

## **ANTHROPOLOGY 3336G-650**

### **Debates in Human Evolution**

#### **COURSE OUTLINE**

**Winter 2021**

**Instructor:** Dr. Ian Colquhoun (he/him)

**Email:** colquhou@uwo.ca

**Office Hours:** Consultation via 'Zoom' can be scheduled; please email me ([note](#) -- There has not been a TA assigned to this course).

**Credit value:** 0.5 credit

**Mode of delivery:** For 2020/2021 this course will be conducted online, synchronously, using Zoom videoconferencing technology, with discussions to take place weekly during the scheduled synchronous class time.

**Synchronous class time:** Mondays 12:30-1:30 p.m. EST.

**Calendar Course Description:** This course provides an overview of the fossil evidence for human evolution as a background for the critical examination of controversies in the field. Areas to be explored include human taxonomy, the evolution of human behaviour and the origin of modern humans.

**Antirequisites:** None

**Prerequisites:** Anthropology 2226A/B and registration in year 3 or 4 in any module.

*Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.*

#### **Course Syllabus:**

This course provides a detailed overview of the human evolutionary fossil record. This review of the hominin fossil record will serve as the basis for critical examination of interpretive controversies in the field of paleoanthropology. Areas to be explored include hominin taxonomy, the evolution of human behaviour (including if pre-*Homo* hominin taxa could have been tool manufacturers as early as 3.3 MYA), and the origin of anatomically modern humans. In addition, we will also consider current and ongoing debates in paleoanthropology, including the relationship of Neandertals (and Denisovans) to anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*, and whether *Homo floresiensis* is a recently discovered extinct hominid, or a taxon based merely on an anatomically modern, but pathological, *Homo sapiens*.

*A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course's OWL site before the first day of class.*

## Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a firm grasp on the current consensus among paleoanthropologists concerning the taxonomic diversity represented in the hominin fossil record, as well as recognizing those fossil hominins whose taxonomic position remains regarded as problematic or uncertain;
- show broad familiarity with the very rich (and always accumulating) peer-reviewed literature on fossil hominins;
- point to a major accomplishment in the course being preparation and (synchronous online) delivery of a conference-style presentation on the topic of their course research paper.

## Course Materials:

The **required text** is:

Conroy, G.C. and Pontzer, H., 2012. *Reconstructing Human Origins: A Modern Synthesis* (3rd edition). W.W. Norton: New York.

*Registered students will be able to access information on additional course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.*

## Evaluation:

Course requirements (aside from weekly attendance of classes) will include:

*Midterm Test* – **35%** of final course grade.

The mid-term examination will be written during the week of March 1st-5th, and will be worth 35% of the final course grade.

*Essays/Written Assignments/Reports* – worth a total of 65% of the final course grade:

**1)** The 2500-3000 word course research paper (approx. 12 pages of text; research papers should not exceed a maximum length of 15 pages of text) is due **Monday, April. 5th; 35% of the final course grade**. More information will be made available to students on the course OWL site. Note - there will be a 3% per day late penalty assessed on a paper's grade for research papers that are submitted between April 5th-8th (Apr. 8th being the revised date of the last day of classes for courses in the W'21 term); because the Registrar's Office expects the submission of final course grades within one week of the end of classes for courses with no final exam, late research papers will not be accepted after April 8th.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

**2).** Each student will make a 10-12 minute **oral presentation** (based on the topic of the research paper; **20% of the final course grade** -- scheduled for Mar. 29th and Apr. 5th);

**3).** Each student will also submit a **brief abstract** (300-word maximum) to complement the oral presentation (**10% of the final course grade**); these abstracts will be due between Mar. 29th and Apr. 8th.

**4). Final Exam – 0%** Note -- There is no final exam in this course (!!).

**Note** Regarding submitted written work:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

**Course-Specific Conditions Required to Pass this "Essay Course"**

Because Anthropology 3336G is classified as a so-called "essay course", all students registered in the course **must** submit a research paper **and** deliver a short (10-12 minute) oral presentation on the chosen topic of the research paper in order to pass this essay course.

**Course-Specific Statements and Policies:**

***Statement on Seeking Special Accommodations***

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

***Statement on Plagiarism***

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

**Institutional Statements and Policies**

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current academic policies regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation. These policies are outlined in Western's academic policies by clicking on this link: [Western's academic policies](#).

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