

Origins of Culture (L0547.000200)  
Syllabus—Spring 2018

Room 43-1-301  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
9:30~10:45

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Office Hours: Monday, 1-2 pm  
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

**Gamble, Clive**  
2013 *Settling the Earth*. Cambridge: Cambridge 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 assistant or I will be able to assist you in securing copies. The most important book is Gamble'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 (4-5 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 (25%); Final exam (25%)

*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. **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 three or four 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 (March 6, 8): Introduction

- Review the syllabus
- In class watch: Robert Sapolsky movie (March 6)
- In class lecture (March 8): 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)
- Study questions: How does evolution work? At what scales do evolutionary changes occur? If humans and chimps share a common ancestor, why are there still both humans *and* chimps in the world?

Week 2 (March 13, 15): Darwinian evolution

- In class: QUIZ 1 (includes Sanderson readings and NOVA documentary)
- In class lecture (March 13, 15): Introduction to Darwinian Evolution
- Watch: Becoming Human (NOVA documentary, Episode 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFu7yghK9GQ>)
- Study questions: Why do scientists think that the last human ancestors evolved in Africa? In what ways do humans owe their evolution to changing climatic conditions over the last 3,000,000 years?

Week 3 (March 20, 22): Sexual dimorphism

- In class: QUIZ 2
- In class workshop: Sexual dimorphism
- For next week, read: Wade (2007) Ch. 8
- Watch: Becoming Human (NOVA documentary, Episode 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAw0zrnCTbs>)
- Study questions: What makes humans different than other animals? What are the elements of our private and social lives that form the basis of human evolution?

Week 4 (March 27, 29): Features of mammalian and primate evolution

- In class: QUIZ 3
- In class workshop: Design an organism (tradeoffs of culture & biology)
- In class lecture: Features of mammalian and primate evolution
- For next week, read: Handout from Prof. Wright "Origins and Evolution" and Gamble, Ch. 1 "The Worlds of Deep Human History"

- Watch: Becoming Human (NOVA documentary, Episode 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0w6TKiJR0>)
- Study questions: What are the major trends in human evolution over the last 3,000,000 years? What is the relationship between bipedalism and the evolution of large brain sizes?

Week 5 (April 3, 5): Early hominoids and hominins

- In class: QUIZ 4
- In class lecture: Pleistocene Landscape Diversity and Human Evolution
- For next week, read: Handout from Prof. Wright “Social Consequences of Climate Change” and Gamble, Ch 2 “The Drivers of Climate and Environment: Terrae 0-2” and Ch. 3 “The Recent Veneers of Climate, Environment and Population”
- For next class, watch: BBC documentary: Neanderthals and human extinction (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWKCdChaLn0>)
- Study questions: How did culture become a critical element of human evolution? What are the conditions that favored the dispersal of humans outside of Africa?

Week 6 (April 10, 12): No lecture

- Make up class: Go to the National Museum of Korea (Line 2, Exit 4)
- Extra credit (worth one quiz grade if completed with my full satisfaction): Write a 2-page essay explaining how ancient Koreans adapted to climate change from 100,000 until 100 years ago. How did they feed themselves? How did the foods they ate over time change? What artifacts specifically show how ancient Koreans adapted to climate (discuss at least three).
  - The assignment is due April 17 at 9:30am.

Week 7 (April 17, 19): *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, read: Gamble, Ch. 4 “Walking and Running Down the Tectonic Trail: Terrae 0-1” and Ch. 5 “Three Strides Across a Biotidal World: Terrae 2”
- Watch: Svante Pääbo at Nobel Conference 50 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ckf4JOfGiEY>)
- Study question: What is the significance of biological and cultural differences in different Pleistocene hominins?

Week 8 (April 24, 26): Neanderthals and Late Pleistocene hominins

- In class: QUIZ 6
- In class lecture: Neanderthals, Denisovans and Hobbits (and probably many more)
- In class workshop: Develop a hypothesis on when and where a new species of hominin will occur, make a prediction on where you will find that new species and persuade someone nearby that your answer is right. Class discussion to follow.
- For next week, study for midterm exam

Week 9 (May 1, 3): MIDTERM EXAM, Modern humans

- In class: **MIDTERM EXAM** (May 1)
- Homework for May 3: *The Incredible Human Journey, Part 1*  
[http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1ip64x\\_bbc-the-incredible-human-journey-1-of-5-out-of-africa-arc-avi\\_travel](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1ip64x_bbc-the-incredible-human-journey-1-of-5-out-of-africa-arc-avi_travel)
- In class: QUIZ 7 (May 3)
- In class lecture (May 3): Intellectual renaissance—Human 2.0
- 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”
- Watch, *The Incredible Human Journey, Part 3*  
([http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1d5blb\\_bbc-the-incredible-human-journey-3-europe\\_tv](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1d5blb_bbc-the-incredible-human-journey-3-europe_tv))
- Study questions: What makes the Upper Paleolithic (Later Stone Age) different than the Middle Paleolithic (Middle Stone Age)? What kinds of new skills and technologies did Upper Paleolithic people invent to cope with the European climate, which was so different than those found in Africa?

Week 10 (May 8, 10): Upper Paleolithic lifeways

- In class: QUIZ 8
- In class lecture: Early anatomically modern humans in Africa and Europe
- For next week, read Gamble, Ch. 6 “Going Beyond, Keeping in Touch: Terra 3”
- Watch *The Incredible Human Journey, Part 2*  
([http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1k34if\\_incredible-human-journey-asia-2-of-5-hd\\_tech](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1k34if_incredible-human-journey-asia-2-of-5-hd_tech))
- Watch *The Incredible Human Journey, Part 4*  
([http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1k35im\\_incredible-human-journey-australia-4-of-5-hd\\_tech](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1k35im_incredible-human-journey-australia-4-of-5-hd_tech))
- Study questions: What are the features of the human colonization of Australia and Asia after 60,000 years ago? Consider timeframes and the types of niches people occupied.

Week 11 (May 15, 17): Australian and Asian colonization

- In class: QUIZ 9
- In class lecture: Blending and Diverging in Diverse Landscapes
- For next week, read Gamble, Ch. 7 “The Call of the North: Terra 3”
- 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>)
- Watch *The Incredible Human Journey, Part 5*  
([http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x13206o\\_the-incredible-human-journey-the-americas-5-5\\_lifestyle](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x13206o_the-incredible-human-journey-the-americas-5-5_lifestyle))
- Study questions: When and how did people first colonize the Americas? Where did they settle and why?

Week 12 (May 22, 24): Colonization of the Americas

- NO CLASS MAY 22 (Buddha’s Birthday, 부처님 오신 날)
- In class: QUIZ 10 (May 24)
- In class lecture: New Worlds, New Frontiers

- For next week, read Gamble, Ch. 8, “Eyes on the Horizon: Terra 4”
- Read Diamond (2002) “Evolution, consequences and future of plant and animal domestication” (provided on the eTL)
- Study questions: What is the relationship between climate, plant domestication and the distribution of language families across the world? How did the domestication process play out differently in different places in the world?

Week 13 (May 29, 31): Origins of agriculture

- In class: QUIZ 11
- In class lecture: Manipulating Plants to Our End
- For next week: Read Balter, Michael (2005) *The Seeds of Civilization*. *The Smithsonian* <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-seeds-of-civilization-78015429/> and Zhang H, Merrett DC, Jing Z, Tang J, He Y, Yue H, et al. (2016) Osteoarchaeological Studies of Human Systemic Stress of Early Urbanization in Late Shang at Anyang, China. *PLoS ONE* 11(4): e0151854. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0151854>
- Study questions: What are the elements of “civilization”? What are the tradeoffs that humans must make to live in urban settings?

Week 14 (June 3, 5): Origins of civilization

- In class: QUIZ 12
- In class lecture: Agriculture and Social Stratification (Part 1)
- For next week: Read Gamble, Ch. 9, “The Human Reunion in Retrospect: Terra 5”
- Read Settles (1996) “The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development” and Lanchester, John (2017) “The Case Against Civilization” *New Yorker* <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/09/18/the-case-against-civilization>
- Study questions: What role does “race” have in shaping the way humans interact with each other? What are the evolutionary underpinnings of the emergence of human “races”?

Week 15 (June 10, 12): Questioning “civilization”

- In class: QUIZ 13
- In class lecture (June 10): Is Complexity Really that Complex? Human domination and exploitation of members our own species.
- In class lecture (June 12): 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 16 (June 17): FINAL EXAM