

PSYC410/510

Evolutionary Psychology: Mon/Wed 2:00-3:20pm (McKenzie Hall 229)

Instructor: Dr. Azim Shariff

Office hours: Monday/Wednesday: 3:45-4:45pm, or by appointment, in Straub 329

Email: shariff@uoregon.edu (please put "410" in the subject line)

TA: Erik Knight

Office hours: Thursday: 11:30-1:30pm, or by appointment, in Straub 337

Email: elk@uoregon.edu (please put "410" in the subject line)

Class Format: In order to facilitate active participation, classes will alternate between Lecture Classes and Discussion Classes. For each topic, we'll start with a Lecture Class, in which I'll introduce the topic and the assigned readings (which will all be available online). The following class will be devoted to discussion of various aspects and controversies relating to the topic. I will lead the discussion, but will base it on the Discussion Questions that you generate (see Assignments and Evaluation)

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|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------|
| Assignments and Evaluation: | Discussion Question/Analysis Paper | 15%* |
| | Discussion Participation | 15% |
| | Midterm Exam | 20% |
| | Final Exam | 25% |
| | Term Paper | 25%* |

** No late assignments will be accepted without medical documentation. This is for your own good. The temptation to 'buy' more time with late penalties too often leads to the unnecessary hemorrhaging of grades.*

Discussion Question/Analysis Paper: Each student will sign up to prepare a two-page analysis paper of a question of their choosing relating to the week's lecture/reading topic.

Lecture Class -
Wednesday

Analysis Paper -
Due Friday Midnight

Discussion Class -
Monday

This paper should be submitted via email no later than midnight on the Friday preceding a Monday discussion class, or the Monday preceding a Wednesday discussion class. The questions discussed in these papers will then form the basis of the Discussion Class.

You may sign up at <http://tinyurl.com/6j7uqhz> (max 7 students per topic).

Please sign up before next class as the 1st papers are due this Friday, Sep 30th.

You can see examples of graded papers on the Blackboard's "course documents."

These analysis papers will be graded as follows:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Suitability of Question for Discussion | 5% |
| Knowledge of Material | 5% |
| Sophistication of Analysis | 5% |
| Total | 15% of final grade |

Discussion Participation: A key focus of the class will be active discussion of controversies within the field of evolutionary psychology. As a result, you will all have ample opportunity to actively participate in the class discussions. Engaging with these discussions will form a not insignificant **15% of final grade**.

Term Paper: The term paper will be a concise but in-depth treatment of a problem within evolutionary psychology that bridges at least two of the topics covered in class. The best papers will involve a review and evaluation of the current empirical and theoretical literature on the relevant topics, and an original contribution to the issue, either via a reframing of the theory, a unique marriage of disparate topics, a compelling critical challenge to existing positions, or a well-thought out proposal for a new empirical investigation of an unresolved issue. 10 pages (double-spaced) Grading of the paper will be broken down as follows:

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Breadth and understanding of existing research | 10% |
| Insightfulness of original contribution | 10% |
| <u>Engagingness, style and composition</u> | <u>5%</u> |
| Total | 25% of final grade |

Midterm & Final Exam: The midterm will consist solely of multiple-choice questions, while the final will add some open response questions. They will cover material from the readings, the class lectures and the discussions, and the final will be cumulative. **Midterm (Oct 26th): 20%. Final (Dec 6th): 25%**

Experimental credits: One of the best ways of learning about how psychological research is conducted is for students to participate in psych experiments themselves. You will have the opportunity to earn up to 2% on top of your grade for participating in two hours worth of experiment through the Psychology Research Participant Pool (<https://uopsych.sona-systems.com/>). Alternatively, you can also earn these 2% by completing a methodological critique of a recent (2009-2011) empirical paper from the journal *Evolution and Human Behavior*. **2% bonus.**

Disability Services: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall, at 346-1155, or disabsrv@uoregon.edu

Academic Misconduct: If you knowingly engage in academic misconduct, you are not only cheating your fellow students, but missing the point of a college education. And if you get caught, you'll get a 0 on the assignment or test, and possibly face more severe punishment. Please inform yourself about the student conduct code (<http://conduct.uoregon.edu>) and about plagiarism, a particularly common form of misconduct (<http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students>)

Class Schedule & Readings

LC= Lecture Class

DC= Discussion Class

Mon, September 26: Intro to Ev Psych I: The Why Question in Psychology (LC)

- (1) Pinker: Why Nature & Nurture won't go away. *Boston Globe*, 2004
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture1-1>

Wed, September 28: Intro to Ev Psych II: Key Concepts and Mechanisms (LC)

- (1) Tooby & Cosmides: Evolutionary Psychology: A primer.
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture2-1>
- (2) Buss et al. Adaptations, Exaptations & Spandrels. *American Psychologist*, 1998
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture2-2>

Mon, October 3: Intro to Ev Psych I & II (DC)

Wed, October 4: Challenges to Ev Psych (LC)

- (1) de Wall: Evolutionary Psychology: The Wheat and the Chaff. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 2002
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture3-1a>
- (2) Angier: Men, Women, Sex & Darwin. *NYT magazine*, 1999
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture3-2a>
- (3) Chopra: Why Evolutionary Biology Embraces the Bogus. *Huffington Post*, 2007
Part 1: <http://tinyurl.com/lecture3-3a>
Part 2: <http://tinyurl.com/lecture3-3b>

Mon, October 10: Challenges to Ev Psych (DC)

Wed, October 12: Sex (LC)

- (1) Bjorklund & Shackleford: Differences in Parental Investment Contribute to Important Differences Between Men and Women. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1999
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture4-1>
- (2) Miller: How mate choice shaped human nature: A review of sexual selection and human evolution. *Book chapter*, 1998
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture-4-2>

Mon, October 17: Sex (DC)

Wed, October 19: Sex II: (LC)

- (1) Baumeister & Vohs: Sexual Economics: Sex as female resource for social exchange in heterosexual relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 2004

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture5-1>

- (2) Kanazawa: Why productivity fades with age: The crime–genius connection. *Journal of Research in Personality*

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture5-2>

Optional: Kirkpatrick: The Evolution of Human Homosexual Behavior. *Current Anthropology*.

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture5-option>

Mon, October 24: Sex II: (DC)

Wed, October 26: MIDTERM EXAM

Mon, October 31: Cognition and Language (LC)

- (1) Hauser, Chomsky & Fitch: The Faculty of Language: What is it, who has it, and how did it evolve? *Science*, 2002

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture6-1>

- (2) Ramachandran: Mirror neurons as the driving force behind the 'great leap forward'. *Edge essay*,

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture6-2>

Wed, November 2: Cognition and Language (DC)

Mon, November 7: Morality (LC)

- (1) Pinker – The Moral Instinct, *New York Times*, 1998

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture7-1>

- (2) Irons: In our own self-image, *Skeptic*, 1996

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture7-2>

Optional: Henrich: Cooperation, Punishment and the Evolution of Human Institutions.

<http://tinyurl.com/lecture7-option>

Web, November 9: Morality (DC)

Mon, November 14: Culture (LC)

- (1) Ehrlich: Does human culture evolve via natural selection, as our genes do? *Seed*, 2008
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture8-1>
- (2) Mesoudi, Whiten & Laland: Is human cultural evolution Darwinian? Evidence reviewed from the perspective of *The Origin of Species*.
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture8-2>

Wed, November 16: Culture (DC)

Mon, November 21: Food & Disease (LC) <Term Papers Due>

- (1) Wrangham: How does cooking play a part in evolution? *Big Think Video*, 2010
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture9-1>
- (2) Rozin: Food & Eating. *Handbook of Cultural Psychology*, 2007
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture9-2>
- (3) Schaller & Murray: Pathogens, Personality, and Culture. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2008
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture9-3>

Wed, November 23: Food & Disease (DC)

Mon, November 28: Religion (LC)

- (1) Dawkins: Viruses of the Mind, *Book Chapter*, 1991
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture10-1>
- (2) Shariff, Norenzayan & Henrich: The Birth of High Gods. *Book Chapter*, 2009.
<http://tinyurl.com/lecture10-2>

Wed, November 30: Religion (DC)

Wed, December 6: FINAL EXAM (3:15PM)