

Origins of Culture (L0547.000200)  
Syllabus—Fall 2015

Room 8-B101  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
11:00~12:15

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Appointments welcome

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This course will offer you an introduction to the biological and cultural evolution of our species. The emphasis of this class will be to understand what defines humanity from the time of early stone tool producers through the domestication of plants and animals 10,000 years ago. We will look at the biological and cultural evidence for our evolution and discuss the specific places in which that evidence is found and how that evidence defines us as a unique species within the Animal Kingdom.

There are four compulsory books for the class:

Bellwood, Peter (ed.)  
2013 *The Global Prehistory of Human Migration*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell Publishers

**Feder, Kenneth**  
2013 *The Past in Perspective*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition. New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press

Sanderson, Stephen K.  
2014 *Human Nature and the Evolution of Society*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press

Wade, Nicolas  
2006 *Before the Dawn*. New York: Penguin

If you have a hard time finding these books, your teaching assistants or I will be able to assist you in securing copies. The most important book is Feder's as it will be the primary reading I assign for several weeks in a row.

There will also be some video assignments, which will be freely accessible from the Internet. I will assist you in getting the reading material you need for this class. I reserve the option to assign supplemental readings for each week as necessary. Each week, I will begin the class with a short (3-5 question) quiz to make sure that you are keeping up with the reading and video assignments. There will be two written examinations that will mostly cover lecture topics, but could include questions from the homework assignments as well. My general teaching philosophy is that for a 3 credit hour class, you should plan on spending an average of six hours per week in home study. I have structured the homework to this expectation. Do not take this class if you cannot commit a total of nine hours every week (including class time). Homework assignments are underlined on the syllabus.

**Grading:** Weekly quizzes (50%); Midterm exam (20%); Final exam (30%)

*Weekly Quizzes:* Quizzes will be designed to test whether or not you have done the assignment and paid attention to the important parts. For the most part, the quizzes will consist of 5 or less multiple-choice questions or require you to fill in short answers. I will allow you to drop your lowest quiz score. If you are absent from class on a

particular day due to uncontrollable circumstances (illness, oversleeping, another class meeting or field trip, graduation photos, etc.), you can drop that quiz. There is an assignment due at the beginning of Week 14 that will count as two quizzes that cannot be dropped. **I do not allow make up quizzes.** 13 quizzes (12 of which count) results in each quiz = 4.17% of your final grade.

*Midterm and final exams:* There will be two exams in this class. The format of each of these exams will be multiple-choice section followed by four or five questions in which I will ask you to write about specific aspects of the course material. Good attendance in class is very important because exam questions are drawn from lectures and our discussions/workshops, and I frequently tell you in class what I am going to ask you about. The final exam is cumulative.

For the long-answer format of the exam, I will allow you to bring in two pages of notes **handwritten** on A4 paper to use as reference material. So, the exam questions will be structured to require you to think about the conditions of human evolution—not regurgitate facts and dates.

### **Class outline:**

Week 1 (September 1, September 3): Introduction

- In class watch: Robert Sapolsky movie
- In class lecture: Introduction to Culture
- For next week, you need to read: Sanderson (2014) Ch 1 and 2
- Watch: Darwin's Theory of Evolution (NOVA documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3QdmgEv7KE> 1:52:00)

Week 2 (September 8, September 10): Darwinian evolution

- In class: QUIZ 1 (includes Sanderson readings and NOVA documentary)
- In class lecture: Introduction to Darwinian Evolution
- In class workshop: Sexual dimorphism
- For next week, read: Wade (2007) Ch. 8
- Watch: Becoming Human (NOVA documentary, Episode 1, watch until 51:30: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBp3SHp\\_Mwo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBp3SHp_Mwo))

Week 3 (September 15, September 17): Features of mammalian and primate evolution

- In class: QUIZ 2
- In class lecture: Features of Mammalian and Primate Culture
- In class workshop: Design an organism (tradeoffs of culture & biology)
- For next week, read: Handout from Prof. Wright "Origins and Evolution" and Feder, Ch. 3 "African Roots"
- Watch: Becoming Human (NOVA documentary, Episode 2, watch from 51:30 until 1:43:00: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBp3SHp\\_Mwo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBp3SHp_Mwo))

Week 4 (September 22: Early hominoids and hominins, Part 1; September 24: **No class**):

- QUIZ 3
- In class lecture: Hominin Origins
- For next week, read: Handout from Prof. Wright "Social Consequences of Climate Change" and Feder, Ch 4 "The Human Lineage"
- Watch: Becoming Human (NOVA documentary, Episode 3, watch from 1:43:00 until 2:34:30: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBp3SHp\\_Mwo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBp3SHp_Mwo))

Week 5 (**September 29: Chuseok NO CLASS**, October 1): Early hominoids and hominins, Part 2

- In class: QUIZ 4 (Oct 1)
- In class lecture: Pleistocene Landscape Diversity and Human Evolution
- For next week, watch: BBC documentary: Neanderthals and human extinction (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvbeREWmD2k>)
- Watch: Svante Pääbo at Nobel Conference 50 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ckf4JOfGiEY>)
- Read: Feder, Ch. 5, "The First Humans"

Week 6 (October 6, October 8): *Homo erectus* and the spread of hominins into Eurasia

- In class: QUIZ 5
- In class lecture: Biological Specialization of Late Hominins
- In class workshop: Small group work to identify common and diverging biological and cultural traits between extinct hominins and modern humans
- For next week, study for midterm exam

Week 7 (October 13, **October 15: SNU Foundation Day, no class**): MIDTERM EXAM

- In class: **MIDTERM EXAM** (Oct 13)
- For next week, read Feder, Ch. 6 "Expanding Intellectual Horizons" (also review Feder Ch. 5 again)
- Watch: The Incredible Human Journey, Episode 1 (I will provide a link for you to watch this movie).

Week 8 (October 20, October 22) Early anatomically modern humans in Africa and Europe

- In class: QUIZ 6
- In class lecture: Blossoming of the Human Mind
- In class watch: The Incredible Human Journey, Episode 2 (followed by a discussion)
- For next week, read Bellwood (Stoneking and Havarti), Ch 4, "Early Old World Migrations of *Homo sapiens*: Human Biology"
- Read Bellwood, (Hiscock) Ch. 5 "Early Old World Migrations of *Homo sapiens*: Archaeology"
- Read Feder, Ch. 7 "Expanding Geographic Horizons" (especially pp. 198-217)

Week 9 (October 22, October 29): Australian and Asian colonization

- In class: QUIZ 7
- In class lecture: Blending and Diverging in Diverse Landscapes
- In class watch: The Incredible Human Journey, Episode 3 (followed by a discussion). October 29 is a "reading period" for SNU in which class is not obligatory. If you would like to watch the movie at home, I will provide a link for you to access the movie. Otherwise, I will show it in class.
- For next week, review Feder pp. 218-237
- Read Bellwood (Meltzer) Ch. 8, "The Human Colonization of the Americas: Archaeology"
- Read Curry, "Ancient Migration: Coming to America" (<http://www.nature.com/news/ancient-migration-coming-to-america-1.10562>)

Week 10 (November 3, November 5): Colonization of the Americas

- In class: QUIZ 8
- In class lecture: New Worlds, New Frontiers
- In class watch: The Incredible Human Journey, Episode 4 (followed by a discussion)
- For next week, read Feder, Ch. 8, "After the Ice"
- Read Diamond (2002) "Evolution, consequences and future of plant and animal domestication" (provided on the eTL)

Week 11 (November 10, November 12): Origins of agriculture

- In class: QUIZ 9
- In class lecture: Manipulating Plants to Our End
- In class watch: Guns, Germs and Steel, Part 1 (followed by an discussion)
- For next week: Read Feder, Ch. 9, "Roots of Complexity"

Week 12 (November 17, November 19): Origins of civilization

- In class: QUIZ 10
- In class lecture: Agriculture and Social Stratification (Part 1)
- In class watch: Guns, Germs and Steel, Part 2
- For next week: Read Settles (1996) The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development and Wade (2007), Chapter 9 (provided on the eTL)
- Watch: Watch Guns, Germs and Steel, Part 3 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJ9espgY-Po>)

Week 13 (November 24, November 26): Questioning "civilization"

- In class: QUIZ 11
- In class lecture: Is Complexity Really that Complex? Human domination and exploitation of members our own species.
- For next week: Go to the National Museum of Korea and complete worksheet. How does complexity evolve in the Korean context from the Pleistocene to present day? This will count as two quizzes and **cannot be dropped**. You must turn in the worksheet at the beginning of class next week.

Week 14 (December 1, December 3): Review and summing up

- In class lecture: Connecting the Past to the Present (What Makes us Human?). What are the costs and consequences of the evolution of our modern world?
- For next week: study for final exam

Week 15 (December 8, December 10): FINAL EXAM