Evolutionary Psychology

http://content.csbs.utah.edu/~cashdan/evpsych

Course Description

Evolutionary Psychology is an interdisciplinary field that studies how our preferences, emotions, and ways of thinking and behaving have been shaped by natural selection. This course discusses how our minds and behavior have evolved to cope with problems of survival, mating and parenting, cooperation, conflict, and status competition.

Readings

- Buss, *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind, 4rd edition*; required (used copies available)
- E-reserve readings (see course outline)

Class website

This course does not use Canvas. Information about the class can be found at the url at the top of the page. The website includes copies of the syllabus, studyguides, and other guidelines. Information on the syllabus handed out the first day of class may be updated on the website.

Contact Information

My office is 217A Stewart Hall and my office phone is 801-581-4672. Feel free to stop by anytime you see my office door ajar, or contact me to set up an appointment. The best way to reach me is via email, at ecashdan@gmail.com

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on:

- 6 quizzes. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes, but I will drop your lowest score (9% each=45%). In the very unlikely event that you are unavoidably absent for two quizzes and notify me ahead of time, I will ensure that you are not penalized for missing the second. If you know what is in the studyguides, you will do fine on the quizzes.
- 5 reviews of assigned videos (5% each=25%). See detailed instructions on course webpage
- Final exam or term paper (30%). Final will be like the quizzes, but cumulative. A term paper is an alternative to the final exam, and is optional. If you choose to write one, submit a topic by March 23, and get approval before beginning. An annotated bibliography is due by April 6. See detailed instructions on the webpage.
• Occasional Homework may be assigned as extra-credit

Students enrolled in 6481 should see me for additional assignments. Grading scales for the undergraduate and graduate sections will be independent.

How to submit written work

Submit video reviews and term papers to turnitin.com; no hardcopy is needed. I will use their ‘grademark’ feature to enter comments online, if you request comments. To submit the first review, set up an account with turnitin.com if you haven’t done so previously, and use the enrollment password “evpsych” and the class ID 9117461

Any cheating or plagiarism constitutes grounds for a failing grade on the assignment in question. See the short video How to Avoid plagiarism https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsAQOnjkTo for tips.

Course Outline

Jan 12: Introduction to course

Jan 14: Evolution 1: Adaptation and maladaptation

• Buss, ch. 1

• reserve: “The misfits”

Jan 19: MLK Day, no class

• watch “Steven Pinker: Human nature and the blank slate”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuQHSKLXu2c (video review #1)

• watch “Dan Dennett: Cute, sexy, sweet, funny”
  http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_dennett_cute_sexy_sweet_funny? (video review #1)

Jan 21: Evolution 2: Kin selection, group selection, sexual selection

• Buss, ch. 1

• reserve: Boyd and Silk, pp. 2-22, 51, 58-66 from How Humans Evolved¹

Jan 26: Science of evolutionary psychology

• video review #1 due today

• Buss ch. 2

¹these are pages from 4th edition, equivalent pages from later editions is fine. This is an optional reading, depending on your background
Jan 28: Evolution 3: Plasticity and learning (genes to behavior)

- reserve: Ridley, “Genes are so liberating”
- reserve: Cashdan, “What is a human universal?” (pp. 1-3, remainder optional)
- watch “Epigenetics” http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/epigenetics.html

Feb 2: quiz #1; Survival 1: Evolutionary medicine

- Buss pp. 97–102, 418–422
- reserve: Nesse and Williams, “Evolution and the origins of disease”
- reserve: Schaller, “The behavioral immune system”

Feb 4: Survival 1: Evolutionary medicine (continued)

- Buss pp. 97–102, 418–422
- reserve: Nesse and Williams, “Evolution and the origins of disease”
- reserve: Schaller, “The behavioral immune system”

Feb 9: Survival 2: Navigation

- Buss ch. 3
- reserve: Jones et al, “The evolution of sex differences in spatial ability”

Feb 11: Survival 3: Food selection and disgust

- Buss ch. 3
- reserve: Sherman & Billig, “Darwinian gastronomy: Why we use spices”
- watch “Catching fire” http://vimeo.com/10325384

Feb 16: Prez Day, no class

- watch “The strange politics of disgust”
  http://www.ted.com/talks/david_pizarro_theStrangePoliticsOfDisgust? (video review #2)

Feb 18: Survival 4: Perception and danger

- reserve: Stefanucci, “Follow your heart: Emotion adaptively influences perception”
- reserve: Ohman, “The malicious serpent: Snakes as a prototypical stimulus…”
- do fun and games (homepage): (a) seeing more than your eye does and (b) blindsight
Feb 23: quiz #2; Mating 1: Sexual selection
- video review #2 due today
- reserve: Gaulin, “Sexual selection is a kind of natural selection”
- watch: Why Sex (60 min video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wns5OQR74OQ

Feb 25: Mating 2: Women’s mating strategies
- Buss ch. 4
- reserve: Small, “Love with the proper stranger”

Mar 2: Mating 3: Men’s mating strategies
- Buss ch. 5
- watch: Asante Market Women (50 min. video, streamable from Marriott)

Mar 4: quiz #3 Mating 4: Short-term sexual strategies
- Buss ch. 6
- reserve: Scelza, “Choosy but not chaste”

Mar 9: Kinship 1: Parental investment
- Buss ch. 7, pp. 411–413
- reserve: Hrdy, “natural born mothers”

Mar 11: Kinship 2: Alloparents
- Buss ch. 7–8
- reserve: Hrdy “Mothers and others”

Mar 16–18: spring break

Mar 23: Kinship 3: Kin selection
- Buss ch. 8
- reserve: Haig, “Troubled sleep: Night waking, breastfeeding, and parent-offspring conflict”
- paper topics due, if you are writing a term paper (send via email)

Mar 25: quiz #4; Group living 1: Reciprocity
- Buss pp. 268–76
- reserve: Sigmund, Fehr and Nowak, “Economics of fair play”
• watch: The Social Brain (55 minute video, streamable from Marriott)

Mar 30: Group living 2: Mind reading
• Buss pp. 276–282, 410–11
• watch fun and games (on homepage), helping in children and chimps
• watch “Do animals have morals?”
  http://www.ted.com/talks/frans_de_waal_do_animals_have_morals (video review #3)
• watch “How we read each others' minds”
  http://www.ted.com/talks/rebecca_saxe_how_brains_make_moral_judgments (video review #3)

Apr 1: Group living 3: Morality and religion
• Buss pp. 406–409
• reserve: Haidt, “The new synthesis in moral psychology”
• reserve: Norenzayan, “The God issue”
• watch “The moral roots of liberals and conservatives”
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vs41JrnGaxc (video review #4)

Apr 6: Group living 4: Coalitions and collective action
• Video review #3 due today
• Buss pp. 283–96
• reserve: McElreath, “The coevolution of warfare, punishment, and culture…”
• reserve: Ridley and Low, “Can selfishness save the environment?”
• paper bibliography due if writing a term paper.

Apr 8: quiz #5; Group living 5: Aggression and warfare
• Video review #4 due today
• Buss ch. 10

Apr 13: Group living 6: Conflict between the sexes
• Buss ch. 11
• reserve: Sapolsky, “The war between men and women:…genomic imprinting”

Apr 15: Group living 7: Status, prestige, social dominance.
• Buss ch. 12
Apr 20: Evolutionary cognitive psychology

- Buss pp 391-409
- watch Simple heuristics that make us smart
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mx_5_4Qur5Y (video review # 5)
- do fun and games (homepage) on intentionality bias
- reserve: Brooks, “Natural born believers”

Apr 22: quiz #6; Evolutionary developmental, personality, and clinical psychology

- Buss pp. 410-422
- reserve: Dutton, “The wisdom of psychopaths”

Apr 27: Evolutionary cultural psychology

- video review #5 due today
- Buss pp. 422–429
- reserve: Henrich, “Rice, psychology, and innovation”

May 4: Final exam, 10:30 a.m. Term papers due.