

Evolutionary and Biological Anthropology

ANTH 6605.090 – Fall 2017

Time: W 5:00-7:45pm

Location: Fretwell 419



Instructor: Dr. Lydia E. O. Light

Office: Hickory 45B

Email: llight1@uncc.edu

Office Hours: MTWR 9:30-10:30 am

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MY OFFICE HOURS: My office is located on the 4th floor of Hickory building while Barnard is under renovation. Unfortunately, this level is only accessible by stairs. If you have a mobility issue, or develop a medical condition that affects your mobility, please indicate this when requesting an appointment, and I will determine an alternate location for our meeting.

If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact me directly.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to several theories and topical areas found within evolutionary and biological anthropology. Students will learn about evolutionary theory, the place of biological anthropology in academia, primatology, paleoanthropology, the origins of modern human populations, genetics, human health and disease, reproduction, modern human biology, and forensic anthropology. One major goal of the course will be to develop critical thinking skills for academic inquiry at the graduate level. The course will also develop independent research skills, requiring students to find peer-reviewed articles addressing thought-provoking questions related to that week's topic.



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***This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

All students are expected to **take responsibility for their learning** in this course. This includes attending seminar, leading seminar when assigned, completing assigned readings, participating in class discussions, turning in all assignments on time and keeping up to date on Canvas. Therefore, class attendance is crucial for successful completion of the course. All students are encouraged to visit me during my office hours for assistance. All changes in course content and schedule will be announced as far in advance as is feasible.

READINGS

There is only one assigned text for this course (*On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin). However, that does not mean that you are not required to read for the course. Instead, **students are required to find peer-reviewed articles/chapters that are appropriate for answering the assigned questions that week beginning in week 3.** We will compile a list of all readings used by all participants throughout the semester using EndNote or Zotero.

WEEKLY RESPONSES

Each week, all students except the discussion leader must turn in a short, ~250 word response to each of the three discussion questions. All answers must be posted in the Discussion Board on Canvas by NOON on the DAY BEFORE seminar (Tuesday). Students will be allowed to skip one week's responses without penalty. Otherwise, late essays will be penalized 20% per each 24-hour period.

Weekly responses will comprise 25% of your final grade. Weekly responses will be graded on relevance and depth of argument, appropriateness of references, and writing style. All papers should be written in a formal, academic style. See Canvas for further details.

DISCUSSION LEADING (25%)

Each week, one student will be responsible for one of the three provided topics. Students will rotate throughout the semester to ensure equal responsibility. Topics will be chosen during the first seminar meeting.

PARTICIPATION (20%)

In-class discussion will form a substantial portion of this course. Students will be evaluated on both their attendance (50%) and their contribution to class discussion (50%). Contributions to class discussion will be measured during each class period by frequency, relevance, and depth.

Note: Seminar courses are most productive and rewarding when everybody comes prepared and everybody participates. During class, please monitor your contributions so that everyone has the opportunity to participate. For example, consider constructing your contributions in class as responses to your peers' weekly thought papers or follow-up questions to your peers' class comments. In this way, you will be significantly contributing to an ongoing, constructive dialogue about course materials.

FINAL PAPER (20%)

Each student will write an end-of-semester paper (20-30 pages) that deals in-depth with one topic related to evolutionary or biological anthropology. A topic statement and preliminary list of

references (at least five peer-reviewed articles) must be turned in to Dr. Light by **noon on October 18th**. Final papers are due in canvas by Wednesday, **December 13th, 5 PM**.

PAPER PRESENTATION (10%)

On the day of the final exam, each student will summarize his/her paper's argument in a 20-minute presentation. The presentation will be graded for delivery and content.

GRADING

Assessment	Percent of final grade
Weekly Responses	25%
Discussion Leading	25%
Participation	20%
Final Paper	20%
Final Presentation	10%
Total	100%

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

This syllabus contains the policies and expectations I have established for the graduate seminar in Evolutionary and Biological Anthropology. Please read the entire syllabus carefully before continuing in this course. These policies and expectations are intended to create a productive learning atmosphere for all students. Unless you are prepared to abide by these policies and expectations, you risk losing the opportunity to participate further in the course.

My classroom is a place where open-minded, independent thinking is encouraged. To facilitate this environment, all students are expected to act with respect and maturity towards their fellow students, the instructor, and any visiting speakers. I hold the following expectations for my students:

- 1) All cell phones (smart or dumb) and other personal electronics must be kept out of sight. If you are using a laptop, I ask that you use it **only for taking notes or completing in-class activities**. If you have extenuating circumstances, please contact me.
- 2) To reduce in-class distractions, please **remain seated during seminar**. Due to the length of the class meetings, we will take a fifteen minute break every class. If you know you need to leave prior to the end of class, please speak to me before class begins.
- 3) Please save your personal discussions for after class and avoid interrupting classmates.
- 4) Arrive **on-time** for class. While it is reasonable to be late occasionally, habitual tardiness is not acceptable. If you have extenuating circumstances, please contact me.
- 5) Some of the material covered in class may be perceived as controversial. Please remain respectful of your classmates (and instructor) during discussions of such nature. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, you will not be permitted to participate further and may subsequently lose opportunities for course credit.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

While I recognize that adjusting to graduate-level academics can be challenging, I do not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty in my class. I will not tolerate any attempts to manipulate grading opportunities or misappropriate credit for work done and will penalize any student violating the university policies on scholastic dishonesty. I reserve the right to ask students to demonstrate that graded assignments completed outside of class are their own work. If work is found to be anything other than the original work of the student, I reserve the right to assign no credit for a portion of an assignment or the entire assignment. Highly egregious cases will be sent to the Dean of Students Office immediately. All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or [online](#).

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE & ACCOMMODATIONS

I encourage all of my students to seek out additional assistance if they are concerned about their academic performance (and even if they are not). I am always available to meet with students either during my office hours or by appointment. In addition, the university provides a number of services designed to help students excel academically. Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

COMMUNICATION POLICY

I try to be available to students as much as possible. In addition to being available during office hours, feel free to email me at light1@uncc.edu with questions. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, but usually much sooner. However, if there is no question in the email that needs to be answered or the question is explicitly stated here in the syllabus, I will not respond to the email. Also, if the email is not written in a professional manner, I will request ONCE that you follow proper formatting, after which I will stop communicating with you via email.

TITLE IX REPORTING POLICY

UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that many UNC Charlotte employees, including all faculty members, are considered [Responsible Employees](#) who are required to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. **This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator.** Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact any of the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) University Counseling Center (counselingcenter.uncc.edu, 7-0311); (2) Student Health Center (studenthealth.uncc.edu, 7-7400); or (3) Center for Wellness Promotion (wellness.uncc.edu, 7-7407). Additional information about your options is also available at titleix.uncc.edu under the “Students” tab.

REVISIONS POLICY

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. The following schedule may be modified in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class or by changes to this syllabus posted on the course in Canvas.

CALENDAR AND TOPICAL QUESTIONS

Week 2, August 30: Darwin – ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES

This first week will be presented as a typical seminar class. All students are expected to complete the assigned book prior to meeting. All students are expected to contribute equally to a student-driven discussion of the text. Some ideas to keep in mind include:

- Why was this text so influential?
- How has our understanding of biological evolution changed?
- How do modern human populations fit in to Darwin's view of the world?

Week 3, September 6: SCIENCE STUDIES

- 1) Does anthropology belong in the humanities or the sciences? Biological anthropology?
- 2) Is there an objective Truth in science?
- 3) What challenges do anthropologists face in presenting their research as science?

Week 4, September 13: BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

- 1) Why are classic evolutionary examples (peppered moths, houseflies, finches, etc.) difficult to compare to modern humans?
- 2) What is the best example of human evolution that can be seen in modern populations?
- 3) How is human evolution taught in K-12 schools in the US today and how can we make it better?

Week 5, September 20: PRIMATOLOGY

- 1) How do ecological/environmental characteristics influence primate behavior?
- 2) In what ways do nonhuman primates impact the environment in which they live?
- 3) Do nonhuman primates have culture?

Week 6, September 27: PALEOANTHROPOLOGY

- 1) How did "Lucy" die?
- 2) How do the recent discoveries of *Homo floresiensis*, *Homo denisovan*, and *Homo naledi* change our understandings of hominin evolution?
- 3) Who were the Neanderthals and what became of them?

Week 7, October 4: PALEO PEOPLES: FOOD AND TECHNOLOGY

- 1) Did hominins have smokin' hot bods from the Paleo Diet and exercise? Should we try to recreate their lifestyles?
- 2) What role did nutrition and the acquisition of food play on the peopling of the world?
- 3) What was the most important invention of paleo people and why?

Week 8, October 11: DNA AND GENETICS IN MODERN POPULATIONS

- 1) What does it mean to say that the way you look is a product of your genes and the environment?
- 2) Was Lamarck correct? What is the role of transgenerational epigenetic inheritance in human evolution?
- 3) Who gets to decide who is black in the United States today?

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Week 9, October 18: SEXUAL BEHAVIORS OF NONHUMAN PRIMATES AND HUMANS

- 1) Have females been selected to be “coy” and highly selective in their reproductive partners and males selected to attempt to “sow their seed” as frequently and widely as possible?
- 2) Were our hominin ancestors monogamous?
- 3) Kyra Sedjwick just found out that her husband Kevin Bacon is also her cousin. Should she be worried?

Week 10, October 25: INFANTS AND PARENTHOOD

- 1) If you were to have a baby (or if you were to support a partner having a baby), would you want a “natural” birth?
- 2) What is the consensus on the importance of breast-feeding, babywearing, cosleeping, and attachment parenting?
- 3) If a child is born as the result of new reproductive technologies, how do we define parenthood?

Week 11, November 1: HEALTH & DISEASE

- 1) What does height tell us about human populations?
- 2) If we are all biologically human, why do different groups have different lifespans and health outcomes?
- 3) We all die, but when does life actually end? When does it begin?

Week 12, November 8: BIOTECHNOLOGY & FUTURE BIOLOGY

- 1) Does organ donation create biological kinship?
- 2) What will our bodies look like in 2,000 and 200,000 years from now?
- 3) Are we already cyborgs thanks to technology?

Week 13, November 15: FORENSIC ANTHROPOLOGY

- 1) What problems do forensic anthropologists face with an increasingly long-lived, globalized society?
- 2) How reliable are biometrics (fingerprints, body shapes, hair analysis, bite marks, DNA) and facial reconstructions?
- 3) Why do forensic anthropologists continue to include race in their biological profiles?

November 22 – No class – Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 14, November 29: Work Day

Week 15, December 6: THE FUTURE OF BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

- 1) What questions will biological anthropologists ask ten years from now? Fifty?
- 2) Have we found all the fossils? What changes will take place in paleoanthropology in the next few decades?
- 3) Why is a holistic four-field approach to anthropology so important for the future of the discipline?

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 13th, 2017, 5:00 – 7:30 pm