

# *Anthropology 469/669: Evolution and Biology of Human Behavior*

Lecture: 10:00-11:15 Tuesdays, Thursdays, FDH 101

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## Catalog Description:

Human behavior has been shaped by evolutionary processes. This course reviews the relevant theory and primary approaches—evolutionary psychology and behavioral ecology—for investigating human behavior from an evolutionary perspective. Topics addressed include cooperation, mate choice, parenting, pair bonding, aggression, language and culture. Empirical data presented on these topics derive from non-human primate comparisons, cross-cultural data sets and case studies from a range of societies.

## Course Objectives:

Students will grapple with current theoretical and empirical evidence concerning the evolution of human behavior. Students will gain insight into the similarities and differences in behavior between humans and other animals, especially non-human primates. Through readings, students develop critical thinking skills to assess evolutionary-oriented research on human behavior. Through a research paper, students have the opportunity to apply course theory to a topic of particular interest. Manifestations of these course objectives include: how do patterns of parent-child sleeping arrangements compare cross-culturally, with other primates, and vary according to global media influence; what are some similarities and differences in international patterns of human mate choice, and how are these patterns informed from an evolutionary perspective; how does early social experience influence cross-culturally variable aspects of human family life, including the neuroendocrine bases for pair bonding and parenting; why are evolutionarily novel human behaviors such as gambling being propagated so successfully around the world.

This class fulfills the UNLV International GEC requirement.

## Reading:

Assigned readings derive from several sources: two assigned texts, an online anthropological resource (MyAnthroLibrary), and a sampling of PDFs available in e-reserve through the UNLV library. The texts and a card providing online access to MyAnthroLibrary can be purchased in the UNLV bookstore. The two assigned books are: 1) Cartwright J. 2008. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.; and 2) Hrdy S. 2009. *Mothers and Others*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

### Grading:

Grades will be based on a midterm exam (20%), a non-cumulative final exam (20%), a research paper due at the end of the course (30%), performance on a behavioral observation exercise (10%), review of an online ethnography (10%) and scores from four pop quizzes (10%). Makeup exams are not permitted without medical documentation. No late term papers will be accepted. Graduate student grades are determined by these assignments and additional criteria: participation in additional discussions of research papers; writing a professional quality and slightly longer (approximately 20 pages) term paper; and guiding in-class discussions of papers assigned from e-reserves.

The research paper involves addressing one of the following three options. Your paper, regardless of which option you choose, should be approximately 15 pages of text, double-spaced, using 12-point font. Your paper should include a clear title, employ sub-headings to help structure components of it, cite at least 15 scholarly references. Further support concerning writing mechanics is available through the UNLV writing center at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

- (1) Write a term paper concerning a topic within the broad scope of this course. The paper may be structured either as a review paper or as a paper based on the formulation and testing of a research hypothesis. For example, one might be struck by the unusual practice, present in many U.S. households, of placing an infant in its own room to sleep, socially removed from mom and dad. Within the scope of reviewing research on “co-sleeping,” one might integrate data from nonhuman primates, cross-cultural patterns of sleep arrangements, and studies of infant-parent sleep physiology toward coherently addressing this subject.
- (2) Test a hypothesis concerning cross-cultural variation in some behavior by using the electronic Human Relations Area Files (eHRAF). Ethnographic and archeological electronic versions of HRAF are available as online UNLV library resources. For instance, by using codes drawn from this database, one might test the hypothesis that the functions served by pets vary by a society’s subsistence base, with pets such as dogs more often serving roles in hunting in hunter-gatherer, agricultural, and pastoralist societies, whereas pets such as dogs more often serve roles of “human emotional surrogates” in complex nation states.
- (3) Conduct a non-invasive behavioral study on some topic relevant to this course. For example, you could develop the hypothesis that young adult men and women seek to engage in more visible displays advertising their sexiness or status compared with older adults. A rationale for this hypothesis could be that young adults have higher “reproductive value,” thus favoring their greater visibility in advertising traits useful in attractiveness and mate choice. You might derive a testable prediction from this hypothesis that in Vegas casinos young adults will play at more spatially visible places and in view of more people than older adults.

### **UNLV Disability Policy:**

UNLV is committed to providing equal access to its programs and services for students who experience disabilities. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) was established to support these goals and to provide assistance with college learning through provision of recommended academic adjustments, auxiliary services, and advocacy. Students wishing

support must register with the DRC and provide recent and appropriate documentation. The documentation should provide an assessment of the current impact or functional limitations of the disability on academic performance. DRC professionals will determine student eligibility for services based on the presented information, and offer reasonable adjustments or accommodations that support college learning for each eligible student. So that services can be arranged and provided in a timely manner students are encouraged to begin the registration process as early as possible. Please refer to DRC for the application forms and other relevant information at: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>

#### UNLV Religious Holidays Policy:

Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the last day at late registration of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the test or examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the university which could not be avoided.

#### UNLV Academic Integrity and Misconduct Code:

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be tolerated in this class. Please refer to UNLV's "Student Conduct resources in general at:

<http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/integrity.html>

Also, please make sure to read UNLV's Academic Integrity Misconduct Policy" at: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/judicial/misconductPolicy.html>

#### UNLV Copyright Policy

Using somebody else's work without permission is just not right. Whether it is copying a chapter or two from a book, pirating a video copy of a new movie, or using photographs off the Internet, the copyright of the owner of that material must be protected. Likewise, your work, whether it is a photograph, a monograph, or a pictograph, is protected under the law. Just as you cannot use copyrighted material without permission, somebody else cannot use your material without permission. At the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, however, the bottom line is this: **YOU ARE WHOLLY RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLATIONS OF COPYRIGHT LAW. THE UNIVERSITY IS IN NO WAY LIABLE, EVEN FOR EMPLOYEE ACTIONS.**

For more information on copyright policy of the university, please refer to:

<http://www.unlv.edu/committees/copyright.html/>

#### Course Outline:

*Week 1 (August 25/27):* Introduction. Course mechanics. Evolutionary approaches to human behavior. Video: Evolution, Program 1.  
Cartwright (C) text: chapters 1,2

*Week 2 (September 1/3):* Basics of evolutionary theory

C: chapters 3,4

*Week 3 (September 8/10):* Human evolution and its consequences

C: Chapters 5,6

Marlowe, F.W. 2005. Hunter-gatherers and human evolution. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 14: 54-67.

*Week 4 (September 15/17):* Cross-cultural variation

C: Chapter 16

Read in entirety one ethnography from the online resource. Submit your writeup September 17.

*Week 5 (September 22/24):* Cognition and emotion

C: Chapters 7,8

Henrich, J., McElreath, R. et al. 2006. Costly punishment across human societies. *Science* 312: 1767-1770.

*Week 6 (September 29/October 1):* Cooperation and conflict

Sapolsky, R.M. 2005. The influence of social hierarchy on primate health. *Science* 308: 648-652.

*Week 7 (October 6/8):* Midterm and library visit

*Week 8 (October 13/15):* Human sexual behavior

C: Chapter 11

From MyAnthroLibrary: Broude's "Variation in Sexual Attitudes, Norms, and Practices"

*Week 9 (October 20/22):* Human mate choice

C: Chapters 12, 13

Bartels, A. and Zeki, S. 2004. The neural correlates of maternal and romantic love. *NeuroImage* 21: 1155-1166.

*Week 10 (October 27/29):* Evolution of human family

Hrdy: first half of book

*Week 11 (November 3/5):* Evolution of human family

Hrdy: second half of book

*Week 12 (November 10/12):* Aggression

In-class debate regarding cross-cultural variation in aggression on Nov. 12. To prepare, read from MyAnthroLibrary 3 PDFs: 1) On Cross-Cultural Research; 2) Family Violence; and 3) War.

*Week 13 (November 17/19):* Video plus Guest Lecturer: Dr. Pierre Lienard

Video: "Evolution: The Mind's Big Bang"; Dr. Lienard guest lectures on Thursday

Boyer, P. and Lienard, P. 2008. Ritual behavior in obsessive and normal individuals: Moderating anxiety and reorganizing the flow of action. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 17: 291-294.

*Week 14 (November 24):* Mental disorders  
C: Chapters 14,15

*Week 15 (November 31/Dec 2)* Ethics and epilogue  
C: Chapters 17,18  
Term paper due November 31