



## PSY 410: Evolutionary Psychology (Winter, 2012)

Tues/Thurs 5-6:20 pm

Gerlinger 246

*Instructor:* Ryan Giuliano

*Office:* Straub 302

*Office hours:* Tues/Thurs 3-4:00 pm, or by appointment

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### Course Overview

Evolutionary psychology is the application of Darwinian analysis to the study of human behavior. Evolutionary psychology is *not* a sub-field within psychology (i.e., cognitive, developmental, or clinical psychology), but rather an *approach* to answering questions about behavior. Thus, this course will emphasize *critical thinking* via evolutionary theory to tackle questions from a variety of fields in psychology. Topics covered will range from the neurological basis of human thought to patterns of social behavior such as morality, sex, and religion.

### Course Materials

There is no textbook assigned for this course. Weekly readings will be posted on Blackboard at least one week prior to in-class discussions.

### Class Format

Most class meetings will be lecture-based, with presentations used during lecture available for download on Blackboard. Lectures will cover assigned readings (also available on Blackboard) and where possible, will involve coordinated group discussion. Students are encouraged to speak up during lecture and offer comments on the material being presented, but with respect to your classmates and the limited size of our class, please keep this commentary relevant and appropriate. Coordinated discussions will take place during some lectures, where students will be split into groups of 5-6 to discuss specific questions raised by the lecture.

### Assignments and Evaluation

Mini-quizzes	5%
Participation	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Term Paper	30%
Final Exam	30%

*\*No late assignments will be accepted without medical documentation. This is for your own good. Temptations to incur late penalties lead to greater loss.*

**Mini-quizzes:** In lieu of an attendance requirement, a mini-quiz will be given at the end of each lecture, consisting of a single multiple-choice or short-answer question. There will be roughly 15 quizzes throughout the term, the best 10 of which will count toward your grade. Thus, it may not be critical for you to take each quiz. **5% of final grade.**

**Participation:** A key focus of this course is to encourage critical thinking and skepticism about controversies within the field of evolutionary psychology. There will be ample

opportunity for participation during lectures, as students are encouraged to speak up at any time, and also during discussion segments that will be coordinated during class. Engaging with these discussions will form a not insignificant **15% of your final grade**.

*Term Paper:* You will write 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, plus an original contribution to the issue, either via a reframing of the theory, a unique marriage of disparate topics, or a proposal for a new empirical investigation of an unresolved issue. 10 pages (double-spaced). Grading of the paper will be broken down as follows:

<i>Breadth and understanding of existing research</i>	12%
<i>Insightfulness of original contribution</i>	12%
<i>Engagingness, style, and composition</i>	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30% of final grade</b>

*Midterm & Final Exam:* The midterm and final will consist mostly of multiple-choice questions, with a few open response, short-answer questions. Exams will cover material from the readings, the class lectures, and the discussions. Since course material will be building upon the foundations of evolutionary theory covered early in the course, the final exam will be cumulative. **Midterm: 20%. Final: 30%.**

*Experimental Credits:* One of the best ways of learning about how psychological research is conducted is to participate in psych experiments yourself. You will have the opportunity to earn up to 2% on top of your final grade for participating in two hours worth of experiment through the Department of Psychology's Human Subjects Pool (<https://uopsych.sona-systems.com/>). Alternatively, you can also earn these 2% by completing a methodological critique of a recent (2009-2012) 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](mailto:disabsrv@uoregon.edu).

## **Academic Misconduct**

If you knowingly engage in academic misconduct, you are not only cheating your fellow students, but are missing the point of a college education. If caught, you will 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\*

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
1	Tues (01/10) Thurs (01/12)	Introduction & Syllabus Evolution Basics
2	Tues (01/17) Thurs (01/19)	Core Concepts of Evolutionary Psychology Challenges & Controversies
3	Tues (01/24) Thurs (01/26)	Development & Epigenetics The Brain: Mental Modules?
4	Tues (01/31) Thurs (02/02)	Language & Cognition Stress & Anxiety
5	Tues (02/07) Thurs (02/09)	Emotion <b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>
6	Tues (02/14) Thurs (02/16)	Sex: Mate Selection Sex: Parenting & Gender Differences
7	Tues (02/21) Thurs (02/23)	Cooperation & Altruism Social Intelligence & Theory of Mind
8	Tues (02/28) Thurs (03/01)	Morality <b>TERM PAPERS DUE</b> Religion
9	Tues (03/06) Thurs (03/08)	Culture Food & Disease
10	Tues (03/13) Thurs (03/15)	Consciousness Meme Theory
Finals	Tues (03/20)	<b>FINAL EXAM @ 7:00 pm</b>

\*schedule subject to change