

## Psychology 410/510<sup>1</sup> – Evolutionary Psychology Course Syllabus, Fall 2004

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Hours: Tuesdays, 10-11 AM; Thursdays, 2-3 PM; by appointment

**Class Stats.** **Meeting times:** Mondays and Wednesdays Noon-1:20 PM  
**Location:** 146 Straub  
**CRN:** Psy 410 = 15793, Psy 510 = 15794  
**Credits:** 4

**Course content.** Evolutionary psychology is the application of modern evolutionary theory to the study of human behavior and the information-processing brain that generates our thoughts, feelings and actions. Evolutionary psychology is *not* a sub discipline within the field of psychology, but rather a perspective or approach that can be applied within the discipline of psychology (and, for that matter, other social science disciplines like anthropology, economics and political science). Thus, evolutionary psychology provides a new, integrated approach to human behavior by attempting to explain how specialized mental mechanisms, designed by a long history of natural selection, guide our social behavior and help us solve problems like inter-group aggression, mate choice and parental care, among the many others that affected the ability of our ancestors to survive and reproduce successfully. In Psy 410/510, we will view the mind/brain as an adapted organ that has operated like other physical and behavioral traits in the service of day-to-day survival and successful reproduction. We will use Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection and sexual selection to unite our analysis of the thoughts, feelings and actions that seem to characterize humans around the world, including variation in behavior that is associated with 'local' conditions.

Some of the topics that we will cover include the nature of "human nature," the origins and functions of species-typical sex differences in preferences and behavior, the evolutionary basis of nepotism (kin favoritism), gene-behavior relations, reproductive behavior (e.g. mate choice) and how culture and social learning interface with Darwinian evolution.

**Class structure.** During most of our class meetings, I will be lecturing and using an overhead projector to illustrate the points I want to make. The overheads that I will use are available to you on the course web page via Blackboard (see "Blackboard course site" below). I **strongly** encourage you to download, print and bring copies of the overheads with you to each class lecture. Think of the overheads as a set of fairly detailed lecture notes, which is why I encourage you to bring copies of them to class and annotate them with your own comments. Besides lectures, some class sessions will be devoted to discussing course-pack readings and various in-class exercises designed to emphasize concepts or research presented in lectures.

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<sup>1</sup> Graduate students should register for Psychology 510. Work requirements for Psy 410 and Psy 510 are identical except Psy 510 students will meet weekly with the professor to discuss additional reading assignments and plan a term paper, which they will write on a topic of their choosing, in consultation with the professor.

I want to encourage your active participation in class, although I realize that class size will limit, to some degree, what we can do. I certainly want you to ask questions, especially if what I have said is unclear, and I also want to encourage comments and counter-points to ideas and results that I present during lectures. I certainly prefer an active, engaged classroom to hearing myself drone on and on. ☺ My analysis of some topics in lectures like sex differences in behavior or the selfish nature of humans may be at odds with some of your own ideas or beliefs. If you are uncomfortable with some of what I present in lectures, I hope that you will speak up in a manner which is thoughtful and instructive for the class as a whole. And I am always willing to talk individually with you.

**Prerequisites.** You will benefit if you have already had some exposure to biological approaches to behavior and, especially, to modern evolutionary theory. Such exposure, however, is not assumed, and the initial set of lectures will provide the background you need to understand the subsequent topics that we will cover.

**Required material.** The *required* book for this course is a paperback textbook, *Evolutionary Psychology, A Critical Introduction* by Christopher Badcock, which is available at the UO Book Store, 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue @ Kincaid Street. There is also a *required* electronic course pack (hereafter the "e-course pack") that will be available on our Blackboard course site (see next paragraph), which will comprise a series of articles from journals and books.

**Blackboard course site.** In Psy 410/510, we will make *extensive* use of Blackboard, which is a web-based course management application. I have created a Blackboard course site for Psy 410/510, and you will be using it as a regular part of the class. The course site will contain announcements, lecture notes (copies of overhead transparencies), assignments and their due dates, and more. *You should plan to visit our course site at least two times per week to stay abreast of class announcements and lecture notes. Hard copies of class materials like lecture notes, reading assignments and exam study guides will **not** be handed out in class, but will be available on our Blackboard course site.*

To use Blackboard, you will need an account, which has already been created for you **if** you have registered for Psy 410/510. To access our course site, launch your web browser (e.g. Internet Explorer, Netscape, Safari) and point it to .....

<http://blackboard.uoregon.edu/>

click on "Login" and enter your UO email account login name (e.g. [wholmes@darkwing](mailto:wholmes@darkwing); be sure to include the server name (either darkwing or gladstone) and password (your UO email password). If you have more than one email account, check the UO's directory (<http://duckweb.uoregon.edu/telecom/directory.html>) to see which one Blackboard 'expects' you to use or you will not be admitted to the course site. If you cannot login successfully by clicking on the "Login" button, click on the "Create an Account" button on the left side of the Blackboard homepage and follow the instructions about what you need to do to create your Blackboard account.

If you have never used Blackboard, you may want to look at a 2-page document on the web, "Getting Started with Blackboard at UO." Point your browser to ...

<http://blackboard.uoregon.edu/local/usingbb/>

**Downloading documents from Blackboard.** You will often want to download course documents such as a set of lecture notes or an assignment onto the computer on which you are working. To make downloading go as smoothly as possible, I will convert all the documents I

produce to portable document format files (pdf files) before I place them on the course site. Any computer with Acrobat Reader software loaded on it will be able to access all the pdf files from our course site, and every UO student-accessible computer has Acrobat Reader on it. If you are using your own computer and do not have Acrobat Reader, you can download the application *for free* by launching your browser and pointing it to ...

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

If you encounter difficulties logging on to Blackboard or downloading documents, you should seek help from the Knight Library Information Technology Center (Second Floor, Knight Library, 346-1935) or the Science Library Information Technology Center (Science Library, Basement of Onyx, 346-1331).

**Course work.** Your grade will depend on how you perform on five required tasks.

- (1) A mini-quiz will be given at the end of each class lecture. One multiple-choice question will be presented, based on material covered in "today's" lecture. There will be 12-15 mini-quizzes during the term, the best 10 of which will count toward your grade such that you can earn a maximum of 10 points for mini-quizzes.
- (2) There will be a multiple-choice exam on the basics of natural selection theory, which will be given about three weeks into the term.
- (3) There will be a midterm and (4) final exam in the course, both of which will comprise multiple-choice questions and perhaps some short-essay questions. The midterm will occur sometime in early November and the final will occur starting at 10:15 AM on Thursday, December 9th.
- (5) You will write a mini-literature review on a topic you choose from a list given to you. Your mini-review will comprise brief summaries of five journal articles each of which addresses your chosen topic. The length of each individual summary will be less than one page of double-spaced text. Some examples of potential topics include (a) adoption in a Darwinian framework, (b) kinship and child abuse, (c) male or female mate-choice criteria, (d) parent-offspring conflict and (e) sex differences in jealousy.

**Grading.** Your final grade will be determined by the total number of points you accumulate via your performance on the five just-described tasks. There will **not** be any 'extra-credit' assignments by which you could augment your point total. I will **not** be assigning a predetermined number of As, Bs, and so forth so your grade is independent of other students' grades. The grading scale will be broken down **approximately** as follows.

A+ = 97-100%	B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D+ = 67-69%
A = 93-96%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	D = 63-66%
A- = 90-92%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%

**Incomplete grades.** A grade of I (incomplete) invites a host of problems for students and faculty alike, and I will not be giving I grades (or Y grades, no basis for grading) except when special circumstances warrant. Incompletes hang over the heads of students and faculty and limit students' abilities to focus fully on their courses following the term in which they received an incomplete. I will only award an I grade if you and I have discussed the special need for an I *before the final exam is given*. If we agree that an I grade is warranted, then we will specify the work that you must complete and the date by which it must be completed to change the grade of an I to the appropriate letter grade. This date will not be later than six weeks into the term after which you receive an I *whether or not you are enrolled that term*. If you choose not to meet with me to discuss your I grade or if your work is not completed by our agreed-upon date, a grade will

be assigned based on the points you had earned when the class ended during the term you were enrolled. I do realize that 'exceptional' events may warrant variation in my I-grade policy, so please talk with me if you find yourself thinking about requesting an incomplete grade.

**Make-up exams, late assignments and 'special' circumstances.** As a general rule, make-up exams will *not* be given. If something critical would prevent you from taking a scheduled exam, you must talk to me *at least one week in advance* of the relevant deadline. Assignments turned in after a deadline, which will *always* be announced on the course web page, will have points taken off for lateness and an assignment completed well past a deadline may receive no points. If you have special needs related to exams, written assignments or lectures (e.g. you have a physical disability, a diagnosed learning disability, English is not your first language), please see me during the first or second week of the term so we can make appropriate arrangements, which I'll be happy to do.

**Your responsibilities.** A learning environment like a university functions best when its members treat one another with courtesy, respect, fairness and honesty. Deception to gain individual benefit is an offense against members of the community and, indeed, the very existence of a community that depends critically on the honesty and openness of its members. The UO Student Conduct Code specifies that plagiarism and other forms of cheating are unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary actions. Plagiarism is submitting a piece of work or part of a piece of work (e.g. term paper) that is not one's own work without attributing the work to the appropriate source. Cheating could involve copying exam answers from another student's paper or referring to unapproved notes during an exam, among other possibilities. Any form of plagiarism or cheating in Psy 410/510 may result in a failing grade or dismissal from the course, as explained in the latest edition of the Code of Student Conduct. An abbreviated version of the Code is published at the back of each term's Schedule of Classes and the entire code is available on the University's website.

**Schedule of assignments, including readings.** I do not want the timetable for class lectures and exams to be set in stone, which would require that we 'cover' a certain amount of material on a preset schedule. However, I will work hard to ensure that you know what's coming up in lectures so that you can complete reading assignments before topics are presented. I will also announce exam dates and due dates for other assignments well in advance of when they will occur. It will be your responsibility to keep abreast of class materials, based on the information I provide at the beginning of each lecture and on our Blackboard course site.

**Course topics and reading assignment.** Listed below is a tentative outline of the lecture topics and readings, both the textbook and the e-course pack, that we will be covering in Psy 410/510. I say "tentative" because, to some degree, what we cover and how much time we spend on a topic will depend on class interest. The e-course pack readings will be available on the Blackboard course site.

## **I. A Darwinian Analysis of Human Behavior**

### **Lecture Topics**

- A. What is "human nature" and how did it arise?
- B. What is a "Darwinian analysis"?
- C. Three Darwinian approaches: sociobiology, human behavioral ecology and evolutionary psychology
- D. Proximate and ultimate explanations for behavior

## Readings

**Textbook** – No reading assignment

### e-Course Pack

- Buss, D. M. (2000). The evolution of happiness. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 15-23.
- Wright, R. (1994). Introduction: Darwin and us; Chapter 1: Darwin comes of age. In R. Wright (Ed.), *The moral animal* (pp. 3-32). New York: Vintage Books.
- Horgan, J. (1995). The new social Darwinists. *Scientific American*, October, 174-181.

## II. Evolutionary Psychology and the Design of the Human Brain/Mind

### Lecture Topics

- A. Adaptive design
- B. What is a "mental" or "psychological mechanism"?

### Readings

**Textbook** – No reading assignment

### e-Course Pack

- Bereczkei, T. (2000). Evolutionary psychology: a new perspective in the behavioral sciences. *European Journal of Psychology*, 5(3), 175-190.
- Ohman, A., & Mineka, S. (2003). The malicious serpent: snakes as a prototypical stimulus for an evolved module of fear. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(1), 5-9.

## III. The Basics of Modern Evolutionary Theory

### Lecture Topics

- A. What is evolution?
- B. Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection
- C. Some critical terms and points of possible confusion

### Readings

**Textbook** – Chapter 1, Selection and adaptation

### e-Course Pack

- Ridley, M. (1993). Chapter 1: Human nature. In M. Ridley, *The red queen* (pp. 3-21). New York: Penguin Books.
- Alcock, J. (2000). Misbehavior - How Stephen Jay Gould is wrong about evolution. *Boston Review*, April/May issue.

## IV. Development 101 – Terms and Conceptual Issues

### Lecture Topics

- A. Important terms and concepts in evolution and in gene-behavior relationships
- B. Frameworks in development: nature-nurture and epigenesis
- C. Heritability and individual differences
- D. Genes and learning

### Readings

**Textbook** – Chapter 2, Genetics and epigenetics

### e-Course Pack

- Pinker, S. (2002, October 13). Why the nature/nurture debate won't go away. *Boston Globe*.
- Jencks, C. (1987). Genes and crime - a review of two books, *Crime and Human Nature* and *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge*. *New York Review of Books*, 34(2), 33-41.

- Seligman, M. E. P., & Hager, J. L. (2004). Biological boundaries of learning: the sauce-Béarnaise syndrome. In D. T. Kenrick & C. L. Luce (Eds.), *The functional mind* (pp. 77-82). Boston: Pearson. Reprinted from *Psychology Today* (1972).

## V. The Level of Selection – Groups, Individuals and Genes

### Lecture Topics

- A. Group selection vs. individual selection – is there a conflict?
- B. Inclusive fitness and gene-level selection; the "selfish gene"

### Readings

**Textbook** – Chapter 3, The evolution and psychology of cooperation

**e-Course Pack** – No reading assignment

## VI. Cooperation and the Problem of Altruism

### Lecture Topics

- A. Kin selection and Hamilton's rule
- B. Nepotism: why kinship and family matter
- C. Reciprocity, sharing and cheating

### Readings

**Textbook** – Chapter 3, The evolution and psychology of cooperation (again)

#### e-Course Pack

- Daly, M., Salmon, C., & Wilson, M. (1997). Kinship: the conceptual hole in psychological studies of social cognition and close relationships. In J. A. Simpson & D. T. Kenrick (Eds.), *Evolutionary social psychology* (pp. 265-296). Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kurzban, R., Tooby, J., & Cosmides, L. (2001). Can race be erased? Coalitional computation and social categorization. Online document from the Center for Evolutionary Psychology, University of Santa Barbara (<http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/erasingrace.htm>).
- Sigmund, K., Fehr, E., & Nowak, M. A. (2001). The economics of fair play. *Scientific American*, 286(1), 82-87.

## VII. Sexual Selection, Male-Female Relationships and Mate Choice

### Lecture Topics

- A. Darwin's theory of sexual selection
- B. Trivers' theory of parental investment
- C. Male-female pair bonds – cooperation and conflict
- D. Mate choice – female preferences and male preferences

### Readings

**Textbook** – Chapter 5, Sex, mating and parental investment (**skip** pp 178-182)

#### e-Course Pack

- Campbell, A. (2002). Chapter 1: The essential woman: Biophobia and the study of sex differences. In A. Campbell, *A mind of her own* (pp. 1-33). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Daly, M., & Wilson, M. (1999). Darwinism and the roots of machismo. *Scientific American*, 10(2), 8-14.
- Fink, B., & Penton-Voak, I. (2002). Evolutionary psychology of facial attractiveness. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11(2), 154-158.

## VIII. Reproductive Strategies and Parental Behavior

### Lecture Topics

- A. A Darwinian view of parental behavior
- B. Parent-offspring conflict
- C. Maternal and paternal care – similarities and differences

### Readings

**Textbook** – Chapter 6, Growth, development and conflict (**skip** pp. 204-208 and pp. 220-226)

### e-Course Pack

- Campbell, A. (2002). Chapter 2: Mothers matter most: Women and parental investment. In A. Campbell, *A mind of her own* (pp. 35-63). New York: Oxford University Press.

## IX. Cognition and Culture – if time allows

### Lecture Topics

- A. Brain size and social intelligence
- B. Culture and natural selection

### Readings

**Textbook** – Chapter 6, Nature, nurture, language and culture (**skip** pp. 244-261)

**e-Course Pack** - No reading assignment

**General references for Psy 410/510.** In the last few years, a number of undergraduate-level evolutionary psychology textbooks have been published. You might want to consult them for additional information on a topic that interests you or if you have difficulty with a particular topic presented in lecture.

*Human Evolutionary Psychology.* (2002) Barrett, L., Dunbar, R. and J. Lycett. Prince University Press.

*Evolutionary Psychology, The New Science of the Mind.* (1999) Buss, D. M. Allyn & Bacon. There's a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

*Evolutionary Psychology, The Ultimate Origins of Human Behavior.* (2002) Palmer, J. A. and L. K. Palmer. Allyn & Bacon.

*Psychology, An Evolutionary Approach.* (2001). Gaulin, S. J. C. and D. H. McBurney. Prentice-Hall Inc.

*Evolution and Human Behavior, Darwinian Perspectives on Human Behavior.* (2000) Cartwright, J. The MIT Press.

*Evolutionary Psychology.* (2003). Rossano, M. J. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

**Journals.** Publications on Darwinian (adaptive) analyses of human behavior appear in a variety of journals in several fields of study. There are two journals in particular that are devoted almost exclusively to studies of human behavior grounded in modern Darwinian theory. The library subscribes to both journals, each of which contains up-to-date empirical and theoretical articles written by scholars in the field.

*Evolution and human behavior.* (Formerly, *Ethology and Sociobiology*). Elsevier Science.

*Human nature : an interdisciplinary biosocial perspective.* Aldine de Gruyter

**Web sites.** Here is a short list of excellent web sites that deal with evolutionary psychology.

The Center for Evolutionary Psychology at the University of Santa Barbara  
<http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/>

A list of frequently asked questions in evolutionary psychology  
<http://www.anth.ucsb.edu/projects/human/evpsychfaq.html>

The official homepage of the Evolution and Human Behavior Society  
<http://www.hbes.com/>

Click on the "links" button to access an extensive list of web addresses related to evolutionary psychology

The Open Directory Project on Sociobiology  
<http://dmoz.org/Science/Biology/Sociobiology/>