

ASEM 2420
Winter 2020

THE CULTURED APE

TF 8:00-9:50
Sturm Hall 154

Instructor

Prof. Dean Saitta
Office Hours: TH 10:00-11:00; also by
appointment
Office: Sturm Hall 105
Office Phone: 303-871-2680
Email: dsaitta@du.edu



Course Description and Objectives

For all of the human species' evolutionary success and Space Age technological prowess we are in many ways still Stone Age people with minds, behavior patterns, and existential anxieties that aren't that different from those of our distant human ancestors. This Advanced Seminar will ask you to reflect a bit on change and continuity in human evolutionary history, and the consequences that the two have for life today.

The course emerges from an interdisciplinary encounter between anthropology, psychology, evolutionary biology, and environmental science. Fields of study known as Evolutionary Psychology and Evolutionary Anthropology sit on the boundary between these disciplines. The famous biologist E.O. Wilson, in his book *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, has described such fields as "borderland" or "hybrid" fields. They deal with how contemporary human behavior is constrained by our heritage as evolved primates. They question the standard social science and mainstream anthropological model of humans as "blank slates" who are primarily shaped by their social and cultural environments. In other words, they view humans as "Cultured Apes."

The course will challenge you to take seriously our bio-psychological heritage as evolved apes. It will engage some of the "hot button" issues of our time—including war, inter-personal violence, gender inequality, gay marriage, religious belief, political affiliation and others—from an evolutionary perspective. We will explore how public policies relevant to the hot button issues of our time might be better developed from a position that is sensitive to humankind's status as an evolved species, a position that might be termed an "Evolutionary Pragmatics". Thus, the course not only draws on the interdisciplinary encounter noted above, but also extends discussion in a way that invades the territory of sociology, political science, economics, ethical philosophy, women's studies, and a number of other disciplines within the social sciences and humanities.

Course Requirements

You will be graded on:

- (1) Class attendance, preparedness, and participation (20%).
- (2) Three Take-Home Writing Assignments:

- a. Assignment #1 (15%)
 - b. Assignment #2 (15%)
 - c. Assignment #3 (15%)
- (3) Research Paper Prospectus (10%)
 (4) Final Research Paper (25%).

You are required to have all reading finished for the days assigned. **Readings are grouped into folders arranged by date on the Course Portfolio site.** You should come to class thoroughly prepared to discuss this material.

Required Readings:

There is no textbook for the course. All readings are available on the DU Portfolio Community site found at <https://portfolio.du.edu/culturedape>. I reserve the right to add, delete, or substitute readings as we move through the quarter. I'll be posting other course material on this page, all including all course handouts, assignments, and slide presentations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	<p>Jan 7 What's the Point of this Course? Goals and Objectives.</p> <p>Jan 10 History of Thought about Apes. <u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jabr, F. (2018) The Person in the Ape. <i>Lapham's Quarterly</i>, Winter. <p>Distribute Assignment #1.</p>
2	<p>Jan 14 Evolutionary History of Humankind. <u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marks, J. (2018) <i>The Alternative Introduction to Biological Anthropology</i>, chapters 11 and 12. <p>Jan 17 Chimpanzee Biology and "Culture". <u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stanford, C. (2014) Chimpanzee Reunion. In: K. Strier (ed), <i>Primate Ethnographies</i>. • Boesch, C. (2003) Is Culture a Golden Barrier Between Human and Chimpanzee? <i>Evolutionary Anthropology</i>, 12: 26-32.
3	<p>Jan 21 What Does It Mean to be 98% Chimpanzee? <u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond, J. (1992) A Tale of Three Chimps. From <i>The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal</i>. • Marks, J., 98% Alike? (2000) <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>, May 12. • Sapolsky, R. (2006) The 2% Difference, <i>Discover Magazine</i>, April. <p>Assignment #1 is due. Distribute Assignment #2.</p>

- Jan 24 **The Enlightenment Quest**
Reading:
- Wilson, E.O. (1998) Resuming the Enlightenment Quest. *Wilson Quarterly*, Winter.
- 4 Jan 28 **The Conceptual Basis of Evolutionary Psychology.**
Reading:
- Freese, J. (2002) Evolutionary Psychology: New Science or the Same Old Storytelling? *Contexts*, Fall.
- Jan 31 **Biophobias: What's to Fear from an Evolutionary View of Humankind?**
Reading:
- McCaughey, M. (2008) Caveman Sex: How Evolutionary Psychology Pushes Sexist Stereotypes, *Alternet*, October 24.
 - De Waal, F. (2016) What I Learned from Tickling Apes. *New York Times*, April 8.
- Assignment #2 is due.**
- 5 Feb 4 **Unresolved Issues, Debates, and Research Challenges in the Study of Human Evolution.**
Reading:
- Barash, D. (2012) The Mysteries of Becoming Human. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 18.
- Feb 7 **NO CLASS. WORK ON YOUR RESEARCH PROJECT!**
- 6 Feb 11 **How Different Are Men and Women?**
Reading:
- Diamond, J. 1992. The Evolution of Human Sexuality. From *The Third Chimpanzee: The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal*.
 - Zuk, M. (2013) Paleofantasy Love. From *Paleofantasy: What Evolution Really Tells Us About Sex, Diet, and How We Live*.
- Distribute Assignment #3.**
- Feb 14 **Are Humans Built for Monogamy?**
Reading:
- Fisher, H. (1987) The Four-Year Itch. *Natural History* (10).
 - Barash, D. (2001) Deflating the Myth of Monogamy. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 20.
- 7 Feb 18 **Is the Cultured Ape Naturally Violent?**
Reading:
- Buss, D. (2005) Murder is in Our Blood. *Los Angeles Times*, May 20.
 - Barash, D. (2015) Why People Kill. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 8.
 - Barbaro, N. (2017) How Can Evolutionary Psychology Help Explain Intimate Partner Violence? *Behavioral Scientist*, September 21.
 - Ferguson, B. (2018) War is Not Part of Human Nature. *Scientific American*, September 1.

Feb 21	<p>Are Women the Superior Sex? Should Women Go to War?</p> <p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Konner, M. (2015) The End of Male Supremacy. <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>, March 30. • Kalinowski, M. (2015) A Victory for Women at War. <i>New York Times</i>, December 4. • Pulley, J. (2015) Women in the Infantry? No Thanks. <i>Wall Street Journal</i>, September 14. • Fazio, T. (2018) Let Women Be Warriors. <i>New York Times</i>, November 22. • MacDonald, H. (2019) Women Don't Belong in Combat Units. <i>Wall Street Journal</i>, January 16. <p>Assignment #3 is due.</p>
8 Feb 25	<p>Is Homosexuality an Evolved, Adaptive Behavior?</p> <p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscarella, F. (2000) The Evolution of Homoerotic Behavior in Humans. <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i> 40 (1).
Feb 28	<p>Are Republicans and Democrats Born or Made?</p> <p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuschman, A. (2013) Can Your Genes Predict Whether You'll be a Conservative or a Liberal? <i>The Atlantic</i>, October 24. • McDermott, R. and P. Hatemi (2018) To Go Forward, We Must Look Back: The Importance of Evolutionary Psychology for Understanding Modern Politics. <i>Evolutionary Psychology</i>, April-June. <p>Research Paper Prospectus is Due.</p>
9 Mar 3	<p>Is the Cultured Ape Naturally Moral?</p> <p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pinker, S. (2006) The Evolutionary Psychology of Religion. <i>The Humanist</i>, September/October. • Smith, E. (2015) Is Human Morality a Product of Evolution? <i>The Atlantic</i>, December 2.
Mar 6	<p>Evolution and Public Policy: Toward an Evolutionary Pragmatics.</p> <p><u>Reading:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natterson-Horowitz, B. and K. Bowers (2012) Our Animal Natures. <i>New York Times</i>, June 9. • Barkow, J. (2003) Biology is Destiny Only if We Ignore It. <i>World Futures</i>, 59: 173-188.
10 Mar 10	Loose Ends; Review of Major Course Themes and Lessons.
Mar 13	Individual Tutorials.
11 Mar 19	Final Research Paper Is Due.