

The University of Oregon
ANTHROPOLOGY 680
Seminar: Biological Anthropology
Fall 2015
Tuesdays 6:00-8:50, 313 Condon Hall

Prof. Nelson Ting

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Course Content. Anthropology, broadly conceived, is the study of humans from a multidisciplinary perspective. The purpose of this seminar is to provide an understanding of the role that biology plays in this field. To accomplish this, several important topics and issues within biological anthropology will be covered. The goal and expectation is for each student to be well versed in how the study of biology (and evolution) has informed us in anthropological studies. Regardless of your area of interest and research in anthropology, a background in biological anthropology will provide you with a breadth of background for understanding the human organism and rounds out your graduate training in anthropology.

Course Requirements. This is a graduate level seminar that encourages and expects your active participation. Class meetings will consist of lecture and student-led discussion. Your final grade in this course will be based on weekly writing assignments, your ability to lead class discussion, and an oral presentation. Additionally, a portion of your grade will depend on your attendance and preparation for and participation in class discussion. Simply put, you are expected to CONTRIBUTE to this course in order to get a good grade.

Weekly Writing Assignments. Most weeks, you will need to complete a short writing (1-2 pages single spaced) assignment based on the readings for that week. The purposes of these assignments are to 1) encourage you to think critically about the assigned readings and to formulate reactions to them, 2) ensure you complete all the readings and are prepared for class discussion, and 3) to help develop and sharpen written communication skills appropriate at the graduate level of scholarship. The assignments will often be centered around a specific set of questions, and you will be asked to give an informed opinion based on the readings. Simple recitation and summation of the readings is not sufficient. You should organize and distill the salient concepts and ideas in the readings and work through them as critically and thoughtfully as possible. In each case, attention will be given to your ability to extract important ideas from the reading, your ability to expound upon and develop those ideas, the coherence of your argument and observations, and the quality and clarity of your writing. You are responsible for completing 6 of these weekly assignments (out of a possible 8), and these will comprise 60% of your final course grade. Late papers will not be accepted.

Leading Class Discussion. Each week, class discussion will be led by 2 students. In total, each student will be involved in this process three different times over the course of the term. This includes summarizing the main points of the readings, critiquing the findings, and developing questions that will stimulate discussion. This comprises 10% of your final grade.

Book Review Presentations. You will be required to read a book chosen from a list and provide a review of the book during the last period of class. The review is to be a critical evaluation of the central thesis of the book and should be no longer than 15 minutes. This accounts for 10% of your grade.

Class Participation. The best way for you to become familiar with the vast biological anthropology literature is to read it, ask questions about it, challenge it, argue over it, and so on - that is why class participation is absolutely essential. I am a firm believer in FULL student involvement in their own education, thus I expect you to have read all the assigned materials before coming to class and for you to DEMONSTRATE this to me through your comments, questions, and critiques. I also expect you all to be engaged with me and with one another while in class - do not be surprised if I put you on the spot with a question or ask for your comments on particular issues. In part, I will do that because I want to encourage you to be prepared for class - that does not mean you have to KNOW everything. But another reason for my doing this is because I see education - and graduate education especially - as a MUTUAL learning process and I fully expect to learn things from you as well and to be challenged to think in new ways. This accounts for 20% of your grade.

Grading Summary. Weekly writing assignments 60%; Leading class discussion 10%; Book Review presentation 10%; Class Participation 20%

Tentative Course Schedule.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC
1	Sep. 29	Lecture: Introduction, Scientific Method, Evolutionary Theory
2	Oct. 6	Discussion: Science and Evolution (paper due) Lecture: Non-human primates: Behavior, Intelligence, Culture
3	Oct. 13	Discussion: Non-human primates (paper due) Lecture: Early human evolution
4	Oct. 20	Discussion: Early human evolution (paper due) Lecture: Evolution of modern humans
5	Oct. 27	Discussion: Evolution of modern humans (paper due) Lecture: Human migrations
6	Nov. 3	Discussion: Human migrations (paper due) Lecture: Race
7	Nov. 10	Discussion: Race (paper due) Lecture: Gene-culture co-evolution
8	Nov. 17	Discussion: Gene-culture co-evolution (paper due) Lecture: Evolutionary Behavior
9	Nov. 24	Discussion: Evolutionary Behavior (paper due) Lecture: TBA
10	Dec. 1	Book presentations