



Department of Anthropology
ANTHRO 2226B: Biological Anthropology
COURSE OUTLINE
Winter 2026

Date: December 8th, 2025

Instructor and Course Information:

Instructor: Madelyn Hertz

Method of delivery: In Person

Credit value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None

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

Course Description:

Biological anthropology is a subfield of the broader discipline of anthropology that studies the evolutionary history and biological diversity of humans and non-human primates. As biological anthropology is a subfield investigating human biology and evolutionary history, this course primarily draws on the synthetic theory of evolution and biocultural anthropological theory as a framework in conjunction with the contributions of primatology, paleoanthropology, and human biology to better understand ourselves.

This course is made up of four parts:

- What is "biological anthropology"? The philosophy of science, the history of evolutionary thought, genetics, and human heredity.
- What makes a primate? Primate evolution, behaviour, and biology.
- Why do anthropologists study bones? What makes a human human? What is "human nature"? The study of human evolution.
- When we study humans, we study people: human variation and biocultural considerations

A full course schedule including a week-by-week breakdown of topics and assigned readings will be posted on the Brightspace course site at the beginning of the term.

Learning Outcomes:

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

- Define fundamental terms, concepts, and methods associated with the study of biological anthropology (natural selection and evolution, living primates, fossil hominins, human variation).

- Explain the kinds of questions anthropologists ask about past people and their environments and describe/illustrate how anthropologists answer those questions using multiple lines of evidence.
- Critically evaluate scholarly research and other sources relevant to anthropological topics.
- Analyze bioanthropological concepts and cases and effectively communicate that analysis both orally (through participation in class discussions) and in written assignments.
- Identify connections between the human past, today's society, and your own life.

Course Materials:

Required textbook: [Explorations: An Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology](#)

This book is a free Open-Source online text. All other readings, videos, and podcasts will be available without cost through the course site on Brightspace.

Use of Brightspace

I will use Western's online course management program (Brightspace) to provide the final course outline and weekly schedule; communicate with the class; and provide copies of applicable readings and links to course materials. Copies of the presentations of the lectures will be made available for that week's content before each class. All grades will be posted in the Brightspace Gradebook.

All course material will be posted to Brightspace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. If you need assistance with Brightspace, you can seek support on the Brightspace Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers (e.g., Safari, Chrome, Edge, Firefox) are supported with Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.

Evaluation:

Grades will be based on the following:

- 4 Lab Assignments (exercises using materials provided)
- Mid-term Exam (multiple-choice questions and true-and-false questions)
- 1 activity (assignment designed to help you think about the material in a new way)
- Final Exam (multiple-choice questions, true-and-false questions, and a short essay; will take place during the December exam period)

4 Lab Assignments (4 x 7.5%)	30%
Creative Activity	15%
Mid-term Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

Lab Assignments – 4 x 7.5% (30%)

Labs involve practical exercises that will allow you to get some "hands-on" experience in the techniques of biological anthropology.

Each student is responsible for completing the lab assignments within the designated time, unless otherwise noted. Lab worksheets are due at **11:55pm on the Friday after your scheduled lab**. You can continue to submit until the following **Sunday at 11:55pm (48 hours)** without penalty, but you will not receive feedback.

Students may miss one lab assignment without documentation. A pre-scheduled make-up lab will be held on **March 25th**. Any student that misses a lab will be invited to attend that session. If the missed assignment is not completed at the general make-up lab, a zero will be assigned. Requests for make-up labs or extenuating circumstances will require documentation.

Important: Classroom Policy for Handling Lab Materials:

This course will involve the opportunity to handle casts of skeletal remains, along with the potential to view real skeletal remains in Western Anthropology's collections. As part of this course, it is expected that you will follow instructions and handle materials with respect.

Creative Activity – 15%

This assignment is an opportunity to think critically about the broader social context and application of the knowledge we're considering each week, and to further engage with course content and online media. Details of the activity will be posted on the Brightspace site.

The activity is due on **March 27th**. Assignments submitted by the deadline will receive feedback. We will continue to accept assignment submissions for an additional 3 days (72 hours) after the deadline, without penalty, but these late submissions will receive only a score and no feedback.

Mid-term Exam – 25%

The mid-term exam will take place on **February 11th**, in the regularly scheduled course time. The final exam is cumulative for the course and will consist of multiple-choice questions and true-and-false questions. More information on the mid-term exam format will be available on the course Brightspace site closer to the date.

Final Exam – 30%

The final exam will take place during the designated exam period. The date will be announced on the course site on Brightspace when the final exam schedule is released. The final exam is cumulative for the course and will involve a reflection on the methods used by biological anthropologists to learn about people in the past and present, and the ethical implications of research.

The exam will make use of multiple-choice, and other short forms of assessment (true/false, etc.) to evaluate students' learning and to allow students to synthesize knowledge gained throughout the course. The multiple-choice format allows for assessment of students' detailed knowledge of a broad range of concepts, theories, principles, and research that other formats do not permit. There will also be a short response/essay section as part of the final exam.

There are different types of multiple-choice questions used in this course, including application-based multiple-choice questions. Although application-based questions can be challenging for students, they are necessary to meet the learning outcomes of this course and to allow students to develop an appreciation for and understanding of the course material as it relates to organizational settings.

Late Assignments, Flexibility, and Accessibility

This course is designed with accessibility and flexibility in mind. In addition to the built-in flexibility in Activity submission, your lowest Quiz grade will be dropped. The course Brightspace site, lectures, and course readings will be formatted for accessibility, to the best of my ability. For the four lab assignments, there will be a 48-hour grace period after the submission target date. After the 48-hour grace period, there will be a penalty of 5% per day for up to one week after the original deadline; after this, late assignments will not be accepted without documentation, or a conversation/email correspondence with myself (a decision to accept an assignment late without documentation will be at my discretion).

I welcome other suggestions for how to make the course more accessible to you.

One way to provide those suggestions is via the course survey (see link on Brightspace); you can also reach out to me by email.

Please consult Western's policy on [Academic Consideration](#).

Additional Statements

Email Correspondence and Communication

I will do my best to respond to your emails in a timely fashion. However, I ask that on weekends or late at night to be patient if I do not respond right away. I do not respond to emails or grade assignments on Saturdays. On weekdays, if I have not responded in 24 hours you can send me another email. Use the following guide for emails:

- Make sure that the answer to your question is not already in the syllabus.
- To ensure your email is routed correctly, please begin the subject line with *ANTH2226*, followed by the topic of your concern.

Although I take a casual and friendly approach to teaching, please communicate with me via email and in-person with respect.

Institutional Statements and Policies

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#) policies in the Academic Calendar. Such items include accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, academic considerations, academic appeals, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and code of student conduct.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

You may use laptops, tablets, or other electric devices to take notes in class. You may not record class lectures or discussions. Phones or other devices, including smart watches, cannot be worn during exams or tests.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Any submitted assignments should be your own original work. Plagiarism or the use of generative-AI tools to produce student work is an academic offence. You may use generative-AI tools to brainstorm ideas (although it would be better to talk to fellow students in the course or to come see me in office hours!), but you cannot use such tools to produce your assignments.

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, in the [Scholastic Offenses policy](#).

All required written work 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 Western University and [Turnitin.com](#).

Computer-marked multiple-choice texts and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

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. All students are expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Writing assignments should reflect the student's own thoughts and independent written work.

Support Services

For student support services please see the [Office of the Registrar](#) and [Academic Support and Engagement](#).

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts on the [GBSV survivor support webpage](#).

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Accessible Education: Students with disabilities work with the Accessible Education office which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. Please see [Accessible Education](#) for information.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays: Students should review the policy for [Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

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