



HBIO 200 – The Human Animal

Units: 4

Class Period: Fall 2025 MW 2:00 – 3:20 pm

Location: Montgomery Ross Fisher (MRF) 340

Instructor: Dr. Chrisandra Kufeldt

Pronouns: She/Her

Email: kufeldt@usc.edu

Office: AHF B10C, Goodall Office Suite in Basement of Hancock

Office hours: TBD

Teaching Assistants:

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the field of Biological Anthropology which examines humans within an evolutionary context and their place in nature. This course evaluates evolutionary processes, classification and what makes a species, primate diversity and socioecology, primate and human evolution, the human fossil record, and variation among living humans.

Learning Objectives

This is a lecture-based course with an online component for students and satisfies a Life Science requirement for the general education program at USC.

1. Evaluate biological processes related to evolution.
2. Understand and apply anatomical terminology to describe human and hominin morphology.
3. Gain familiarity with the breadth of the field of Biological Anthropology.
4. Discriminate between association and causation and identify the types of evidence used to establish causation.
5. Evaluate the credibility, use, and misuse of scientific and mathematical information in scientific developments and public-policy issues.

Course Organization

The course is divided into three parts. The first will focus on evolution and the biological processes related to genetic inheritance, reproduction, and species formation. The second part of the course will focus on primates: What are primates? How are they different from other animals, specifically mammals, and what makes humans primates? This part of the course will focus on primate diversity, behavior, ecology, and conservation. The third part of this course will focus on human evolution by exploring the human fossil record, the ecological context in which our fossil ancestors evolved, the emergence of living humans and the variation observed among our species *Homo sapiens*. Each part of the course builds upon the previous part.

Course Notes

All course materials including syllabus, assigned readings, grades, and assignment rubrics can be found on Brightspace. Additionally, course announcements and scheduling amendments can also be found here.

Attendance

Attendance is highly recommended, but class attendance for lecture is not monitored and does not count towards your course grade, but students are responsible for all material presented in lectures. Lectures slides sets will be shared with students via Brightspace before or after the lecture. Lectures will not be provided online or recorded, the student needs to obtain *my* consent to record lecture.

Required texts

The textbook for this course is an open access (FREE) textbook titled:

Explorations: An Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology, Editors, B. Shook, Nelson, K., Aguilera, K., Braff, L. There is a link for the textbook on Brightspace.

The attached link will also provide you with a pdf copy that can be downloaded,

<http://explorations.americananthro.org/>

Contacting the Instructor and office hours

I would like to get to know each one of you, but your first point of contact for questions regarding this course should be your TA. Familiarize yourself with their names, email, and office hours. You are always welcome in my office hours, and I encourage you to attend them. 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.

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

USC has a strict policy (Campus 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).

Grading and Assessment

Students should understand from the outset that this is a difficult course. In an introductory survey course, you are presented with **a lot** of information. You need to learn basic facts before you can start putting these facts together into a coherent picture and remember that **it is your responsibility to learn this information.**

Evaluations for this course are based on **four** exams, lab, plus one optional extra credit activity. The student must take all four exams to receive a passing grade. All the exams are multiple choice and true/false. You are allowed **one** 3 x 5 note card (inches), 7.6 x 12.7 cm for the metrically inclined, to use at every exam. The exams will compose 75% of your final grade. The remainder of your grade is based on labs.

Final grades will be determined by the following rubric:

1. Labs (25%) – hands on activities to supplement lecture. Students will work with casts of living primates and fossil bones and learn this material more in depth.
2. Exams (75%) – All four exams are made up of multiple choice, true/false, matching questions.

3. LA County Zoo Extra Credit Assignment (3%) – I will provide free zoo tickets for students that would like to visit the LA County Zoo and complete the assignment on living primate observations following the second exam. This is an optional assignment. Students must provide their own transportation. The points can help boost a struggling lab grade or an exam score on the cusp.
4. Regarding missed or makeup exams – the student must contact me within 24 hours of the exam if there is an emergency that prevents them from taking the exam. If you miss an exam or contact me outside of designated time, you are allowed a makeup however the exam will be prorated at 5% for every day missed – this means you will begin to lose points.

*Please take note of the final exam schedule and make plans accordingly.

Exam Schedule:

Exam I – September 17
 Exam II – October 15
 Exam III – November 10
 Exam IV – December 3

Grading

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

A note on labs

Labs are intended to supplement lecture. Regular attendance and completion of lab assignments are necessary to receive an A in this course. A few rules:

- Students are allowed a minimum of **two** unexcused absences from lab, with the option to make up the lab. Any unexcused absences after the allotted two will result in a drop in your lab grade and the student will be precluded from further makeups.
- Regarding lab absences, the student needs to contact their TA immediately.
- All exam reviews will be held in lab.

- You will need to see your TAs to review your exams, but you only have a two-week window in which to review your exam/discuss your grade.
- No devices in lab (excepting OSAS accommodations).

OSAS

It is the student's responsibility to send me your OSAS accommodations as soon as possible and to reserve room in the testing center for the exams. The date for each exam is provided and this needs to be done several weeks ahead of time.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the [student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#)

Course Policy on AI

Since creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Class Schedule

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

Week 1		
Monday	August 25	Syllabus Overview & Introduction to Biological Anthropology
Wednesday	August 27	History of Evolutionary Thought
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 1. <i>Introduction to Biological Anthropology</i> , pages 2 – 22.
Part I: Biological Processes		
Week 2		
Monday	September 1	Labor Day Holiday – No Class
Wednesday	September 3	Evolution and Natural Selection
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 2. <i>Evolution</i> , pages 29 – 35; 49 – 51.
Week 3		
Monday	September 8	Genetics: Genotype to Phenotype
Wednesday	September 10	Forces of Evolution
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 3. <i>Molecular Biology and Genetics</i> , pages 58 – 71, 73 – 75, 81 – 88.
Week 4		
Monday	September 15	Formation of Species
Wednesday	September 17	Exam I
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 4. <i>Forces of Evolution</i> , pages 113 – 115, 121 – 128, 132 – 135.
Part II: Primates		
Week 5		
Monday	September 22	Human Variation

Wednesday	September 24	What Makes a Primate?
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 13. <i>Race and Human Variation</i> , pages 491 – 505; Chapter 14. <i>Human Variation: An adaptive significance approach</i> , pages 518 – 541.
Week 6		
Monday	September 29	Primate adaptations
Wednesday	October 1	Primate diversity
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 5. <i>Meet the Living Primates</i> , pages 148 – 158, 159 – 180. Chapter 6. <i>Primate Ecology and Behavior</i> , pages 190 – 214.
Week 7		
Monday	October 6	Primate Behavior
Wednesday	October 8	How to Become a Fossil
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 5. <i>Meet the Living Primates</i> , pages 159 – 180; Chapter 6. <i>Primate Ecology and Behavior</i> , pages 190 – 214.
Week 8		
Monday	October 13	Primate behavior
Wednesday	October 15	Exam II
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 7. <i>Understanding the Fossil Context</i> , pages 240 – 252, 256 – 261. Chapter 8. <i>Primate Evolution</i> , pages 274 – 297, 298 – 303.
Week 9		
Monday	October 20	How to Become a Fossil
Wednesday	October 22	Primate Evolution
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 8. <i>Primate Evolution</i> , pages 298 – 303.
Week 10		
Monday	October 27	Becoming Human
Wednesday	October 29	Earliest Hominins
Part III: Human Evolution		
Week 11		
Monday	November 3	Primate evolution
Wednesday	November 5	Becoming human

		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Appendix A. <i>Osteology</i> , pages 632 –661. Chapter 9. <i>Early Hominins</i> , pages 327 – 334.
Week 12		
Monday	November 10	Exam III
Wednesday	November 12	Earliest Hominins
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 9. <i>Early Hominins</i> , pages 334 – 341.
Week 13		
Monday	November 17	The Genus <i>Australopithecus</i>
Wednesday	November 19	<i>Paranthropus</i> and Early <i>Homo</i>
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 9. <i>Early Hominins</i> , pages 341 – 343, 344 – 345; Chapter 10. <i>Early Members of the Genus Homo</i> , pages 376 – 391.
Week 14		
Monday	November 24	<i>Homo erectus</i> and Archaic hominins and Neanderthals
Wednesday	November 26	Thanksgiving Break – No class
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 11. <i>Archaic Homo</i> , pages 405 – 431; 432 – 435.
Week 15		
Monday	December 1	<i>Homo sapiens</i> evolution and dispersal
Wednesday	December 3	Exam IV
		Readings: <i>Explorations</i> Chapter 12. <i>Modern Homo sapiens</i> , pages 446 – 471.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

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. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

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

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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

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 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) 740-0411

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

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

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) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

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