

ANTHROPOLOGY 350: Physical Anthropology
University of La Verne, Fall 2010
MW 8-9:30 am, Hoover Building 117

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This course in Physical Anthropology covers both the biology of contemporary human populations and the evolutionary history of hominins and our hominid ancestors, broadly defined. It emphasizes three themes: anthropology is a holistic discipline; humans are an integral part of nature; and our evolutionary past influences the relationship we have with our environment. Topics to be covered include the nature of humankind, genetics and natural selection, heredity, human and non-human primate anatomy and behavior, the fossil record, and human variation.

Required Text

Stanford, C., Allen, J.S., and Anton, S.C. (2010) *Exploring Biological Anthropology: the Essentials*. Pearson Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Angeloni, E., ed. (2010) *Annual editions: Physical Anthropology 11/12*. McGraw Hill/Dushkin, Dubuque, Iowa.

Course Structure and Evaluations

This course will involve a lot of writing, and therefore, a lot of thinking, so give your brain a break and set a reasonable pace to proceed with both your reading and writing assignments. The intent is to provide you with an opportunity to explore the world of Physical Anthropology, as well as to understand that the discipline is not just confined to a classroom. You will have a number of assignments that include critical thinking exercises tied to the chapters in the main textbook, news articles about some aspect of Physical Anthropology, short abstracts related to articles in our reader, and reaction papers.

All grades for this course will be based on written assignments and class participation (yes! participation is a requirement); there are no midterm or final exams.

Critical Thinking Questions. Please respond to each of the Critical Thinking Questions at the end of each chapter in our main textbook. As there are no tests in this course, this is your demonstration that you have read and understood the material in our textbook.

News Article. Each week locate one news or scientific article about some aspect of Physical Anthropology in relevant academic journals or science news sources. The articles can be dated within the last six months. Write a short summary of the article, and include the article with the summary. A minimum of 12 news articles is required, due on Mondays. I will randomly call on several students each Monday to present their selected article to the rest of the class.

****Modifications to this syllabus may be made at any time.**

Abstracts. Each abstract summarizes an article of your choosing in the Annual Editions book. Abstracts are due on Wednesdays. They are to be typed and double-spaced, and should be 200±10 words (no more, no less). Note that the word limitation is part of the exercise! Please put the word count at the end of your summary (otherwise, I have to count the old-fashioned way, which takes time, tends to be annoying and could result in the wrong word count).

The purpose of an abstract is to convey the essence of what is being said in the article. In the abstract, you must describe the most salient facts or goal(s) of the article, i.e., the main point(s) the author is making. You should not put down everything the author says, but you do need to understand and digest the contents of the article and then write your summary. The abstract should be written in your own words. If you want to use a statement from the article to emphasize a point you are making, be sure to put the statement in quotes to identify it as coming from the author (and not you).

A total of ten (10) abstracts will be completed over the course of the term. You must read at least one article in each of the seven units within the Annual Editions reader; the selection of articles will be left to you. Please be sure to list the article title and number in the heading information for your abstract.

Reaction Papers. There are five (5) reaction papers required for this course. Each paper should be 500±50 words in length, no more and no less (typed, double-spaced). Please do not exceed the word limit (this is part of your assignment; use the Word Count facility in your computer). You must use from 8 to 10 references for each paper (not included in the word count) and follow each reference in your 'References Cited' section with a short one to two sentence annotation. Each reaction paper is a response to a major issue (see list of topics below), so please keep your discussion within the boundaries of the chosen topic. Think of this as your opportunity to present a thoughtful, concise, and well-prepared discussion about issues that tend to be controversial in the field.

You will need to be creative in the development of your ideas, drawing upon comparative material and making inferences from that material. There are no right or wrong responses; however, discussions must be factually based and derived from a foundation of reliable knowledge. Feel free to use the full range of anthropological resources available to you!

Reaction Paper #1 (required), exempt from the word count: annotated bibliography. Select one topic, find 10 references (**they may not be websites!!**), cite using appropriate format for your field (ASA, AAA, APA, MLA), and annotate (one to two sentence summary of salient points).

Reaction Papers # 2-5: any topic of your choosing from Topics list, including the topic you chose for #1 (you can even use those same references, so your work will not be for naught).

Grading. All grades for this course will be based on written assignments and participation; there are no midterm and final exams.

Chapter questions	15 %
News articles (12)	5 %
Abstracts (10)	20 %
Reaction papers (5)	60 %
Participation	variable factor

Web Resources. A copy of this syllabus appears on the website www.exhumanitas.com where you will also find information on special features, links to information and reference sources, book recommendations, and special posts.

Proposed meeting schedule

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT
1	Aug 30-Sept 1	Introduction		
2	Sept 6*-8	Part I: Foundations <i>* Labor Day, Sept 6 (holiday)</i>	Ch 1-2	Monday: holiday* Wednesday: abstract 1 chapter questions
3-6	Sept 13-Oct 6	Part II: Mechanisms of Evolution	Ch 3-6	Mondays: news article Wednesdays: abstract 2-5 Wk5 (9/29), React1 Last Wednesday: chapter questions
7-8	Oct 11-20	Part III: Primates	Ch 7-8	Mondays: news article Wednesdays: abstract 6-7 Wk7 (10/13), React2 Last Wednesday: chapter questions
9-13	Oct 25-Nov 24	Part IV: Fossil Record, including Bioarchaeology <i>Thanksgiving Break Nov 25-26</i>	Ch 9-13	Mondays: news article Wednesdays: abstract 8-10 Wk9 (10/27), React3 Wk11 (11/10), React4 Last Wednesday: chapter questions
14-15	Nov 29-Dec 8	Part V: Modern Humans, including Forensic Anthropology	Ch 14-15	Mondays: news article Wednesdays: Wk14 (12/1), React5 Last Wednesday: chapter questions
16	Dec 13	FINAL EXAM WEEK		No assignments

Topics for the Reaction Papers:

1. Discuss the issues embroiled in the Evolution-Intelligent Design (Creationism) controversy.
2. My favorite hominid, and why.
3. Discuss the biological and ethical problems with genetic engineering, particularly manipulation of human genetic material.
4. Does human cloning and genetic engineering pose evolutionary dangers? Discuss, provide examples to illustrate your points.
5. Discuss the effect of climate shifts on the evolution of the human family, i.e., hominids.
6. If you were in charge, would you reclassify *Australopithecus* as *Homo*? Why, or why not?
7. Discuss *Homo floresiensis* and its place in the human evolutionary record. Include in your discussion the arguments for and against describing it as a new human species.
8. There are two extreme models for the origin of modern humans—the Multi-Regional Model and the Out-of-Africa (Replacement) Model. Describe each, including benefits and drawbacks. How would you model the origins of modern humans?
9. Interpret the following poem entitled “To the Taung Child”. Include in your interpretation a discussion of Raymond Dart and the 1924 controversy surrounding his identification and report of the Taung child.

TO THE TAUNG CHILD (a poem written by Jack P. Hutchings, Vancouver, British Columbia, at Taung, 3 February 1985)

When, in brief childhood here you used to play
In primal innocence, you could not know
The mission that awaited you or guess
That wayward Chance would cheat your early death
And Bring you strangest immortality.
A million years, while Life around you grew
Into new forms to suit Earth’s changing mood.
You slept, cocooned in stone, awaiting one
Who’d read your ciphered message and proclaim
Your signal place in Mankind’s history.

Three-score years on, your infant face is known
And honoured round the world...Heed not as we
Debate your lineage: though countless kin
May yet emerge to make their rival claims
As purer hominids, your place is sure:

You showed us first our cradle Africa.

True, first-born, we salute you, Child of Taung.

10. Discuss the problems with developing a definition of *Homo habilis*. Should it be reassigned to *Australopithecus*? Retain its *Homo* designation? Or, be assigned to a new genus?
11. Discuss whether Neanderthals and anatomically modern humans should be different species. What is the evidence?
12. Have we reached the end of evolution, or will *Homo sapiens* speciate?
13. Develop a definition for “human”.
14. Review and respond/react to a book related to physical anthropology, such as *A Primate’s Memoir* by Robert Sapolsky. In your review, be sure to provide a brief summary of the content of the book in addition to your own assessment/reaction.
15. Part of the discussion about being human has to do with the brain, perception and cognition, which in turn have to do with the boundary between the tangible and intangible. Discuss shamanism and its depiction in cave art, as well as descriptions provided in oral histories and other anthropological accounts. Can shamans really transcend the physical tangible world and enter the intangible nether-world of spirits, ghosts and disembodied beings?
16. Does homosexuality or bisexuality have an evolutionary advantage for primates?
17. How common was cannibalism in the past? What is the evidence?
18. Develop your own question to cover a topic that most interests you.

A Word about Writing, whether for this course or another

The aim of any writing project is for you to explore a particular question or problem, developing an argument that encapsulates your solution concerning the question you are discussing. It is NOT intended that you ‘write all you know’ about the topic, or merely summarize the views of a textbook. Think about the topics offered and do some background reading to help you select the most appropriate one for your interests.

1. In selecting a topic, think about your interests. What piques your interest? What presents a challenge to you? You may need to do some background reading to help narrow your topic of interest. When you have selected a topic, think hard about what the topic involves, what is the question that keeps coming forward? Do some analytical thinking about this, and about ways of approaching the question to explore its meanings and problems, and develop a response.
2. Start reading early, well before the assignment due dates. Find relevant references by following up bibliographies in a textbook and using the references listed in academic articles.
3. Always keep notes on the sources (articles) you are reading—author, title, journal title, year of publication and publisher, and the page number of all material. There is nothing more frustrating than not being able to track down where you found a useful quote.
4. Get into the habit of putting your notes in your own words, as it is a good way of checking whether you are following an argument. Always be careful to include quotation marks around any phrases or sentences that you take directly from the readings, otherwise you could easily slip into presenting an author’s work as your own (that would be *plagiarism*, which as you know is an unethical practice!).
5. Now, to make an argument, you need to structure your writing. Work out an outline of the points

you want to cover, the order in which they best support your argument, and suitable supporting evidence or specific examples you want to use.

6. It is important to use specific examples to illustrate and substantiate your points.

7. Wherever possible use diagrams, maps, graphs, and other illustrations to support your argument. Such visual materials are an important part of communication.

8. Keep to the set word/page limit—it is part of the exercise. To be able to develop your ideas concisely is an important skill, and working with a word or page limit gives you valuable practice. However, footnotes, reference lists, or any appendices do not come into the word/page count—they are extra. It is important to be highly selective in what you include. Remember that you can summarize and condense material and reference the sources, you do not have to re-state it all in your paper.

9. Get someone else to read a draft of your paper. They don't have to know anything about your topic—but they should still be able to follow your ideas. They will quickly tell you if the ideas and information are unclear, or poorly expressed, if the paper is too long and repetitive or needs expansion on some points. You can also try reading your paper aloud, as this is a good way to find out how it sounds. Try to prepare your draft few days or so before the paper is due to allow time for your own assessment and revision.

10. You should prepare an initial draft and then try to evaluate it, possibly several times, and where necessary change the structure or contents. Aim to polish the organization, your ideas and the clarity of your expression.

11. As a way of improving your expression, find an article that you have enjoyed reading and study how it is written—the structure and style the author has used.

12. Please keep a copy of your paper in case of problems.