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

- Daly, *Killing the Competition: Economic Inequality and Homicide*
- E-reserve readings (see course outline)

Optional background reading: If you have had no other classes in which evolutionary theory was taught, I highly recommend the sections on natural selection in Boyd and Silk, *How Humans Evolved*. The 4th edition is downstairs in the anthro library, with recommended pages - other editions are fine too.

If you are sceptical that humans evolved, or if you just want more evidence (scepticism is good), I recommend the short (100 page) book by Alan Rogers, called *The Evidence for Evolution*. I’ll put a copy in the anthro library downstairs, there are copies in Marriott also.

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%). There are links to the videos and detailed instructions on the 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, you must follow intermediate deadlines, both for getting my approval of the topic, and for submitting an annotated bibliography. 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 14364016.

Any cheating or plagiarism constitutes grounds for a failing grade on the assignment in question. Cutting and pasting text from an online source is not research, it is plagiarism. See the short video How to Avoid plagiarism https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsAQOnjk_To for tips.

Course Outline

Jan 9: Introduction to course

Jan 11: Adaptation and maladaptation

- Buss, ch. 1

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

1these are pages from 4th edition, equivalent pages from later editions is fine. This is an optional reading, depending on your background
Jan 16: MLK Day, no class

- watch “Cute, sexy, sweet, funny” for video review #1

Jan 18: Kin selection, group selection, sexual selection

- Buss, ch. 1, 397–8 (group selection)

Jan 23: Plasticity and learning (from genes to behavior)

- skim Buss ch 2
- reserve: Ridley, “Genes are so liberating”
- watch “Epigenetics” (you may substitute this for the Dennett video review if you prefer)

Jan 25: Survival 1: Evolutionary medicine and life in the EEA; Quiz #1

- video review #1 due today
- Buss ch. 3 (material discussed over the next 6 class periods)
- reserve: Nesse and Williams, “Evolution and the origins of disease”
- reserve: Schaller, “The behavioral immune sytem”

Jan 30: Survival 2: Evolutionary medicine & clinical psychology

- Buss pp. 404–409 (beginning frequency dependence)
- reserve: Dutton, “The wisdom of psychopaths”
- reserve: “The misfits”
- watch “The strange politics of disgust” for video review #2

Feb 1: Survival 3: Fear and danger

- reserve: Stefamucci, “Follow your heart: Emotion adaptively influences perception”
- reserve: Ohman, “The malicious serpent: Snakes as a prototypical stimulus...”

Feb 6: Survival 4: Cognition: heuristics and biases

- video review #2 due today
• Buss pp. 379–393

• do fun and games (homepage): (a) seeing more than your eye does, (b) change blindness (c) intentionality bias

• watch “Counter-intuition”

• watch “Simple heuristics that make us smart” (for video review # 3)

• reserve: Brooks, “Natural born believers”

Feb 8: Survival 5: Food selection; Quiz #2

• reserve: Sherman & Billig, “Darwinian gastronomy: Why we use spices”

• watch “Catching fire”


• video review #3 due today

• Buss chapter 3 (concludes with this lecture)

• reserve: Cashdan et al “sex differences in spatial cognition in Hadza foragers”

Feb 15: Mating 1: Sexual selection

• reserve: Gaulin, “Sexual selection is a kind of natural selection”

• watch: Why Sex (60 min video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wns50QR74OQ

Feb 20: Presidents’ Day

Feb 22: Mating 2: Women’s mating strategies

• Buss ch. 4

• reserve: Small, “Love with the proper stranger”

Feb 27: Mating 3: Men’s mating strategies; Quiz #3

• Buss ch. 5

• watch: Asante Market Women (50 min. video, streamable from Marriott)
Mar 1: Mating 4: Short-term sexual strategies

- Buss ch. 6
- reserve: Scelza, “Choosy but not chaste”

Mar 6: Kinship 1: Parental investment

- Buss ch. 7
- reserve: Hrdy, “natural born mothers”

Mar 8: Kinship 2: Alloparents

- Buss ch. 7–8
- reserve: Hrdy “Mothers and others”

Mar 13–17: spring break

Mar 20: Kinship 3: Kin selection and kin conflict; Quiz #4

- Buss ch. 8

Mar 22: Group living 1: Reciprocity, coalitions, and collective action

- Buss ch. 9 (2 lectures)
- reserve: Sigmund, Fehr and Nowak, “Economics of fair play”
- reserve: Ridley and Low, “Can selfishness save the environment?”
- watch for next time: The Social Brain (55 minute video, streamable from Marriott)

Mar 27: Group living 2: The social brain

- Buss ch. 9, pp. 399
- watch “Do animals have morals?” (for video review #4)
- watch “How we read each others’ minds” (for video review #4)
- watch “Need help? Ask a 2-year old” (for video review #4)
- watch “Can babies tell right from wrong?”
Mar 29: Group living 3: Morality and religion

- Buss pp. 395–397
- reserve: Haidt, “The new synthesis in moral psychology”
- reserve: Norenzayan, “The God issue”
- watch “The moral roots of liberals and conservatives” for video review #5

Apr 3: Group living 4: Aggression and warfare

- Video review #4 due today
- Buss ch. 10
- Daly chs. 1–3

Apr 5: Group living 5: Conflict between the sexes; Quiz #5

- paper topics due, if you are writing a term paper (send via email)
- Buss ch. 11
- reserve: Sapolsky, “The war between men and women: . . . genomic imprinting”

Apr 10: Group living 6: Status, prestige

- video review #5 due today
- Buss ch. 12
- Daly ch. 4–6

Apr 12: Evolutionary cultural psychology

- Buss pp. 422–429
- reserve: Henrich, “Rice, psychology, and innovation”
- Daly, ch. 7
Apr 17: Evolutionary developmental psychology; Quiz #6

- annotated bibliography due, if writing a paper (5 references, with 2–3 sentences each summarizing its relevance to the paper)
- Buss pp. 410-422
- Daly ch. 8
- reserve: Mittal, “Cognitive adaptations to stressful environments”

Apr 19: TBA

Apr 24: Wrap-up, discuss Daly 9–10

- Daly chs. 9–10

Apr 28: Final exam, 1:00 p.m.

May 1: Term papers due