

Department of Anthropology

ANTH 3336G-650 - Debates in Human Evolution

COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2023

Version date: January 8, 2023

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.

Course information:

Credit value: 0.5

Mode of delivery: For the W'23 term, this course will be delivered online, asynchronously

Requisites:

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 Description:

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** is available on the course's OWL site.*

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;
- complete a term research paper that examines a "problem-oriented" research issue/problem in hominin paleoanthropology.

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 keeping up with the weekly readings) will include:

Midterm Test	35%
Research Paper	35%
PowerPoint Slide	15%
Journal abstract	15%

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

The mid-term test (in 'take-home' format) will be written during the week 6 of the term (Feb. 13-14), 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 by **Friday, March 31st; 35% of the final course grade**. 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, the March 31st submission date for the term research papers must be a hard deadline.

All submitted papers may be subject to 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 prepare a **PowerPoint slide set (10-12 slides)** that is based on, and provides a complementary summarization of, the topic of the research paper (**15% of the final course grade**) -- scheduled for submission between Mar. 29th and Apr. 5th);

3). Each student will also submit a **brief journal-style abstract (300-word maximum)** to complement your research paper (**15% of the final course grade**); these abstracts will be due between Apr. 3rd and Apr. 6th.

4). Final Exam – 0% of course grade; **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).

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. In addition to the research paper, a short (i.e., 10-12 slide) PowerPoint file to complement the research paper (emphasizing and highlighting the main aspects of the research paper) is also required.

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.

Academic Rights and Responsibilities

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Policies in the Academic Calendar](#) which include, but is not limited to, academic consideration for medical illness, accommodation for religious holidays, academic appeals, academic accommodation for students with disabilities, as well as scholastic discipline.

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