

**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**ANTH 722: SEMINAR IN BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**Semester:** Fall 2019

**Section:** 1 (W 5:00 - 6:40, FA 538)

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**Office Hours:** M, F 12-2 ([Make an Appointment](#))

**DESCRIPTION:**

The purpose of this course is to give students a graduate-level understanding of the historically significant and contemporary primary literature in biological anthropology. Participants will become conversant in the scientific evaluation of evidence from the fossil record, the skeletal record, genetic data, and comparative primatology. Participants will also learn to concisely contextualize scientific arguments concerning human evolution and biological variation.

**COURSE GRADES:**

Your grade for the course is based on the average of your weekly grades. Each week, 60% of your grade comes from the Critical Summary, 30% from your Forum Contribution, and 10% from your Replies to Forum Contributions. All assignments and your final grade are evaluated on a "ten-point grade scale":

90-100% = "A"      80-89% = "B"      70-79% = "C"      60-69% = "D"      <60% = "F"

There is no "curve" applied to the grades in this course (i.e., if you have an 88 average, you will receive a "B" for the course; if you have a 75 average, you will receive a "C" for the course; etc.).

**Course Requirements:**

**Critical Summaries**

Each week, participants will use electronic library resources to find and read the assigned literature. Each participant will prepare a critical summary of the assigned article. The writing style will follow the requirements of the [Current Anthropology Style Guide](#). Each summary should begin with the citation of the reading selection using [Current Anthropology Style](#). The critical summary will be between 1½ to 2 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, 12pt font, one-inch margins). Critical summaries should summarize and briefly contextualize the reading. The summaries will contribute 60% toward the final grade for the course.

- (a) The evaluation component of your summary should place the article in the theoretical and disciplinary context. As the seminar unfolds week by week, summaries should evolve by making connections with prior weeks' readings and discussions.

- (b) The critical summaries will be completed and emailed to the instructor in a WORD document no later than 5pm on the Friday before the seminar session. **Do not** send links to document locations (Google docs, Office 365, etc.).
- (c) On the Saturday before the seminar session, all of the summaries will be posted on the iLearn website as a pdf document. Students should read all of the summaries before the session.

### Forum Contributions

- (1) Each week participants will contribute one forum posting on iLearn. The forum postings will contribute 30% toward the final grade for the course. Forum postings must be submitted no later than noon on Saturdays. Your posting should cause classmates to think, react, investigate, or question. Quality postings **should**:
  - a) Pertain to the subject area for the week's reading assignment
  - b) Be concise and on target (100 to 250 words), but detailed enough for understanding and meaningful application to the issue addressed
  - c) Raise an area of inquiry or an issue in a clear manner for further discussion or debate
  - d) Reference the primary literature (i.e., literature in peer-reviewed venues)

Forum postings **should not**:

- a) Reiterate the content of a submitted critical summary
  - b) Reiterate content from the week's reading assignment
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- (2) Each week, participants will contribute at least two replies to at least two different forum postings. The forum replies will contribute 10% toward your final grade for the course. Forum replies must be posted no later than noon on Tuesdays. Below are some examples of the kinds of replies that will be counted. Feel free to "get into" the discussion with as many comments to your peers as you'd like. Be sure that your response is insightful and will help your peers better understand the context of the week's subject area.
    - a) **Add a suggestion.** For example, after reading a posting or reply from a peer, you might decide to add an example, answer a question, or clarify an idea (all should provide references).
    - b) **Provide feedback to others such as a specific comment or idea along with an example, expansion, or suggestion (all should provide references).** In other words, "way to go Susie" is a good start, but won't get credit. You could even start with "that's crap Susie", however the key is providing positive, constructive criticism or helpful and encouraging advice. Healthy debate is fine however, please refrain from mean-spirited comments.
    - c) **State an opinion and provide supportive evidence or arguments with references.** Informed debate is critical for academic discourse. Please feel free to engage in debate as long as you provide specific references.

## **Seminar Attendance**

Each week, each participant will fully participate in the class discussion. That is, you should come prepared with notes from the assigned articles for discussion, discussion points, and questions for further consideration. You are allowed one session absence without consequence. Each additional absence from a session will result in a 10% reduction in your final grade for the course. Arriving late for a session is counted as an absence.

Participants who miss an assignment (critical summary, forum contribution, or forum reply) will be dropped from the course.

## **TEXTBOOKS:**

There are no texts for this class. You will be reading from the primary literature.

One of the most important things that a graduate student must be proficient at is finding appropriate sources of literature and learning how to efficiently navigate the library system of your campus. To this end, you will be learning how to navigate our electronic journal resources by finding the articles for each week. In doing so, you should take note of the easiest ways to find the widest bodies of appropriate literature. You should also begin developing a list of potential journals for your thesis research.

## **ASSIGNMENT POLICY:**

All assignments must be turned in by their stated due date. Late assignments will not receive credit.

## SCHEDULE

	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READING</b>
<b>Sep 4</b>	<b>The Discipline of Biological Anthropology</b>	Peregrine et al. 2012
<b>Sep 11</b>	<b>The Evolutionary Perspective</b>	Freeman 1974
<b>Sep 18</b>	<b>Contemporary Perspectives on Natural Selection</b>	Hancock and Di Rienzo 2008
<b>Sep 25</b>	<b>Nonhuman Primate Behavior and Biology I</b>	Whiten and van de Waal 2017
<b>Oct 2</b>	<b>Nonhuman Primate Behavior and Biology II</b>	Louail et al. 2019
<b>Oct 9</b>	<b>Taxonomies and Phylogenies – Theory and Method</b>	Wood and Lonergan 2008
<b>Oct 16</b>	<b>The Origin of Primates</b>	Soligo and Smaers 2016
<b>Oct 23</b>	<b>Origins of the Hominina</b>	Frelat et al. 2017
<b>Oct 30</b>	<b>Origins of the genus <i>Homo</i></b>	Antón and Snodgrass 2012
<b>Nov 6</b>	<b>Late Hominin Evolution</b>	Schroeder and Ackermann 2007
<b>Nov 13</b>	<b>Human Diversity</b>	Relethford 2009
<b>Nov 20</b>	<b>Bioarchaeology</b>	Griffin 2014

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## Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Critically read and discuss the primary literature in biological anthropology.
- Distinguish between strong and weak methodological approaches and interpretations.
- Explain the use of evolutionary theory in biological anthropology.
- Evaluate the evidence from the fossil record, the skeletal record, genetic data, and comparative primatology to articulate well-reasoned responses to questions pertaining to human evolution, variation, and adaptation.
- Compare and contrast alternative theories concerning the adaptive advantages and development of specific human traits such as bipedalism, encephalization, and language skills.
- Use genetic and evolutionary theory to explain the pattern of modern human genotypic and phenotypic variation and relate them to ecological variables.

### University Withdrawal Policy

The Withdrawal deadline occurs three weeks after the semester starts. After this deadline, students must petition for a Withdrawal, or receive a non-passing grade for a class if they do not complete the requirements of the course. Withdrawals are permitted only for serious and/ or compelling reasons. In the last three weeks of the semester, students must be able to document the reason for their withdrawal.

**At SF State, dropping a course is the student's responsibility. However, faculty are authorized to instructor-drop students who do not attend the first class meeting or do not meet the course criteria.**

### Disability Statement Policy

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email ([dprc@sfsu.edu](mailto:dprc@sfsu.edu)).

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact: The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; [http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe\\_plc/](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/) Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/> For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>