Office Hours

Please contact me through email [kufeldt@usc.edu](mailto:kufeldt@usc.edu) or through Blackboard. I understand that my office hours may not accommodate everyone's schedule. I am happy to meet with students at another time or through zoom, please contact me to schedule a preferred time.

## Grading and Assessment

Participation in this course is very important since most of your grade is based on in-class assignments, therefore regular attendance is crucial to maintain a high grade. Grades are based on in class assessments (Fishbowls, Jigsaws, Think Piece, Journal Entries), a midterm, and final exam. Every student must complete all assignments. I understand that life gets in the way, so you are allowed two unexcused absences and if you miss an in-class assignment, there will be an alternative assignment for you to complete. This course requires reading, writing, and critical thinking.

Final grades will be determined on the following rubric:

1. Attendance: 5%
2. In class activities (Think Piece, Journal Entries): 20%
3. Small group activities: 25%
4. Midterm: 20%
5. Final Essay: 30%

### 1. Attendance (5%)

Students are permitted only excused absences from this class (see institutional guidelines). Unexcused absences receive no attendance points for the day.

### 2. In-class activities (20%)

To get the most out of the class, it is essential that students stay on top of the readings and other material. Because this course is discussion-based, class participation and regular attendance are key components of final grades. Students are expected to contribute to every class. Such contributions should 1) demonstrate familiarity with the reading material, 2) offer critical assessment of the reading material, and 3) display openness in beginning and maintaining conversations with other students. Tardiness and lack of participation will result in a loss of points. For this purpose, there will be timed writings labelled as think pieces and double journal entries, this is for students to engage with the material and ask questions for further clarification.

### 3. Small group activities (25%)

Small-group activities such as Fishbowl and Jigsaw will occur four times during the semester. Fishbowls will include a small group debating/discussing the reading topic assigned while the larger group takes notes, perspectives, and observes the structure of the conversation. Other small group activities will focus on different ways of presenting what students have learned to each other and to the larger group.

### 4. Midterm (20%)

Students will be given a take home midterm where they will read a peer-reviewed journal article and critique the article. A rubric will be provided for the midterm and what is expected closer to the date. This exercise is meant to demonstrate how the student critically reads and considers the material they are learning throughout the course.

### 5. Final Essay (30%)

The topic of the essay will be one of the themes or topics we cover in the course. Each student will write a five-page essay on their topic due to Blackboard on the final exam day. The essays will be graded according to the rubric that will be made available by the time of the Midterm.

Final grades will be determined by the following grading scale:

94 – 100%	= A
90.0 – 93.99%	= A-
87.6 – 89.99%	= B+
84 – 87.5%	= B
80 – 83.99%	= B-
77.6 – 79.99%	= C+
74 – 77.5%	= C
70 – 73.99%	= C-
60 – 69.99%	= D
59% and below	= F

## Required texts

No textbook encapsulates all the material covered in this course and instead multiple resources are used. Readings for each week will be posted as PDFs on Blackboard or the course google drive folder. Readings are due **on the day they are listed** in the week-by-week scheduled outline below and need to be completed before class.

### **Sharing of Course Materials Outside of the Learning Environment is Strictly Prohibited**

USC has a strict policy (SCampus Section 11.12[B]) that prohibits sharing of *any* synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment. Any student who violates this policy will be prosecuted to the maximum extent allowable by the USC Student Conduct Code, including failure of the course and suspension from the University.

*Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).*

## Policy for Adding or Withdrawing from Classes

September 8, Add/drop deadline

September 8, Change to Pass/No Pass; Drop without 'W'

November 10, Withdraw deadline

Further deadlines and policy for add/drop can be found at:

<https://classes.usc.edu/term-20233/calendar/>

# 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 Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

## Students and Disability Accommodations

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### Support Systems:

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - (213) 740-5086*  
[eeotix.usc.edu](http://eeotix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*  
[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](http://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776*  
[osas.usc.edu](http://osas.usc.edu)

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

*USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710*  
[campussupport.usc.edu](http://campussupport.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101*  
[diversity.usc.edu](http://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*  
[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*  
[ombuds.usc.edu](http://ombuds.usc.edu)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

*Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-3340 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)*  
[chan.usc.edu/otfp](http://chan.usc.edu/otfp)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

## Class Schedule

**Please note the class schedule is tentative and subject to change**

### *Evolution and ecology of social living*

August 22 – 24

Course Introduction & Getting to know you  
Causation and Evolution; Review of Natural Selection

Readings: Overview of evolutionary concepts – Lewin, R., Foley, R., 2004. *The Principles of Evolutionary Theory*.

August 29 – 31

Ecology of Social Relationships: Why live in a group?

Readings: Review of primate socioecology – Clutton-Brock, T., Janson, C., 2012. Primate Socioecology at the Crossroads: Past, Present, and Future. *Evol Anthropol* 21, 136-150.

September 5 – 7

Evolution of Social Behavior  
Group Assignment #1: How to read a paper: Part 1

Readings for Group Assignment →: Tague, R.G., Lovejoy, C.O., 1986. The obstetric pelvis of A.L. 288-1 (Lucy). *J Hum Evol* 15, 237 – 255.

September 12 – 14

Cooperation + Punishment  
Jigsaw: Aggression

Readings: See Jigsaw reading assignments on Blackboard

*Uniquely human?*

September 19 – 21

**Midterm Due**

Mating strategies – Male and female strategies

Mating strategies/Mating preferences

Group Assignment #2: How to read a paper: Part 2

Readings for Group Assignment →: Tague, R.G., Lovejoy, C.O., 1986. The obstetric pelvis of A.L. 288-1 (Lucy). *J Hum Evol* 15, 237 – 255.

September 26 – 28

Jigsaw: Mating Strategies

Childhood, Genes & Environments

Readings: Crabbe, J.C., Phillips, T.J., 2003. Mother Nature meets Mother Nurture. *Nature* 6, 440-442. See Jigsaw reading assignments on Blackboard

October 3 – 5

Parenting Grandparents and stepparents

Biological role of infanticide

Readings: Daly, M., Wilson, M.I., 1996. Violence against Stepchildren. *Curr Dir Psych Sci* 5, 77-81.

October 10 – 12

Fishbowl: Infanticide

Fall Recess Thursday no class

Readings: See Blackboard for Fishbowl Readings



October 17 – 19

Sexual differentiations: development and the HPG axis  
The evolution of the female orgasm & Homosexuality

*This modern hellish life*

October 24 – 26

Sexual coercions  
Behavioral endocrinology in humans, Behavioral endocrinology in humans – stress  
Behavioral endocrinology in humans – males and females

Readings: See Blackboard

October 31 – November 2

Sex differences in the context of mating strategies

November 7 – 9

Cognitive sex differences and the case against perceived differences  
Fishbowl: Cognitive sex differences

Readings: Connellan, J., Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., Batki, A., Aluwalia, J., 2000. Sex differences in human neonatal perception. *Infant Behavior & Development* 23, 113-118.  
See Blackboard for Fishbowl Readings

November 14 – 16

Behavioral endocrinology in humans, Behavioral endocrinology in humans – stress

Readings: Singh, R., Masih, P.P., 2022. An overview of the relation between depression anxiety stress and resilience among college students. *Int J Soc Sci* 10, 376-378.

November 21 – 23

Video: The Secret Life of Bonobo Apes  
Thanksgiving break

Readings: NA

November 28 – 30

Evolution of Language and Culture

Readings: “From grasping to grooming to gossip.” Leavens et al., 2014. *The Evolution of Social Communication in Primates*.

**Final essays due on Friday December 8 through Blackboard.**