

**PSY 255 – Evolutionary Psychology  
Lebanon Valley College, Fall 2003**

**Dr. Barry X. Friedman**

**Monday, Wednesday, & Friday, 11:00 – 11:50  
Garber 204**

**Professor Information**

Office: Garber 248

Office Hours: *Monday = 2:00 – 3:00, Tuesday = 3:35 – 4:45, Wednesday, 4:00 – 5:00, Thursday = 3:45 – 4:45*, and by appointment to meet your needs. Appointments can be made (and are preferable) for meeting times that may be more convenient for you.

Simply send me an email requesting one and we'll set it up. I encourage you to set up an appointment to discuss the class, what psychology graduate school is like, what one can do with a psychology degree, etc...

Email: [friedman@lvc.edu](mailto:friedman@lvc.edu)

Office Telephone: 867-6199

**Brief Autobiography**

I was born and raised on Long Island, New York. After receiving my B.A. in psychology from Binghamton University, I made my academic manifest destiny west to study evolutionary psychology at The University of Texas, Austin. My research interests lie mainly in the area of interpersonal relationships, with a primary focus on the evolved psychological mechanisms that underlie commitment in romantic relationships. I am also interested in the evolution and development of menopause, and the psychological changes that accompany it. As for my non-academic life, I enjoy playing golf, racquetball, baseball, and basketball. I'm also a huge movie buff (e.g., P.T. Anderson, Aronofsky, Fincher, Kubrik, Linklater, K. Smith, Tarrantino) and music fanatic (e.g., U2, Radiohead, Counting Crows, Dave Mathews Band, Led Zeppelin, Coldplay).

**Psychology Department Philosophy**

The Psychology Department at LVC seeks to foster the development of a thoughtful, flexible, and scientific approach toward human behavior that is guided by critical analyses of empirical research. Upon graduating, psychology majors will be prepared to pursue applied entry-level positions in the work force and for graduate studies in a range of areas such as psychology, neuroscience, social work, medicine, business, education, and law. The program allows students to arrive at a thorough understanding of the myriad processes underlying behavior, with a broader goal of applying this knowledge to one's own life and society on the whole (adapted from p. 133 of the 2003-2004 Catalog).

**Evolutionary Psychology Course Description and Objectives**

This is an introductory course aimed at undergraduates with little or no experience with evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology is the scientific study of human nature based on understanding the psychological adaptations that we evolved to cope with survival and reproductive challenges faced over the long expanse of our

evolutionary history. We begin with a brief historical review of key themes in psychology and evolutionary biology. We then proceed to substantive topics including problems of survival, long-term mating, sexuality, parenting, kinship, cooperation, aggression and warfare, conflict between the sexes, status, prestige, and social dominance. The course concludes by arguing for a unified field that integrates the different branches of psychology.

LVC is one of only about 30 universities/colleges in North America to offer a comprehensive undergraduate evolutionary psychology course. Whatever your major, interests in psychology, and eventual career goals, evolutionary psychology will prove interesting, useful, and thought-provoking.

Successful completion of this course will enable you 1) to understand Charles Darwin's proposed method of evolution, natural selection, 2) to understand the major methods, theories, and findings in evolutionary psychology, and 3) to apply that knowledge to your everyday life. *Knowledge of how and why your mind works the way it does will best allow you to use your mind to tackle the myriad obstacles that life throws at you!*

### **Location in the Psychology Major and General Education Program Requirements**

The prerequisites for this course are Psy 111, 112, Psy 120, or 130 (i.e., Gen Psy I, Gen Psy II, Intro to Exp Psyc, or Stats and Data Analysis). This course will (eventually) count towards the 3-credit course needed from the "social processes" area of the psychology major program. This course does not meet any general education requirements.

### **Required Books**

Buss, D. M. (2004). *Evolutionary psychology: The new science of the mind*. Needham Heights, MA:

Allyn & Bacon.

This was the first textbook written for evolutionary psychology. The author is a founding father of the discipline. Even after five years and the debut of at least six other texts, Buss' text (now in its second edition) is still the most clear, comprehensive, and engaging text available.

Costs \$67.95 from the campus bookstore.

Dawkins, R. (1996). *The blind watchmaker*. New York, NY: Norton.

Richard Dawkins is one of the top three science writers alive. His clarity of thought and expression are second to none. This book will serve to expand upon the intricacies and to unravel the myriad complexities inherent in Darwin's 1859 theory of natural selection.

Costs \$15.95 from the campus bookstore.

### **Teaching Philosophy**

I take great pride in a teacher's responsibility to foster student learning. I strive to engage my students' interests by requiring high standards and using entertaining teaching methods. My role as a teacher is to foster critical, creative thinking, and intellectual risk-taking. Your role as a student is to work hard and HAVE FUN with this class. I encourage you to ask questions, interject humorous anecdotes, and seek clarification as

needed. I most enjoy teaching psychology and want you to most enjoy learning it.  
ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE, PLEASE!!!

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required for this class. Missed exams cannot be made up, and missed notes cannot be borrowed from me, so you must COME TO EACH AND EVERY CLASS! Much of the material covered in lecture is not in the textbook, and will be included on exams. If you miss a class you are responsible for knowing any class announcements given in your absence. If you know that you must miss a class for a documented school related activity (e.g., school trip, sporting/band/choir event) you must let me know at least one week prior to the anticipated absence.

### **Electronic Communication**

I'll be using Blackboard, an online course management program to post grades, PowerPoint lectures, necessary Word documents, and to email you.