



PSY 410: Evolutionary Psychology (Fall 2015)

Tues-Thurs 10:00-11:20 pm
Lokey Education Building 117

Instructor: Ryan Giuliano (giuliano@uoregon.edu)

Office hours: LISB 118, Thurs 11:30-12:30 pm or by appt.

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 will cover the biological basis of a wide range of human behaviors, such as sex, emotion, stress, morality, culture, religion, and consciousness.

Course Materials

There is no textbook assigned for this course. Weekly readings will be posted on Canvas at least one week prior to in-class discussions. Exams will feature multiple questions from each reading, so it is recommended that students not only read all material but read thoroughly enough to be able to think critically about the content. A significant portion of the readings will include peer-reviewed journal articles with dense scientific language. Each student's ability to parse these articles for the information most relevant to what is emphasized during lectures will be crucial for performing well in this course. For example, students are not expected to be expert in neuroscience or genetics, but students are expected to be able to discuss how neuroscience or genetics findings relate to evolution and/or psychology.

Class Format

Most class meetings will be lecture-based, with presentations used during lecture available for download on Canvas. Lectures will cover assigned readings that should be read *before* class, so that coordinated group discussion may be possible. Students are encouraged to speak up during lecture and offer comments on the material being presented.

Assignments and Evaluation

Mini-quizzes	16%
Projects	24%
Exams	60%

**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 consisting of 3 to 7 multiple choice questions will be interspersed within each lecture. There will be roughly 16 mini-quizzes throughout the term, the best 13 of which will count toward your grade. Thus, it may not be critical for you to take each quiz. Since three quizzes will be dropped when calculating your grade, there will be no make-up opportunities. If you know you will not be able to attend a given lecture due to a university-excused absence, it is your responsibility to contact me ahead of time and we will make alternative arrangements. **Students who complete all 16 mini-quizzes will receive a 2% bonus on their final course grade.**

Projects: Two projects will be assigned during the course, each being worth 12% of your final grade. Additional details of the project requirements will be discussed in class and provided on Canvas. The purpose of the projects is to provide an opportunity to explore a specific issue of evolutionary psychology that is particularly interesting to you. You will critically evaluate the research that has been performed within your domain of interest (project 1), and then will be asked to communicate what you have learned to members of the general public who may benefit from this information (project 2).

Project 1. You will choose a specific content area to focus on from a list of topics provided on the course blog and email your top three preferences to giuliano@uoregon.edu by October 8th. Once group assignments have been confirmed by your instructor, you will choose one article from your group's provided reading list and critically evaluate this article in a short paper (~2 pages). All students will email their papers to giuliano@uoregon.edu by the due date, November 3rd.

Project #2. Together with the group members in your focus area, you will create an 'info-graphic' or informational flyer oriented towards the general public that characterizes a general finding within evolutionary psychology. In addition, you will also turn in a write-up of 1-2 pages (double-spaced) that summarizes the content of the info-graphic, including proper citations and references in APA format. Importantly, your graphic and write-up must include at least 7 citations of peer-reviewed scientific articles to back up the claims you are making. This project will involve finding a delicate balance between critically evaluating empirical information, while presenting this information in a fashion that can be readily digested by non-scientists. Individuals choosing to work alone will have the option to do so (please contact me). The top three rated infographics will have the opportunity to present their infographic on the final day of class for extra credit. Each group will submit one project via email to giuliano@uoregon.edu due at the beginning of week 10 by the end of the day (12/1).

Exams: All exams will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions covering material from readings, class lectures, and discussions. Since course material will be building upon the foundations of evolutionary theory covered early in the course, some elements of the final exam will be cumulative. **Each exam is 20% of final grade.**

Experimental Credits: You may earn up to 2% extra credit 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*. Critiques must be written on an article pre-approved by the instructor.

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 the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall, at 541-346-1155, or uoaec@uoregon.edu; <http://aec.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://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>. This includes falsifying information about absences. All excused absences must be approved through Oregon Hall (see me for details).

Class Schedule*

<u>Week</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading(s) & Due Dates</u>
1	T (9/29) R (10/1)	Syllabus & Intro to Evolution NO CLASS: Library HW	Cosmides & Tooby (1997) <i>see lecture slides for 9/29</i>
2	T (10/6) R (10/8)	Core Concepts of EP Sexual Selection	Buss et al. (1998) Miller (1998) — Votes for topic DUE
3	T (10/13) R (10/15)	Genes & Kin Selection Challenges & Controversies	Nowak et al. (2010) deWall; Angier; Chopra
4	T (10/20) R (10/22)	Exam # 1 Stress & Status Hierarchies	Sapolsky (2004; 2005)
5	T (10/27) R (10/29)	Emotion Brain Evolution	Ekman (1999) Krubitzer (2009)
6	T (11/3) R (11/5)	Language & Cognition Social Intelligence & ToM	Ghazanar (2008) — Project 1 DUE Baron-Cohen (1999)
7	T (11/10) R (11/12)	Development & Epigenetics EXAM #2	Weaver et al. (2004)
8	T (11/17) R (11/19)	Morality Cultural Evolution	Haidt (2008); Henrich (2006) Mesoudi et al. (2004)
9	T (11/24) R (11/26)	Religion NO CLASS: Thanksgiving	Norenzayan & Shariff (2008)
10	T (12/1) R (12/3)	Memetics Consciousness & the Self	Dawkins (1991) — Project 2 DUE Dennett (1995)
Final	R (12/9)	FINAL EXAM @ 8:00 am (Wednesday)	

*subject to change (see Canvas)