

**Syllabus for Evolution, Brain, and Behavior: Evolutionary Psychology**  
**Psychology 342, section 1, Fall Semester 2003, UNM**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00 pm to 5:15 pm, Mitchell Hall 122**  
**Instructor: Geoffrey Miller, Ph.D., UNM Psychology Assistant Professor**  
**Teaching Assistant: Chris Jenkins, UNM Psychology Ph.D. Student**

This syllabus contains information that will be crucial to your success in this course. Read this whole syllabus before the next class session – you will be quizzed on its contents. Keep this accessible, and refer to it regularly throughout the course!

**This syllabus includes the following sections:**

1. **Overview of course content**
2. **Textbooks**
3. **Grades**
4. **Instructors**
5. **Class rules**
6. **Class attendance (10% of grade)**
7. **Quizzes (60% of grade)**
8. **Video analysis reports (30% of grade)**
9. **How to ace this course**
10. **Key Dates and Course Schedule**

**1. Overview of course content:**

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 in prehistory. It is a new science that arose around 1990 and that has led to a flood of new research on human sexuality, aggression, status, parenting, family life, group cooperation, emotions, and other topics that had been neglected in mainstream psychology. Evolutionary psychology tries to offer a coherent framework that for unifying the diverse areas of contemporary psychology research. Evolutionary psychology also tries to connect with other disciplines in two directions. It connects with the natural sciences through evolutionary biology, behavior genetics, and neuroscience. It connects with the humanities and the social sciences (e.g. economics, political science, sociology) through its understanding of individual human nature and collective behavior. UNM is one of only about 30 universities in North America to offer a comprehensive evolutionary psychology course to undergraduates. Whatever your major, your interests in psychology, and your eventual career goals, I think evolutionary psychology will prove interesting, useful, and thought-provoking.

**2. Textbooks required for this course:**

- (1) *Evolutionary Psychology* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2003) by David Buss, Allyn & Bacon, ISBN 0-205-37071-3. \$69.50 new from the UNM bookstore. I chose this textbook for several reasons: (1) it is new and up-to-date, (2) it's written by a leading evolutionary psychologist at University of Texas at Austin, (3) it's well-written, and has lots of real-world examples, data, and photos.
- (2) *The Mating Mind* (2001) by Geoffrey Miller, Anchor Books, ISBN 0-385-49517-

X. \$15 new or cheaper used from the UNM bookstore, or cheaper from amazon.com or other online retailers.

### **3. Grades**

**Your grade for this course will depend on three types of assessment:**

- **class attendance (10%).**
- **quizzes (60% of overall grade),**
- **video analysis reports (30%),** and

Each is described in sections below.

For every student, every grade for each class attendance check, quiz, and video analysis report will be posted on the WebCT site for this class as soon as the grade is entered in our records. So, you will be able to have an up-to-date idea of how well you are doing.

For this to work, you must sign up for a UNM Net ID if you do not already have one by September 4. This will make you 'visible' on the course Web CT site so your grades can be entered there. If you do not have a UNM Net ID, please log on to the website <https://www2.unm.edu/cirt/nac?unix> from any computer with internet access (e.g. any UNM computer pod) and follow the instructions there.

### **4. Instructors:**

#### **Main instructor: Geoffrey Miller**

Assistant Professor, Psychology, Logan Hall 160

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1161, USA

(505) 277-1967 (office)      (505) 277-1394 (dept fax)

gfmiller@unm.edu      <http://www.unm.edu/~psych/faculty/gmiller.html>

Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:00 pm to 3:45 pm, Psych. Dept., Logan Hall 160 (ground floor)

If you can't make office hours and you have a question, please call or email.

#### **Instructor background:**

Born in 1965 in Cincinnati Ohio, went to Columbia University in New York for B.A. in biological psychology (1987), and to Stanford University in California for Ph.D. in experimental psychology (1993). After that, I did research in England at the University of Sussex, University College London, and the London School of Economics, with one year spent in Munich at a Max Planck Institute, and one semester as a visiting professor at UCLA in California. My British wife Rosalind is a science television documentary producer, a Ph.D. student at the Institute of Psychiatry in London, and a member of the New Mexico Board of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. We have a 7 year old daughter, Atalanta. This is my third year as an assistant professor at UNM.

I'm very happy to be here, since UNM is the world's leading center for evolutionary research on human nature. Evolutionary social psychology is the focus of my research, especially person perception: how people make inferences about the hidden

traits (e.g. intelligence, kindness, attitudes towards green chile) of others given how they look, behave, and talk. I've published about 40 research papers and given about 90 scientific talks around the world.

**Teaching Assistant: Chris Jenkins**

Psychology, Logan Hall, Office: Logan Hall, B38E (in the basement)

University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131-1161, USA

Office phone: 277-5934

Office hours: Wednesdays noon to 1:45 pm.

**5. Class rules:**

Do not arrive late. The regular in-class quizzes start at 4:00 pm, not 4:05 pm. It is best to have a seat by 3:55. Learn how long you'll need to find parking.

Do not leave early, (including starting to pack up your notes and books, before 5:15 pm).

Exceptions: if you let me know before class that you will need to leave, or you have a genuine emergency.

Do not talk to other students in class unless I ask you to. If someone else talks too much, please let me know.

Do not eat or chew gum in class. Safely sealed drinks (e.g. coffee cups with lids or water bottles) are OK to bring.

Do not wear hats, caps, or sunglasses in class. I need to see your eyes to know if you're paying attention.

Turn off mobile phones when in class. Nobody else wants to hear your phone. If your phone rings, I will answer it and you will probably be embarrassed. If it keeps happening, I will ask you to drop the course. Exceptions: if you must remain available for a child, elderly relative, or other dependent, please let me know by email that this is your situation, and get a phone with a silent vibrating call alert.

Do not come to class if you are too tired, ill, injured, depressed, hung over, stoned, upset by American global imperialism, etc. to pay attention and to participate actively in the discussions and exercises. Get your rest and stay healthy. I expect everyone who shows up to class to be able to participate fully in the class.

Also, come to class well-fed with a decent lunch that will not make you suffer a hypoglycemic blood sugar crash half-way through class. Your brain won't work without a good, steady supply of protein and complex carbohydrates.

If you are a parent: If you need to bring a baby or young child to class occasionally, please see me as soon as possible. I try to run a family-friendly class, and will make every effort to accommodate you, but we must also reach agreement about what to do if the child disrupt the class too much.

If you have a disability, or are on a UNM sports team that requires missing some classes: I will make every effort to accommodate your needs. Please see me in office hours or send an email explaining your situation.

If you are offended or upset by any of the course content, please talk to me in my office hours, call, or email me. This course includes detailed lectures and readings

about emotionally charged topics such as sex, infidelity, rape, jealousy, violence, warfare, family conflict, and mental illness. The suggested videos to watch are mostly rated R, because most good adult dramas that portray evolutionarily relevant behaviors include some sex, violence, and strong language. This course may be personally challenging if you have a strong literal belief in the creation stories of the Old Testament, the Koran, the Hindu Rig-Veda and Upanishads, the Native American cultures, or other traditions. Alternatively, this course may be challenging if you have strong post-modernist, secular beliefs about the role of culture, ideology, or gender roles in shaping human behavior. I am happy to discuss in a mutually respectful way any of your concerns about these topics, and I will seek workable solutions that try to reconcile your right to religious and political freedom of belief, my right to academic freedom in teaching, and the university's need to maintain intellectual standards in teaching and grading.

## **6. Class attendance**

Class attendance will be assessed by **10 attendance quizzes**, which will add up to 10% of your course grade. They will be given on 10 random days throughout the semester, towards the end of the lecture on each day. You will simply write your NAME and your STUDENT ID NUMBER on a multiple-choice quiz sheet or a sign-up sheet. The purpose of this is to deter students from just showing up at the beginning of class for each quiz, and then leaving afterwards and missing the lectures.

## **7. Quizzes**

Exams suck. They cause great anxiety. They do not help students to stay on top of the readings and the lecture material. They encourage rote memorization and last-minute cramming. This course has no exams. No midterm; no final. Instead, it has a lot of little quizzes that will add up to determine most of your grade.

At the beginning of every class, there will be a short, 8-minute quiz that includes 8 multiple-choice questions. They begin with the second class on Thursday, August 28. By the end of the semester, you will have taken about 30 of these, and performance on these will determine 60% of your final grade.

Thus, each quiz is worth only about 2% of your course grade. Do not panic if you miss a few. The quizzes will be added together at the end of the semester and there will be a grading curve such that even if you miss a few quizzes, you will be able to get a very good grade in the course.

### **Details about the quizzes:**

The multiple-choice quizzes will be computer-graded. For each quiz, you will receive two pieces of paper: one question sheet with the day's quiz questions, and one answer sheet for marking your name, your ID number, and your answers. You can write on the question sheet if that helps you to figure out the right answers, but the question sheets will not be collected; you should keep them.

On the answer sheet for each day's quiz, you MUST fill in the circles to identify your NAME and your STUDENT ID NUMBER. If you do not fill both of these in, you will not get any credit for the quiz because we will not know whose answer sheet we are grading. You must mark your answers (as A, B, C, D, or E) in the first 8 answer rows on the form. If you mark your answers in the wrong rows, the marking computer will not be able to read them properly, and this will harm your quiz grade.

Please bring a number 2 pencil to every class in order to mark your quiz answers on the answer sheet. We will bring a few extra pencils to each class, but not enough for everyone.

Quizzes will be graded on a 0 to 10 scale. You will get a minimum of 2 points just for showing up and taking the quiz, even if you get all of the answers wrong. If you show up late for class, you will not be able to take that day's quiz. This should encourage prompt, regular attendance.

The questions within each quiz will range in difficulty from very easy to very hard. Most of the questions should be very easy if you have read the textbook assignment for that class and attended the previous class. There may be a couple of questions that require a bit of thought, and which I do not expect most students to get right. If you consistently get 7 or 8 out of 10 on the quizzes, you are doing very well, and would probably get at least a B in the course.

The quizzes will be machine-graded by CIRT using my master answer key. They should be able to do this fairly quickly, so you will be able to look up your grade on the WebCT system within a few days of each quiz. I will also reveal the correct answers immediately after each quiz so you get immediate feedback.

No particular quiz matters very much. You can miss a few and still get an A. But if you miss most of them or do badly on them, your grade will be poor. Final grades will be determined by a fairly generous grading curve, and in the past, most students have received a higher final grade than they expected based on the percentage correct that achieved on their quizzes.

Each quiz will cover two kinds of material: the textbook reading assigned for that class (i.e. to be read before that class), and the lecture in the previous class. If you regularly read and understand the textbook assignments, and pay attention in class, you will do well on the quizzes.

Quizzes will be open-book. You can refer to the textbook or to your notes if you want. However, since you will only one minute to answer each question, you will probably not be able to find the right answers if you have not read the textbook assignments ahead of class, and if you did not attend the previous class. The open-book policy is to minimize rote memorization and maximize your ability to apply ideas from the course to real-life and hypothetical situations. Most real jobs are also "open-book" – but you'll need to know where to look to quickly find the information you need, whether you go into medicine, law, business, research, or whatever.

You may not talk with other students during the quiz, and you may not copy their answers. No peeking, no cheating. Violations will be subject to the normal university procedures and penalties.

### **Why quizzes?**

- (1) You'll know how well you're doing in the class all the way through the

semester. There won't be the usual uncertainty and anxiety about that. Instead, you'll be getting good feedback about whether you're understanding the textbook and the lectures, so you can modify your study style if you are not happy with your grades.

(2) Quizzes will encourage regular, prompt attendance, so you actually get the benefits out of being at a real university with real students and a real live professor – rather than just reading the textbook by yourself at home, or watching psychology videos.

(3) Although the quizzes are multiple-choice, some of the questions will require critical thinking, imagination, and a good understanding of how to apply the course content to new situations. Multiple choice does not mean mindless.

(4) Mid-term and Final Exams give unfair advantages to students who cope better with high-stress situations. Quizzes are fairer, and more accurately reflect knowledge rather than just stress-coping ability.

(5) Taking lots of little quizzes rather than two big exams provides a more accurate, reliable assessment of how well you really know the material. With two big exams, if you happen to have a bad argument with your boyfriend or girlfriend the night before the midterm, and happened to get a cold during final exam week, you might perform poorly on both – not because of poor preparation, but because of how bad you feel. With lots of quizzes, you might feel rotten for a few of them, but all the other students will too on some of them, so it all evens out more fairly.

## **8. Video analysis reports**

I want you to be able to apply ideas from the course to understand how our evolved psychological adaptations function in real life. But how can I assess this? We don't share the same experiences, so I can't see whether you really understand your life in a deeper way from learning evolutionary psychology. Well, in modern society, one way we can share the same experience is by watching the same videos. This gives us some common reference points – common characters, behaviors, and relationships – that you can write about in the light of what you have learned about evolutionary psychology. You've probably watched a total of about 15,000 hours of television before coming to UNM, so I expect your 'video literacy' should be well developed, and your ability to interpret and to critically analyze what you watch should be well-honed.

Video analysis reports are short, concise, thoughtful reactions to videos that I will suggest as relevant to particular parts of the course, and that you will rent somewhere and watch at home, or wherever you have access to a VCR or DVD machine and a television.

Each report will be a maximum of ONE PAGE, with no more than 600 words on that page. They must be printed out from a computer on standard white 8½ by 11 inch paper. You must print them out single-spaced in 11 point font in font type "Arial" (which I prefer) or "Times New Roman", with one-inch margins at top, bottom, and

sides. Do not use smaller font, weird font, or any print color other than black. If you don't print your reports single-spaced, you won't be able to fit your 600 words on one page, and I will only read one page.

At the top of the paper you must put the following information exactly as it is shown below:

Evolutionary psychology theme(s) X(Y, Z, etc) in:

The title of the video you are analyzing:

By your name, your student number, your email address, your phone number

For example,

Women's long-term mate choice in:

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

By Eric Cartman, 341-44-9999, southpark@unm.edu, 976-6969

**You will turn in three (3) video analysis reports for this course:**

**the first on Tuesday Sept 30, related to lectures 1-10 and their readings**

**the second on Tuesday Nov 4, related to lectures 11-19 and their readings**

**the third on Thursday Dec 11, related to lectures 20-28 and their readings**

Each report will be graded on a scale of 0 to 10. You will get a minimum of two points if you turn in a report in the required format, on time, that demonstrates to my satisfaction that you watched the video attentively. You will get more points if you show that you can interpret characters, behaviors, and relationships from the video in the light of new things you have learned in this class. I will give 10 full points very rarely, if you turn in an exceptionally interesting, creative, thoughtful, and knowledgeable report. If you consistently get 7 or 8 points on the video reports, you are doing very well.

**What is a video analysis report?**

It is NOT a summary of the plot, or a review of the movie, or a record of your emotional reactions to the movie, or a report on random associations that were inspired by the movie.

It is a way for you to show me how you can apply ideas and insights from class to understand human nature in new and deeper ways. Movies include lots of characters, behaviors, and relationships. Do not write about all of them. Choose just one or two as your focus. Talk about how an evolutionary psychologist would interpret the character's thoughts, feelings, actions, strategies, interests, and relationships. Use the ideas, terms, and theories from the textbook and lectures – not just to show that you know what they mean, but to show how they can help you understand real human life (or at least, life as depicted in videos).

When referring to characters in your report, please use the proper character name (e.g. "William Shakespeare"), not the actor's name (e.g. "Joseph Fiennes") or some

descriptive shorthand (e.g. “Elizabethan stud-muffin genius”). To look up the proper character names, freeze-frame at the end credits and write down the names, or go to amazon.com’s web page for the film and look under “Cast list”, or go to the film’s own web site. I recommend using [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) to search the net efficiently.

In these reports I expect you to show a university-level mastery of English writing, including not just good grammar, spelling, and composition, but the ability to grab me with your first sentence, to fascinate me by the end of your first paragraph, to get to your main point quickly and clearly, and to support it with well-reasoned arguments and insights.

Do NOT turn in a first draft – something you dashed off the night before it was due. I want a polished report that has been developed and improved over at least a week. I expect you to have done a good outline, a first draft, a revision of your first draft (perhaps with the help of a class-mate or friend), a thorough proof-reading for grammar, spelling, and clarity, and a letter-perfect final version. This is not too much to ask for a one-page report.

In the real-life jobs you get after graduation, you will probably have to do lots of things similar to writing reports like this – presenting concise, to-the-point analyses of situations in the light of your expert knowledge. This may be a much more useful skill to learn than the sorts of literary criticism essays you may be used to writing in English Composition courses.

For each report, you will be able to pick from a list of six high-quality, well-acted films that are widely available in video rental stores. They are mostly recent films, but there are a few older classics. For each report, I will try to include a range of films that appeal to the range of students in this course, including both sexes, different personality types, and different interests. However, because the best films for illustrating evolutionary psychology content are often serious adult dramas with some sex, violence, and/or strong language, and because most serious adult dramas are rated “R”, many of the films are rated “R”. I hope that’s OK with you.

All of the videos listed below should be widely available on both VHS and DVD, including from local video rental stores Blockbusters and Hollywood Video (at the south-west and south-east corners respectively of Central & Girard). They are also available through online rental services such as Netflix (c. \$20/month for all the videos/DVDs you want, max 3 out at a time, via mail – [www.netflix.com](http://www.netflix.com)).

**For Video Report 1 (due Tuesday Sept 30) write on one of these six film choices:**

**Quest for Fire** (1981). Prehistoric adventure. Starring Everett McGill (as Naoh), Ron Perlman (Amoukar), Nameer El-Kadi (Gaw), and Rae Dawn Chong (Ika). Directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. Rated R.

- Angels and Insects** (1996). Victorian natural history romance/drama. Starring Mark Rylance (as William Adamson), Kristin Scott Thomas (Matty Crompton), Patsy Kensit (Eugenia Alabaster), Jeremy Kemp (Sir Harald Alabaster). Directed by Philip Haas. Rated R.
- The Fast Runner** (Atanarjuat) (2001). Eskimo romance/action. Starring Natar Ungalaaq (as Atanarjuat), Sylvia Ivalu (Atuat), Peter-Jenry Arnatsiaq (Oki), Lucy Tulugarjuk (Puja). Directed by Zacharias Kunuk. Rated R.
- The Edge** (1997). Alaskan adventure/thriller: man vs. bear. Starring Anthony Hopkins (as Charles Morse), Alec Baldwin (Robert Green), Elle Macpherson (Mickey Morse). Directed by Lee Tamahori. Rated R.
- Notting Hill** (1999). Modern London romance. Starring Julia Roberts (as Anna Scott), Hugh Grant (William Thacker), Rhys Ifans (Spike). Directed by Roger Michell. Rated PG-13.
- Shakespeare in Love** (1998). Elizabethan London romance. Starring Gwyneth Paltrow (as Viola De Lesseps), Joseph Fiennes (William Shakespeare), Geoffrey Rush (Philip Henslowe). Directed by John Madden. Rated R.

**For Video Report 2 (due Tuesday Nov 4), the film choices are:**

- American Beauty** (1999). Modern American family drama. Starring Kevin Spacey (as Lester Burnham), Annette Bening (Carolyn Burnham), Thora Birch (Jane Burnham), Wes Bentley (Ricky Fitts). Directed by Sam Mendes. Rated R.
- The Ice Storm** (1997). American family drama set in 1970s. Starring Kevin Kline (as Ben Hood), Joan Allen (Elena Hood), Sigourney Weaver (Janey Carver), Elijah Wood (Mikey Carver), Tobey Maguire (Paul 'Charles' Hood). Directed by Ang Lee. Rated R.
- Magnolia** (2000). Modern Los Angeles family drama. Starring Tom Cruise (as Frank T. J. Mackey), William H. Macy (Quiz Kid Donnie Smith), Philip Seymour Hoffman (Phil Parma), Jason Robards (Earl Partridge), Julianna Moore (Linda Partridge), John C. Reilly (Jim Kurring). Directed by Paul Thomas Anderson. Rated R.
- Erin Brockovich** (2000). Legal drama: single mother versus pollution. Starring Julia Roberts (as Erin Brockovich), Albert Finney (Ed Masry). Directed by Steven Sonderbergh. Rated R.
- The Insider** (1999). Corporate/media drama: scientist versus Big Tobacco. Starring Russell Crowe (as Dr. Jeffrey Wigand), Al Pacino (Lowell Bergman), Christopher Plummer (Mike Wallace). Directed by Michael Mann. Rated R.
- Boiler Room** (2000). Corporate drama about selling . Starring Vin Diesel (as Chris Varick), Giovanni Ribisi (Seth Davis), Ron Rifkin (Judge Marty Davis). Directed by Ben Younger. Rated R.

**For Video Report 3 (due Thursday Dec 11), the film choices are:**

- Braveheart** (1995). Medieval Scottish warfare drama. Starring Mel Gibson (as William Wallace), Catherine McCormack (Murron), Sophie Marceau (Princess Isabelle), Directed by Mel Gibson. Rated R.
- American History X** (1998). Modern family drama about racism in California. Starring Edward Norton (as Derek Vinyard), Edward Furlong (Danny Vinyard), Bevely D'Angelo (Doris Vinyard). Directed by Tony Kaye. Rated R.
- Death and the Maiden** (1994). Intense sexual/political drama set in South America. Starring Sigourney Weaver (as Paulina Escobar), Ben Kingsley (Dr. Roberto Miranda). Directed by Roman Polanski. Rated R.
- House of Games** (1987). Con artist vs. psychologist romantic drama. Starring Lindsay Crouse (as Margaret Ford), Joe Mantegna (Mike). Directed by David Mamet. Rated R.
- Pollock** (2000). Biographic drama of manic-depressive painter Jackson Pollock. Starring Ed Harris (as Jackson Pollock), Marcia Gay Harden (Lee Krasner). Directed by Ed Harris. Rated R.
- Frida** (2002). Biographical drama of injured painter Frida Kahlo. Starring Salma Hayek (as Frida Kahlo), Alfred Molina (Diego Rivera), Geoffrey Rush (Leon Trotsky). Directed by Julie Taymor. Rated R.

**Optional recommended videos that contain strong evolutionary psychology themes – listed here for your enjoyment – not required for this course.**

- About a Boy** (2002). Stars Hugh Grant, Rachel Weisz, Toni Collette. Dir: Paul Weitz. PG-13.
- The Accused** (1988). Stars Jodie Foster, Kelly McGillis. Dir: Jonathan Kaplan. R.
- Alien** (1979). Stars Sigourney Weaver, John Hurt, Ian Holm. Dir: Ridley Scott. R.
- The American President** (1995). Stars Michael Douglas, Annette Bening. Dir: Rob Reiner. PG-13.
- Babette's Feast** (1988). Stars Stephane Audran, Birgitte Federspiel. Dir: Gabriel Axel. G.
- La Belle Noiseuse** (1991). Stars Emmanuelle Beart, Michel Piccoli. Dir: Jacques Rivette. R.
- Black Robe** (1991). Stars Lothaire Bluteau, Sandrine Holt. Dir: Bruce Beresford. R.
- Cast Away** (2000). Stars Tom Hanks, Helen Hunt. Dir: Robert Zemeckis. PG-13.
- City of God** (2003). Stars Alexandre Rodrigues, Leandro Firmino da Hora. Dir: Katia Lund. R.
- Courage under Fire** (1996). Stars Denzel Washington, Meg Ryan. Dir: Edward Zwick. R.
- Dances with Wolves**. (1990). Stars Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell. Dir: Kevin Costner. PG-13.
- Dangerous Liaisons** (1989). Stars Glenn Close, John Malkovich, Michelle Pfeiffer, Keanu Reeves, Uma Thurman. Dir: Stephen Frears. R.
- The Deep End** (2001). Stars Tolda Swinton, Goran Vignjic. Dir: David Siegel. R.
- Dolores Claiborne** (1995). Stars Kathy Bates, Jennifer Jason Leigh. Dir: Taylor

Hackford. R.

**Endurance – Shackleton’s Legendary Antarctic Expedition** (2000). Narrated by Liam Neeson. Dir: George Butler. G.

**Fight Club** (1999). Stars Edward Norton, Brad Pitt. Dir: David Fincher. R.

**Glory** (1989). Stars Denzel Washington, Matthew Broderick. Dir: Edward Zwick. R.

**The Godfather** (1972). Stars Marlon Brando, Al Pacino, Robert Duvall. Dir: Francis Ford Coppola. R.

**Gorillas in the Mist** (1988). Stars Sigourney Weaver (as Diane Fossey).

**Groundhog Day** (1993). Stars Bill Murray, Andie MacDowell. Dir: Harold Ramis. PG.

**Koyaanisqatsi** (1982). Dir: Godfrey Reggio. Not Rated.

**Lantana** (2001). Stars Anthony LaPaglia, Barbara Hershey. Dir: Ray Lawrence. R.

**The Last of the Mohicans** (1992). Stars Daniel Day-Lewis, Madeleine Stowe. Dir: Michael Mann. R.

**Monster’s Ball** (2002). Stars Billy Bob Thornton, Halle Berry. Dir: Marc Forster. R.

**Much Ado about Nothing** (1993). Stars Kenneth Branagh, Emma Thompson, Keanu Reeves. Dir: Kenneth Branagh. PG-13.

**My Best Friend’s Wedding** (1997). Stars Julia Roberts, Cameron Diaz. Dir: P.J. Hogan. PG-13.

**Parenthood** (1899). Stars Steve Martin, Jason Robards. Dir: Ron Howard. PG-13.

**Planet of the Apes** (2001). Stars Mark Wahlberg, Helena Bonham Carter.

**Platoon** (1986). Stars Tom Berenger, Willem Dafoe. Dir: Oliver Stone. R.

**Predator** (1987). Stars Arnold Schwarzenegger. Dir: John McTiernan. R.

**Saving Private Ryan** (1999). Stars Tom Hanks, Tom Sizemore, Matt Damon, Giovanni Ribisi, Vin Diesel. Dir: Steven Spielberg. R.

**Sense and Sensibility** (1995). Stars Emma Thompson, Kate Winslet. Dir: Ang Lee. PG.

**A Simple Plan** (1998). Stars Bill Paxton, Billy Bob Thornton. Dir: Sam Raimi. R.

**Sophie’s Choice** (1982). Stars Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline. Dir: Alan J. Pakula. R.

**White Oleander** (2002). Stars Alison Lohman, Michelle Pfeiffer. Dir: Peter Kosminsky. PG-13.

**Ulee’s Gold** (1997). Stars Peter Fonda, Patricia Richardson. Dir: Victor Nunez. R.

**On the following page is an example of a pretty good video analysis report that should give you some idea what I am looking for.** (Example video analysis report)

**Male strategies for displaying fitness, status, and sensitivity in:**

Pretty Woman (starring Julia Roberts as Vivian and Richard Gere as Edward)

By Geoffrey Miller, (student ID number), gfmiller@unm.edu, 277-1967

In *Pretty Woman*, business tycoon Edward Lewis shows that in sexual courtship, people must use a wide range of both conventional and innovative self-presentation strategies to display their fitness indicators to best advantage. Edward’s main challenge is to combine his conventional, well-polished displays of competence and status with new tactics for appearing romantically likable. To demonstrate his status, it was sufficient for Edward to maintain the standard businessman image: dressing in Armani suits, being driven around in a white limo, and sponsoring charity polo games. He embodies all the status-projection strategies mentioned in class: displaying status artifacts (the Lotus Elise, the penthouse suite at the Regent Beverly Wilshire Hotel, the constant cell-phone calls, the business entourage), conspicuous consumption (buying

Vivian elegant clothes, loaning her the \$250,000 necklace, flying her to San Francisco on a private jet for an evening), basking in the reflected glory of being friends with a U.S. Senator, and demonstrating supreme confidence in his body language and facial expressions. Likewise, to demonstrate his physical courage and dominance, it was enough to face down Hollywood drug dealer Carlos and his thugs.

However, to become more likable, to demonstrate his kindness and sensitivity to Vivian as a potential good provider and good parent, Edward had to become much more innovative in his self-presentation, treading the fine line between overly obvious sensitivity-displays (which would have been hard to accept) and overly subtle signals (which might have gone unnoticed). For example, to overcome Vivian's suspicion that he was a heartless profit-seeker, Edward had to stage a performance of his musical sensitivity – a late-night session of soulful piano-playing in the hotel lounge – hoping that Vivian would wander down and appreciate his virtuosity. Likewise, he has to convert an ostensibly status-oriented event – enjoying opening night at the opera from a private box – into a credible demonstration of his own musical romanticism, and of his sensitive mentorship of Vivian's emerging taste for the good life.

Edward also had to combine his usual competence-displays with a new set of vulnerability-displays, including projecting modesty by admitting his incompetence with the Lotus Elise's manual transmission, revealing troubled family dynamics by admitting his hatred of his recently deceased father, and emphasizing that both he and Vivian make their livings by “fucking people for money”. This psychological loosening-up is symbolized by Edward shedding his formal suits in favor of relaxed leisure wear for horse-riding and barefoot picnics.

Ultimately, to win Vivian's heart, Edward must reject three major aspects of his previous life and learn to play new social roles with courage and panache. First, he must reject his persona as a business vulture who buys and breaks up companies with no compassion for their founders or workers, by keeping intact the company founded by aging ship-building magnate James Morse. Second, he must reject the associated habits and social relationships of that business-robot persona, overcoming Vivian's fears about his workaholicism by taking an unprecedented day off work, and her fears about the company he keeps by punching and firing his long-time lawyer friend Philip Stuckey after Stuckey tries to rape Vivian. Third, he must reject his self-image as a man “hopeless at relationships” – after a failed marriage and a recent break-up with his New York girlfriend – through making a grand romantic gesture for Vivian: climbing her fire escape despite his fear of heights, to deliver a bouquet of roses symbolic of his willingness to marry her. *Pretty Woman* offers hope that, like Edward, we can break free of our loneliness by breaking free of our habitual status-signalling strategies.

### **Suggestions for writing the video analysis reports**

In the two previous undergraduate lecture courses in which I have assigned video analysis reports, the most common content problems were:

- Too much plot summary. Just mention characters, scenes, or plot developments briefly – specifically enough that we know which one you mean, but not in so much detail that you spend many sentences summarizing what happened.
- Not enough reference to specific psychology ideas from text and lectures – many

students started out with a good title and thesis statement, but then lost their focus halfway through the report, drifting off into plot summary or character evaluation.

- Inappropriate or ‘throwaway’ use of psychology terms without making it clear how they’re relevant to the film or whether you really know what they mean. Don’t define the terms, but do use them properly in context. Then support your claims with specific details from the film.
- Not enough supporting details from the film to justify your claim that a particular social psych idea is relevant to some character, scene, or plot theme.
- Not enough specific behaviors by specific characters being mentioned to justify your generalizations. Note: in my one-page example analysis of Pretty Woman (see above), I included at least 25 specific examples of self-display tactics by the “Edward Lewis” character; many students included only 2 or 3 specific details from their films.
- Too much focus on the main character’s situation or motivations, without connecting that character analysis to your psychology points and themes – e.g. whole paragraphs discussing Shakespeare’s writer’s block in Shakespeare in Love, or Eugenia Alabaster’s incestuous yearnings in Angels and Insects. Only discuss these if you illuminate them with specific evolutionary psychology and specific behaviors.

The most common writing problems were:

- Title and thesis statement were too vague to keep your essay well-focused throughout
- Poor organization of ideas, without a clear, logical progression from one paragraph to the next.
- Misspelling character names, mis-identifying characters, or failing to mention specific characters when they would be useful examples of some social psych point you’re making.
- Need to vary sentence length and structure more. Use a variety of sentence types to keep things interesting. You should have some 3 to 5 word sentences for emphasis, and maybe some that are much longer when you are conveying a complex idea.
- Too many run-on sentences that could be chopped up into shorter, stronger pieces.
- Failure to proof-read carefully, to check spelling, grammar, sentence structure.

## **9. How to ace this course**

It should be easy to get a terrific grade in this class, if you do the work on time and think about what you are learning. If you read the textbook assignments and listen to the lectures, you will probably do very well on the quizzes. If you watch the videos attentively and polish your rough drafts into good final versions, you will probably do very well on the video analysis reports. If you attend class regularly, you will get a good class attendance grade. I love giving A's to students who learn a lot and who think about their lives and relationships in new ways by learning evolutionary psychology.

On the other hand, if you treat this course as a soft option, you will do badly. If you skip lectures, fail to do your assigned readings, and do last-minute video reports, you will get a disappointing grade. I am not at all afraid to give a C, D, or F to someone who deserves one. Nor can I be talked out of giving the appropriate grade by a last-minute appearance in my office hours.

You will get a lot of feedback in this course: about 30 quiz grades, 3 video report grades, and 10 attendance grades. These will all be available on WebCT. If you find that you are coming to class and doing the work, but are not doing as well on these as you would wish, please see the instructor or the TA to discuss how you can do better. We will be glad to help.

Here are some key things to do, in order to excel in this course:

Get a three-ring binder and keep everything related to the course in it, including this syllabus, any course handouts, all of your graded quizzes and video analysis reports, and your own notes on the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises.

Read the readings on time, when you're awake, lucid, and attentive. Read them before the class when they'll be discussed. Take notes on them. Digest them. Be ready to ask some reasonable questions about the readings in class.

Participate actively in class discussions. Be engaged. Have fun. Connect the readings to your own life-experience.

Give yourself at least a week to do each video analysis report after watching the video.

Don't leave them to the last minute. Watching the video twice, with a couple of days in between viewings, can be very useful in picking up nuances of character and behavior. 5-day video rentals make this easy.

Come to my office hours and to the T.A.'s office hours. Ask me questions. Get my feedback. Show me you care!

Note: University can be stressful. It is very common for students (and faculty!) to experience anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems. If you have such problems that are interfering with your studies or your life, please do not hesitate to seek help from any of the following resources:

AGORA – the UNM Crisis Center (open 24 hours): 277-3013

Student Health Center (including Counseling and Therapy Services): 277-3136

Psychiatric Emergency Services (open 24 hours): 272-2920 or 247-1121

UNM Psychiatric Consultants: 272-4763

UNM Family Practice Center, Psychiatry Department: 272-2223

## **10. Key Dates and Course Schedule**

**Fall Semester key dates:**

Classes begin: August 25, Monday  
Labor day holiday Sept 1, Monday  
Registration ends: Sept 5, Friday  
Last day to change grading options: Sept 19, Friday  
Last day to drop course w/o grade: Oct 3, Friday  
Fall Break holiday: Oct 16-17, Thursday, Friday  
Last day to withdraw from course: Nov 14, Friday  
Thanksgiving holiday: Nov 27-28, Thursday, Friday  
Last day of classes: Dec 12, Friday  
Final exams: Dec 15-19, Monday - Friday

**Course schedule: List of assignments, readings, and topics for each class**

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No assignments before the first class

1: Aug 26 Tuesday **Introduction to the course**

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For the second day of class (Aug 28):

Read this syllabus carefully

Buy textbook package from UNM bookstore

Get your UNM Net ID if you don't already have one by Sept 4

Read Buss Chapter 1, 1-35 (35 pp)

Prepare for the first quiz at the beginning of this class,  
which will cover the information in this syllabus, and the  
Buss Chapter 1 reading

2: Aug 28 Thursday **History of Evolutionary Psychology**

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For the third day of class (Sept 2):

Read Buss Chapter 2, 36-68 (33 pp)

Prepare for the second quiz; remember that from now on,  
there will be a quiz in every class

3: Sept 2 Tuesday **Methods of Evolutionary Psychology**

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Read Miller Chapter 1, 1-32 (32 pp)

Deadline for getting UNM Net ID (for WebCT and email)

4: Sept 4 Thursday **Explaining Brain Evolution**

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Read Buss Chapter 3, 70-87 (18 pp)

5: Sept 9 Tuesday **Food: A basic survival challenge**

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6: Sept 11 Thursday Read Buss Chapter 3, 87-102 (16 pp)  
**Landscapes, Fears, & Death: Other survival challenges**

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7: Sept 16 Tuesday Read Miller Chapter 6, 177-194 (18 pp)  
**Pleistocene Mating I**

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8: Sept 18 Thursday: Read Miller Chapter 6, 194-223 (30 pp)  
**Pleistocene Mating II**

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9: Sept 23 Tuesday Read Buss Chapter 4, 104-134 (30 pp)  
**Women's Long-term Mate Choice**

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10: Sept 25 Thursday Read Buss Chapter 5, 135-162 (28 pp)  
Be working hard on your first video analysis report  
**Men's Long-Term Mate Choice**

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11: Sept 30 Tuesday Read Buss Chapter 6, 163-186 (24 pp)  
First video analysis report due  
**Short-Term Mate Choice**

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12: Oct 2 Thursday Read Miller Chapter 4, 99-122 (23 pp)  
**Mate Choice for Fitness Indicators I**

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13: Oct 7 Tuesday Read Miller Chapter 4, 122-137 (15 pp)  
**Mate Choice for Fitness Indicators II**

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14: Oct 9 Thursday Read Buss Chapter 7, 188-202 (15 pp)  
**Parenting I**

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15: Oct 14 Tuesday Read Buss Chapter 7, 202-219 (17 pp)  
**Parenting II**

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(no classes October 16 ot 17: fall break)

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Read Buss Chapter 8, 220-250 (30 pp)  
16: Oct 21 Tuesday **Kinship**

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Read Buss Chapter 9, 252-279 (27 pp)  
17: Oct 23 Thursday **Cooperation in Groups**

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Read Miller Chapter 9, 292-318 (27 pp)  
18: Oct 28 Tuesday **Morals and Virtues I**

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Read Miller Chapter 9, 318-340 (23 pp)  
Be working hard on your second video analysis report  
19: Oct 30 Thursday **Morals and Virtues II**

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Read Miller Chapter 10, 341-366 (26 pp)  
Second video analysis report due  
20: Nov 4 Tuesday **Language I**

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Read Miller Chapter 10, 366-391 (25 pp)  
21: Nov 6 Thursday **Language II**

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Read Buss Chapter 10, 280-297 (18 pp)  
22: Nov 11 Tuesday **Aggression I**

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Read Buss Chapter 10, 297-310 (14 pp)  
23: Nov 13 Thursday **Aggression II**

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Read Buss Chapter 11, 311-343 (33 pp)  
24: Nov 18 Tuesday **Sexual Conflict**

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Read Buss Chapter 12, 344-359 (15 pp)  
25: Nov 20 Thursday **Status I**

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Read Buss Chapter 12, 359-379 (20 pp)

26: Nov 25 Tuesday **Status II**

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(no classes November 27 or 28: Thanksgiving holiday)

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27: Dec 2 Tuesday **Art and Darwinian Aesthetics**  
Read Miller Chapter 8, 258-291 (33 pp)

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28: Dec 4 Thursday **Creativity and Ideology**  
Read Miller Chapter 11, 392-425 (34 pp)

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29: Dec 9 Tuesday **Evolution and Psychology I**  
Read Buss Chapter 13, 373-394 (22 pp)  
Be working hard on your third video analysis report

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30: Dec 11 Thursday **Evolution and Psychology II**  
Read Buss Chapter 13, 394-412 (17 pp)  
**Third video analysis report due**

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(Final exams Dec 15-19: No final exam in this course)