PSYCHOLOGY 3F03: EVOLUTION AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

Spring/Summer 2017

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Brian Krupp (kruppdb@mcmaster.ca)
Where: Chester New Hall B107
When: Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 1:30 to 4:20 pm

Office Hours: By appointment only.

Course Content

This course concerns the relevance of evolutionary theory to human behaviour, especially social behaviour. As a consequence, it is an interdisciplinary enterprise: we will cover research drawn from Biology, Psychology, Anthropology, Economics, and Medicine, and will likely touch on other areas of study as well.

The goals of the course are twofold. First, you will form a greater appreciation for the place of evolutionary thinking in human psychology and behaviour. Second, you will learn about the methodological approaches to the study of human behaviour, from theoretical development to empirical testing. Having met these goals, you will ideally develop critical faculties that enable you to judge the quality of claims about human psychology and behaviour that you might encounter outside of this classroom.

Required Readings

Students are responsible for all of the readings listed in the Schedule and Readings section, below. These readings are available through the course website.

Grading

Grades will be assigned on the basis of three tests, worth 20% each, and one final exam, worth 40%. All tests will be taken during class time. As can be seen below, the tests are scheduled for May 16th, May 30th, and June 13th, and the final exam is scheduled for June 15th. The tests will assess your knowledge and comprehension of lectures given and readings assigned prior to the day of the test. The final exam will cover the content of the entire course—lectures, readings, and all.

There will be no “make-up” tests. If you file acceptable documentation online with the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) or with your Dean of Studies, your final grade will be based on the test(s) and exam that you completed, with appropriate re-weighting of the final exam. For further information about missed work, medical exemptions, exam conflicts, and deferred exams, see http://mcmaster.ca/msaf/.

Tests and the final exam may include multiple choice and/or short answer and/or essay questions. A deferred final exam will not necessarily be of the same format as the original
final exam. Grades will be computed out of 100 points and converted to a letter grade as follows: 90-100=A+, 85-89=A, 80-84=A-, 77-79=B+, 73-76=B, 70-72=B-, 67-69=C+, 63-66=C, 60-62=C-, 57-59=D+, 53-56=D, 50-52=D-, and <50=F.

The instructor reserves the right to adjust final marks up or down, on an individual basis, in light of special circumstances and/or the student's total performance in the course.

Email

All students should have McMaster e-mail accounts. If you prefer to receive e-mail at another address, we will try to accommodate your request, but we cannot be responsible for the non-receipt of messages to students using non-McMaster e-mail addresses. Neither can the instructors be responsible for returning long distance calls from students. Any student wishing to contact the instructor should use e-mail.

Course Website

All students registered in this course have access to the course website, which you can access via Avenue to Learn (http://avenue.mcmaster.ca). I will post lecture notes, term test feedback, and other course-related materials on this site. Lecture slides are prepared with care and are often being improved upon until the minute class begins. I will do my best to get you the slides before class begins, but I cannot guarantee this will happen. Slides are not a replacement for taking notes.

Policy Reminder

Your attention is drawn to the Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty, as found in the Senate Policy Statements distributed at registration and available in the Senate Office. Any student who infringes one of these resolutions will be treated according to the published policy. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. a grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, at http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf

SCHEDULE AND READINGS

I anticipate no changes in the course schedule below. If unforeseen circumstances require changes, they will be announced both in class and on the course website. Readings are available to persons registered in the course at its website on Avenue; most can also be accessed through the library. They should be read before the class for which they are assigned (in other words, read Gregory (2009) before the class of May 4, etc.).
May 2: Introduction

May 4: Evolutionary Theory


May 9: Social Evolution Theory (I)


May 11: Social Evolution Theory (II)


May 16: TEST 1 & Kinship (I)


May 18: Kinship (II)


May 23: Sociality Among Nonkin (I)


May 25: Sociality Among Nonkin (II)


May 30: TEST 2 & Sexual Selection (I)


June 1: Sexual Selection (II)


June 6: Parenting & Family Dynamics


June 8: Differences Within Groups


June 13: TEST 3 & Differences Between Groups


June 15: FINAL EXAM