

Anthropology 1100: Introduction to Biological Anthropology and Prehistory

Section 001, Manning Hall 320, 2:40 am – 3:45 pm MW

Instructor: Dr. Kathryn Hicks

Office: Manning Hall 300A

Email: kahicks2@memphis.edu

Office hours: Monday 11 am – 2 pm or by appointment

Course Description

Anthropology is the study of human beings, starting from the initial emergence of our species and including diverse cultures from across the globe. The following are some of the big questions that anthropologists seek to answer: 1) what are the similarities and differences among human cultures; 2) how does our cultural upbringing influence how we understand and interpret the world around us; 3) how are humans different from or similar to other species and why; 4) how has human biology and social organization changed through time, and; 5) what are the biological similarities and differences between people from different regions of the world? In this class we will focus specifically on questions 3, 4 and 5.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. describe the place of humans in the natural world, including our relationship to other species.
2. explain how our history as a species (both evolutionary and social) can help us better understand ourselves today.
3. explain the methods that anthropologists and other scientists use to answer questions about human beings, and what kinds of data anthropologists use to support their conclusions.
4. “think anthropologically” by applying anthropological theory or knowledge to better understand and interpret real-world issues.

Readings: The required text is Lewis, Jurmain, and Kilgore, *Understanding Humans: Introduction to Physical Anthropology and Archaeology (11th edition)*.

Assignments

Assignment	Points
1) Attendance and Participation	10
2) In-Class Assignments	35
3) Exams	45
2 mid-terms, 1 final of equal weight	
4) Group Presentation	10
5) Bonus Assignment	2
Total	102

1) Attendance and participation (10 points)

Students may miss up to three classes without penalty. For each additional absence you will lose 3 attendance points until you have a grade of 0. Consistently coming to class late or leaving early, not engaging in group work, or sleeping during class time will also affect your grade. Documentation is not necessary unless you miss an exam.

Students are responsible for reading the assigned sections of the textbook, and some exam questions will be drawn from them. I will also periodically ask students to focus on small sections of the book and be prepared to summarize them for the class. Students will retain full participation points by making a good faith effort to read and understand the material, and being prepared to deliver their summary when called upon.

2) In-class assignments (35 points)

Students will complete several assignments during class time; some in small groups and others as individuals. These are designed to help students work with and better understand material from lectures and the text book. There will be no make-up assignments, but I will drop the two lowest grades for each student.

Example assignments:

Case-Studies: You will be provided with background information and data from real scientific studies, and asked to interpret the information and answer questions about it as a group.

Labs: You will be provided with relevant archaeological or fossil materials and asked to analyze them and report on your observations.

The fact that individual and group work happens in class means that you need to be prepared when you come to class, having done and thought about the readings.

3) Exams (45 points)

In-class exams will be made up of a combination of matching, short answer, short essay and reading comprehension questions. We will have an in-class study session in advance of each exam. The exams are not comprehensive; each covers two class units.

4) Group Presentations (10 points)

Working in groups of 3-4, students will present to the class on a Scientific American article. Your job will be to summarize and explain the scientific research outlined in the paper and explain how it relates to course content. There will be a number of papers to choose from for each class unit, and one or two groups will complete 10-15 minute presentations at the beginning of specific class sessions. Following your presentation, I will ask you to complete an evaluation of yourself and your peers to determine whether all group members contributed to the planning and preparation. The rest of the class will fill out an evaluation of each of the other presentations. If you sign up for a time slot and then miss the presentation without an acceptable documented reason, you will not have an opportunity to make up the assignment.

5) Office Hours Bonus Assignment (2 points)

A strategy employed by many successful students is to take advantage of office hours. This is a good opportunity to get clarification or explanation of difficult concepts from the professor, and make sure that the professor knows who you are and what you hope to get out of the class. I also find it helpful to touch base with students early on in the course to find out how you are doing and to discuss possible strategies to help you learn more from the class or better understand the content. I will give students up to 2 points for coming to my office and speaking with me about their progress in the class etc, provided that you come to see me before the second exam.

Much of the work I have described here will take place during normal class time, along with films and course lectures. The work you will complete outside of class includes reading, preparing for exams and preparing your presentations.

Course Policies

- 1) Students are responsible to read and follow the syllabus. I have provided a lot of information to ensure you have the tools you need to be successful in this class. I reserve the right to make amendments to the syllabus in the case of unforeseen circumstances or if students agree as a group to changes to facilitate learning goals. Notices will be posted on ecourseware, so be sure to check the bulletin periodically.
- 2) The best way to contact me is by email. I check my email at least once a day Monday through Friday, but less frequently over the weekend; if you contact me on Friday afternoon, I will likely reply on Monday morning. Note that this is a professional rather than personal communication or text message, so your email format should reflect this. I will not respond to emails that are not properly addressed and signed (e.g. Hi Dr. Hicks, ... , Sincerely, Jane Doe).
- 3) There will be no unexcused makeup exams or late assignments. If you cannot attend an exam for acceptable documented health or school related reasons, you must speak with me before the exam, and make alternate arrangements. If you have an emergency the day of the exam, you should contact me no later than 5:00 the same day. If I haven't heard from you by then, you will receive a grade of 0. In either case, expect to provide documentation. Please note that make-up exams will be different from in-class exams.
- 4) Cell phones, MP3 players, etc., must be turned off and stowed; no newspapers, crosswords, sudokus, or work for other classes; no talking during class. This policy is designed to ensure that you do not disrupt the class, or distract other students who are trying to pay attention. This is an issue of basic courtesy and respect for your instructor and fellow students.
- 5) Cheating or other academic misconduct will result automatically in failure in the course and notification of the Office of Student Judicial and Ethical Affairs, no exceptions. This course involves a lot of group work, so let me be clear about what I mean; I encourage and expect you to collaborate with other students on group learning tasks, including group exam preparation. When it comes to individual assignments and exams, however, you must complete the work on

your own, without collaboration with others, and without copying from other students. Please note that letting others copy from you is as serious an offense as copying from someone else.

- 6) Final grades are non-negotiable. It would be unethical and unfair of me to allow some students to complete bonus work after the class is over. If you have concerns about needing to make a particular grade in this class I'm happy to work with you on a strategy, but the time to come see me is at the beginning of class, not at the end when I can no longer do anything for you.

Reasons for Course Format

In-class activities:

Imagine taking guitar lessons based only on a lecture format: you attend a lecture twice a week where the instructor carefully demonstrates all the cords and explains to you how to read music, how to hold the instrument, and how to sit or stand. You have three exams in the course where you're expected to apply this knowledge by accurately playing a series of assigned songs. You would likely do poorly on the exams because the only opportunity you have to practice and make mistakes is also the only time you are being directly evaluated.

This kind of lecture format is what many students expect in their college classes. Doing well on an exam requires specific skills such as determining the most important points in reading, synthesizing information from multiple sources, and recognizing subtle differences between multiple choice answers. It is important to practice these skills if you ever hope to develop them. Education researchers suggest that students retain very little of what they're told (orally) and shown (visually) in lecture: 50% on a good day. Just like any other skill, students learn content and how to use content by doing, by practicing, and by repetition. This course, like other college courses, is designed to maximize your ability practice working with the material.

Group work:

Education research suggests that students learn as much from each other as from the professor. Often the best way to learn something is to have to understand it well enough to explain it to others. Team assignments are also generally more fun and engaging than spending long hours working alone or exclusively listening to the professor. A team of students working together can often out-perform their strongest member and when teams work well, all the team members benefit from this learning opportunity.

Grading Scale

Points	Grade	Points	Grade
≥95	A+	67-69.9	C+
90-94.9	A	63-66.9	C
85-89.9	A-	60-62.9	C-
80-84.9	B+	55-59.9	D+
75-79.9	B	51-54.9	D
70-74.9	B-	≤500	F

Week	Date	Unit/Topic	Reading	Class Work
1	Aug 26	Introduction; what is anthropology	Course syllabus	Welcome and introduction
	Aug 28	1) Scientific Method; History of Evolutionary Theory; Natural Selection	UH chapters 1 and 2	Class-room activities: lecture, discussion, film, presentations or group-work (CA)
2	Sept 2	Labor Day		No Class
	Sept 4			CA
3	Sept 9			CA
	Sept 11			CA Begin student presentations
4	Sept 16	2) Heredity; Modern Synthesis of Evolutionary Theory; Macroevolution	UH chapters 3 and 5	CA
	Sept 18			CA
5	Sept 23			CA
	Sept 25	Exam review		CA Exam review
6	Sept 30	Units 1 and 2		Exam 1
	Oct 2	3) Archaeological and Paleoanthropological Methods	UH chapter 8	CA
7	Oct 7			CA Return and discuss exams
	Oct 9			CA
8	Oct 14	Fall Break		No class
	Oct 16	4) Hominin origins; Early Homo	UH chapters 9 and 10	CA
9	Oct 21			CA
	Oct 23			CA

10	Oct 28			CA
	Oct 30	Exam review		Exam review
11	Nov 4	Units 3 and 4		Exam 2
	Nov 6	5) Premodern humans; Emergence and dispersal of modern humans	UH chapters 11 and 12	CA
12	Nov 11			CA Return and discuss exams
	Nov 13			CA
13	Nov 18			CA
	Nov 20	6) Upper-Pleistocene foragers; transition to agriculture	UH chapters 13 and 14	CA
14	Nov 25			CA
	Nov 27	Thanksgiving		No class: work on assignment
15	Dec 2			CA
	Dec 4	Exam review		CA Exam review
	W Dec 11	Final Exam	Manning Hall	1:00 to 3:00 PM