

Anthropology 2226B-650
Biological Anthropology
Department of Anthropology
COURSE OUTLINE (January 2024)
Winter Term 2024

Version date: Jan '24

Lectures:

Asynchronous delivery via OWL.

Instructor:

Dr. Ian Colquhoun (he/him)

Office hours: By appointment - email me (meetings via 'Zoom' can be scheduled).

Email: colquhou@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: TBA

Requisites:

Prerequisites: There are **not** any designated prerequisite courses to Anthro 2226A/B. However, students who have taken Anthro 1022A/B or Anthro 1026F/G (or the former Anthro. 1020E) should find they have a solid conceptual basis for the work in Anthro 2226A/B.

Antirequisites: None.

Course Description:

Biological (or, physical) anthropology is a very diverse anthropological subfield encompassing such research as: the study of human evolution (i.e., paleoanthropology), the study of living and fossil non-human primates (i.e., primatology and paleoprimateology), the study of the human skeleton (i.e., human osteology), and the study of adaptations in living human populations (i.e., human biology). As in other areas of evolutionary biology, the synthetic theory of evolution provides the conceptual framework for considering the biological processes and fossil evidence relevant to the evolution of the human species. This means our study of human evolution and adaptation

will also draw on aspects of numerous fields, including: genetics, population biology, primatology, conservation biology, ecology, and geology.

The course has a four-part structure, and will pursue an “issues-oriented” perspective that is based in a critical, comparative perspective:

- i)** We begin the course with a consideration of the **philosophy of science** and an examination of the **history of evolutionary thought**. In this first segment of the course, we will consider **the genetic basis of short-term and long-term evolutionary change**.
- ii)** The second segment of the course deals with the **evolution of the Order Primates**; this segment also includes an overview of the taxonomy, biogeography, and socioecology of those mammalian species most closely related to humans -- the living non-human primates.
- iii)** The third segment in the course focuses on the field of **paleoanthropology** -- the study of the fossil record of hominin evolution.
- iv)** The fourth, and concluding, segment of the course inspects **the adaptations, biologic variation, and biocultural behaviour of contemporary human populations**.

Throughout the term, in keeping with an “issues-oriented” perspective, attention will also be given to any material relevant to the course published in the academic literature and/or reported in the media as the term unfolds.

This is also a **lab course**, which adds an "applied" aspect to the course. A significant portion of your course grade (30.0%) will be based on the three lab reports you are expected to complete. The lab assignments will be comprised of practical exercises that will allow you to get some first-hand experience in the techniques of biological anthropology, to conduct qualitative observations, to make quantitative analyses, and to interpret and report on those observations and analyses. That said, concerning the lecture portion of the course, questions that arise from the course readings or lab exercises are encouraged – this means you should endeavour to be aware of material in the course text and/or weekly slide-deck files that can be of use in completing the lab exercises! A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be available on the course’s OWL site.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- be able to appreciate, recognize, and communicate the breadth of material that constitutes the field of biological anthropology (much of which is often reported in the popular media, but not explicitly identified as being “biological anthropology”);
- develop the ability to identify and describe major theoretical issues in the various sub-areas of biological anthropology (i.e., evolutionary theory, primate biology and taxonomy, paleoanthropology, and human biology);
- also gain familiarity with basic quantitative methods employed in comparative osteology, paleoanthropology, and human skeletal biology.

- acquire recognition of active and promising research fronts in biological anthropology and gain some background for predicting the directions where future research is most promising for major advances in the field.

Course Materials:

Our course text is: **Marks, Jonathan, 2017. *The Alternative Introduction to Biological Anthropology (2nd Edition)***. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The following online Open-Access biological anthropology text (*EXPLORATIONS AN OPEN INVITATION TO BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY*) may prove to be a useful supplementary source of information -- particularly if a student did not previously take one of the recommended first year anthropology courses that provides an introductory grounding to biological anthropology:

https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Anthropology/Physical_Anthropology/EXPLORATIONS%3A_An_Open_Invitation_to_Biological_Anthropology

Evaluation Breakdown:

Course requirements (aside from the expectation of keeping up with the weekly readings) will include:

- three lab assignment reports (10% each, for a total of 30% of final grade)
- a mid-term 'take-home' test (tentatively scheduled for Feb. 14th-15th; 35% of final grade)
- a final 'take-home' test (To be written during the W'24 Final Exam Period (Apr. 11th-30th) -- **date & time to be scheduled by the Registrar's Office**; 35% of final grade).

Lab Reports (3 x 10% each) – 30%

Each student is responsible for completing three required lab assignments during the course of the term. The lab assignment topics represent major elements of the material covered in the course. While the weekly "lecture" portion of the course has been moved to asynchronous delivery, there are still lab exercises that have been prepared regardless of the course's asynchronous delivery.

The class will be divided into three lab groups for purposes of completing the lab exercises -- each group's lab handouts are clearly labelled and available under the 'Resources' tab on the course OWL site. Switching lab groups will not be allowed without documentation of medical or compassionate grounds. Lab groups will work in rotation. Each lab group's assignments are to be handed in one week from the date the lab work was done (i.e., lab reports are due during the week after a set of lab exercises are completed). Submission of late lab assignments must include documentation to account

for the late submission --under such circumstances, there would be no late penalty assessed on late lab reports. Without such documentation, late lab reports will be penalized 0.05% for each day the lab report is late, up to a maximum of 3 days. **There will be no make-up labs.**

Midterm Test – 35%

The mid-term test in the course will occur in the form of a 'take-home' test which is tentatively set to be written February 14th-15th, 2024 (during Week 6 of the course). The mid-term test will **cover material from Week 1 through Week 6** of the course.

Final Test – 35%

The final test in this course will take place during the designated April 11th-30th, 2024 exam period. The date and time of the final test are scheduled by the Registrar's Office and will be distributed via an OWL 'Announcement', and posted on the course OWL site once the April exam period timetable is issued.

Answers on both the mid-term and final exams will follow a short essay format. Material covered on the exams will come from both the weekly video and slide-deck presentations as well as the weekly readings, but material highlighted in the weekly slide-decks will be emphasized. The slide decks also include material that is not covered in the course text (a good reason to appreciate **why** the **differences** between what Marks presents in his text and what gets presented in the slide-decks are worth paying attention to!).

Academic and Accommodation 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 lab or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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](#)

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. Please visit Western Libraries to read about [What is Plagiarism?](#)

Academic Rights and Responsibilities

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [academic policies](#) regarding accessibility, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and medical accommodation.

Note on Mid-term and Final tests -- Because Anthropology 2226B-650 is being delivered as an asynchronous online course, Western has a policy that mid-term and final tests can *only* be in one of two formats: **i)** "real-time" tests conducted online with 'cyberproctor' software, or **ii)** "take-home" tests that are administered over two consecutive days, with a 24-hour "question reveal" period (during which time students can be preparing their test answers) followed by a 6-hour window during which completed test answers must be submitted via the course OWL site. **We will be using "take-home" test formats for the mid-term and final tests in Anthropology 2226B-650.**

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