

Fall 2015

ANTH 2051

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Human Origins

ANTH 2051, Section 001

Fall 2015

MWF 11:00 – 11:50

Instructor: Dr. Lauren Lastrapes

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Office Hours: MW 9:30 – 11:00

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Catalog Description: Offered each semester. The origin and evolution of the human species, primates, modern human variation, prehistoric societies, and linguistic classification.

Improved Description: Since the University's description of the course lacks a verb and any significant detail about what we'll learn, I will explain more. This semester, we will use two texts created with different goals in mind to understand the value of an evolutionary perspective, the pathways of hominin evolution from primates to premodern hominins to *Homo sapiens*. Our primary goal, one that emerges from the list of smaller goals that appears below, is to learn to use physical anthropology and its ideas, concepts, and points of view, to interpret contemporary human diversity. This course, combined with ANTH 2052 (*Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*), should prepare you to take more advanced courses in UNO's Anthropology Department (where our focus is on cultural, urban anthropology). This course can also be useful for framing scientific knowledge gained from courses in biology, chemistry, environmental sciences and other fields so that that you can use that knowledge to interpret everyday experiences.

While there are certain requirements that must be covered each time *Human Origins* is taught, every instructor brings his/her own approach and point of view to the course. The goals of this particular course are:

1. To understand the theory of evolution
2. To understand how the scientific method and its assumptions and practices operate
3. To learn to build, week after week, complex critical thoughts from accumulated knowledge
4. To independently research and explain interesting parallels between course content and current issues that exist outside of the classroom
5. To interpret the contemporary human condition using the lens of evolution

Course Format: This course is a discussion course, not a lecture course. You are expected to arrive in class with that day's reading assignment completed. You should be prepared to ask questions and discuss with me and one another the reading's important features. The course is divided into nine units that will necessarily build upon and overlap with one another. The units are detailed below in the reading schedule. Basically, we'll read things on our own and then come together to talk about them in class three times a week. Sometimes, to get conversations started, we will spend the first few minutes of class writing—either in response to a prompt or freely—so please be prepared with paper and writing utensils.

Participation:

At each class meeting, we'll discuss the readings assigned for that day/week. Participating in discussion, either through verbal engagement or active listening, is required. Taking notes is encouraged, but the most important thing is to be present and engaged so that you learn things that expand any knowledge you gained from reading the text before class.

More on Absences:

Each student can miss three classes without penalty. Missing a fourth class or more will result in a lower grade for the course. I don't accept doctor's notes, parent's notes, discussions of your child's illness, or explanations about how your grandmother's cousin died and you were a pallbearer in the funeral. Life happens to all of us. Your failure to appear in class is your issue, not mine. You can miss three classes. If you miss more for any reason, you'll suffer consequences for the absences.

Unit Reflections:

The course, as noted above, is divided into nine units. At the end of each unit, you will have an opportunity to write a one-to-three-page reflection on the key ideas examined in that unit in response to a prompt that I will develop in the course of class discussion. **Every student must complete 7 out of 9 possible Unit Reflections.**

Exams:

In addition to the writing assignments, this course includes two short essay exams. On these exams, you will answer questions in approximately 3 – 6 sentences. The questions will ask you to think about the readings—the ways they overlap, specific themes, your ideas about the texts—and write succinctly about them. The first exam will occur at the midterm period and cover everything up to that point. The second exam will occur during finals and will cover everything between the midterm exam and the end of the course.

Easy Projects:

During the last few class meetings, students will have an opportunity to give presentations on topics of their own choosing. These will be brief presentations, which can include audiovisual components if you so desire, addressing a correlation between a subject of discussion in class and the world around us. We will talk more about the nature of these projects when we meet, and we will decide together what we want them to look like by the middle of the course.

Required Texts:

Angeloni, Elvio, ed. 2013. *Annual Editions: Physical Anthropology*. Twenty-Third Edition. McGraw-Hill.

ISBN: 0078136199

Lieberman, Daniel. 2013. *The Story of the Human Body: Evolution, Health, and Disease*. New York: Vintage.

ISBN: 0307907414

Grading:

Participation/Attendance	20%
End of Unit Writing Assignments	30%
Exam #1	20%
Exam#2	20%
Easy Projects	10%

Reading and Assignment Schedule:

Week One

Wednesday, August 19

Radiolab excerpt, “Galapagos” (full episode on Moodle for reference)

Friday, August 21

“The Myth of Big Bad Gluten” *New York Times* opinion piece from July 5, 2015 (on Moodle)

Week Two

Monday, August 24

In Angeloni: Prefatory materials, “Evolutionary Perspectives,” Quammen, Shermer (on Moodle)

Wednesday, August 26

In Angeloni: Weiner, Carey (on Moodle)

Friday, August 28

In Angeloni: Otto, Alters and Alters (on Moodle)

Week Three

Monday, August 31

In Angeloni: “Primates,” Sapolsky, Goodall

Due: Unit One Reflection

Wednesday, September 2

In Angeloni: Stanford, Boesch and Boesch-Achermann

Friday, September 4

In Angeloni: Tucker, de Waal

Week Four

Monday, September 7

NO CLASS, Labor Day

Wednesday, September 9

In Angeloni: “Sex and Gender,” Smuts, Small

Due: Unit Two Reflection

Friday, September 11

In Angeloni: Paul, Hrdy

Week Five

Monday, September 14

In Angeloni: “The Fossil Evidence,” Brahic, Wong

Due: Unit Three Reflection

Wednesday, September 16

In Angeloni: Alper, Wong

Friday, September 18
In Angeloni: Zimmer

Week Six

Monday, September 21
In Angeloni: “Late Hominid (sic) Evolution,” Gibbons, Neimark
Due: Unit Four Reflection

Wednesday, September 23
In Angeloni: Shea, Gibbons, Caspari

Friday, September 25
In Angeloni: Stanford, Jablonski

Week Seven

Monday, September 28
In Liberman: Preface, Chapter 1
Due: Unit Five Reflection

Wednesday, September 30
In Liberman: Chapter 2, Chapter 3

Friday, October 2
In Lieberman: Chapter 4

Week Eight

Monday, October 5
In Lieberman: Chapter 5

Wednesday, October 7
In Lieberman, Chapter 6

Friday, October 9

Midterm Exam

Week Nine

Monday, October 12
In Angeloni: “Human Diversity,” Shenk, Chaplin
Due: Unit Six (Lieberman section) Reflection

Wednesday October 14
In Angeloni: Mukhopadhyay and Heinze

Friday, October 16
NO CLASS, Fall Break

Week Ten

Monday, October 19

In Angeloni: Bogin, Maples

Wednesday, October 21

In Angeloni: "Living with the Past," Armelagos, Wolf

Due: Unit Seven Reflection

Friday, October 23

In Angeloni: Gadsby, Diamond

Week Eleven

Monday, October 26

In Angeloni: Moalem, Natterson-Horowitz and Bowers

Wednesday, October 28

In Angeloni: Nowak, Dunn

Friday, October 30

In Angeloni: Rogers

Week Twelve

Monday, November 2

In Lieberman: Chapter 7

Due: Unit Eight Reflection

Wednesday, November 4

In Lieberman: Chapter 8

Friday, November 6

In Lieberman: Chapter 9, first half

Week Thirteen

Monday, November 9

In Lieberman: Chapter 9, second half

Wednesday, November 11

In Lieberman: Chapter 10, first half

Friday, November 13

In Lieberman: Chapter 10, second half

Week Fourteen

Monday, November 16

In Lieberman: Chapter 11

Wednesday, November 18

In Lieberman: Chapter 12

Friday, November 20
In Lieberman: Chapter 13

Week Fifteen

Monday, November 23
No reading assigned, catch up day
Due: Unit Nine Reflection

Wednesday, November 25
NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Holiday

Friday, November 26
NO CLASS, Thanksgiving Holiday

Week Sixteen

Monday, November 30
Presentations

Wednesday, December 2
Presentations

Friday, December 4
Presentations, last class

Your final exam will be on Wednesday, December 9 from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. It will be given in our regular classroom.

Statements of Relative Import:

Moodle

A few of your assigned readings will be posted on Moodle. You'll have to be able to log on and find the documents. I'll give more detailed instructions on how to do this in class. We won't be using Moodle to communicate or discuss readings.

Email Communications

You will need to use your UNO email account to receive communications for this class. Remember to keep it clean enough so as not block any incoming messages. I will occasionally communicate with you via email especially if there are changes in the class schedule or to share things I think you might find interesting.

Feel free to email me: lelastra@uno.edu.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information. The Code is available online at

<http://www.uno.edu/student-affairs-enrollment-management/documents/Student-Code-of-Conduct-May-2014.pdf>

Note: If you don't know what plagiarism is, find out. Then don't do it. I will bust you. I always do.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.