

Anthropology 2105
HUMAN NATURE
Spring 2015

Prof. Dean J. Saitta

Office Hours: Thursday 10-12:00; also by
appointment.

Office: Sturm Hall 105

Office Phone: 303-871-2680

Email: dsaitta@du.edu

Course Portfolio: <http://portfolio.du.edu/201210ANTH21052965>

Course Objectives

The concept of human nature is widely used in our culture. It is used to explain and justify many different aspects of human behavior including altruism, selfishness, gender roles, family structure, sexual behavior, warfare, and a multitude of phobias. Because the concept of human nature roots human behavior in an unchanging biology it is a very powerful concept in Western life. And, like any source of power, the concept can be put to both noble and sinister uses.

This course uses the question of "what is human nature?" to explore the field of biological anthropology. Biological anthropology is that part of anthropology which investigates the nature and sources of human biological variation through space and time. We take a scientific, evolutionary perspective on the origin and development of human biological differences, including differences between humankind and other life forms, differences between the various human "races", and differences between human males and females. As alluded to above, we will also explore the social and political uses to which the concept of "human nature" has been put in our culture. By using knowledge from biological anthropology to think critically about the human condition, the course serves the cause of general education.

Course Requirements

You will be graded on:

- (1) Class attendance, preparedness, and participation (10%).
- (2) Several unannounced pop quizzes or "minute papers" (10%)
- (3) Three take-home writing assignments (80%).

Required Reading

- Park, Michael 2013 *Biological Anthropology* (7th edition). McGraw Hill, New York.
- Additional required readings are available on the course Portfolio site:
<http://portfolio.du.edu/201210ANTH21052965>.

You are required to have all reading finished for the days assigned. You should come to class thoroughly prepared to discuss this material. **You should be prepared to take pop quizzes on the reading in the form of one page "minute papers."** I reserve the right to drop and/or add readings as the course unfolds.

Assignments

The take-home writing assignments are due on the dates indicated—no exceptions.

Classroom Etiquette

You are expected to adhere to basic standards of classroom etiquette. No cellphone use or web surfing! Life is complicated and we understand that you may need to miss class on rare occasions. Regular absenteeism, however, is disrespectful to your instructor and classmates. A five minute break half-way through class is provided for you as a courtesy. You are expected to adhere to the University' Honor Code.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Reading</u>
1	Mar 23	What is the purpose and philosophy of this course? Organizing questions and concepts.
	Mar 25	Where Do Humans Come From? Darwin's Revolution. <u>READING:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chapters 1 and 2.• Barash, D. 2012 The Mysteries of Becoming Human. <i>Chronicle Review</i>, June 18.• Siegfried, T. 2009 Charles Darwin was Born into a World that Today's Scientists Wouldn't Recognize. <i>Science News</i>.
2	Mar 30	Science, Evolution, and Religion. <u>READING:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shermer, M. 2006 The Facts of Evolution. From <i>Why Darwin Matters</i>.
	Apr 1	Processes of Biological Evolution: Microevolution and Macroevolution. <u>READING:</u> Chapters 3, 4, 5. ASSIGNMENT #1 DISTRIBUTED (20% of grade—see Portfolio site for associated readings).
3	Apr 6	Humankind's Place in Nature: Introduction to the Primates. <u>READING:</u> Chapters 6 and 7.

- Apr 8 Biology and Behavior of Living Primates.
READING:
- Chapter 8
 - Stanford, C. 2001 Got Culture? From *Significant Others: The Ape-Human Continuum and the Search for Human Nature*.
 - Parker, I. 2007 Swingers. *The New Yorker*. July 30.
- 4 Apr 13 Highlights of Primate Evolution;
Background to Paleoanthropology: Culture, Power, and Interpretation.
READING: Chapter 9.
- Apr 15 Human Evolutionary History. Overview of the Hominid Fossil Record and Morphological Trends.
READING: Chapters 10 and 11.
ASSIGNMENT #1 IS DUE.
- 5 Apr 20 **ASSIGNMENT #2: HUMAN FOSSIL SKULL LAB (35% of grade)**
- Apr 22 **HUMAN FOSSIL SKULL LAB, continued.**
- 6 Apr 27 What Were Our Ancestors Like? Debates about Diet, Activity Patterns, and Family Structure.
READING:
- Summers, A. 2005 Born to Run. *Natural History*, April.
 - Jones D. 2007 Ape Behavior Reveals Secrets of Human Evolution. *New Scientist*. April 25.
- Apr 29 *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthals.
READING:
- Chapter 12
 - Gibbons, A. 2011 A New View of the Birth of *Homo sapiens*. *Science* 331.
 - Adler, R. 2015 One of the Family? *New Scientist: The Human Story*.
- 7 May 4 Human Adaptability;
The Concept Of Race: History and Applications.
ASSIGNMENT #2 IS DUE
READING:
- Chapters 12 and 13.

	May 6	Does Race Exist? <u>READINGS:</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate between C.L. Brace and G. Gill (2000). Found at: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/evolution/does-race-exist.html • Leroi, A.M. 2005 A Family Tree in Every Gene. <i>The New York Times</i>, March 14.
8	May 11	Biology, Culture, and Behavior: The "Nature-Nurture" Debate. <u>READINGS:</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gladwell, M. 2007 None of the Above. <i>The New Yorker</i>, December 17.
	May 13	Human Evolutionary Psychology; Controversies in the Study of Human Nature. <u>READINGS:</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisher, H. 1987 The Four Year Itch. <i>Natural History</i> 96. • Muscarella, F. 2002 Homoerotic Behavior in Human Evolution. <i>Gay and Lesbian Review</i>. November-December. • Thornhill, R. and C. Palmer 2000 Why Men Rape. <i>The Sciences</i>. January-February.
		ASSIGNMENT #3 DISTRIBUTED (25% of grade).
9	May 18	Evolutionary Pragmatics. <u>READINGS:</u>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freese, J. 2002 Evolutionary Psychology: New Science or the Same Old Storytelling? <i>Contexts</i>, Fall.
	May 20	The Future of Human Evolution; Worldviews in the Study of Human Life and History. <u>READING:</u> Chapter 14.
10	May 25	NO CLASS- MEMORIAL DAY
	May 27	Individual Tutorials Related to Assignment #3.
	May 29	ASSIGNMENT #3 IS DUE.