

HUMAN EVOLUTION

ANTHROPOLOGY 388.7 (31315)

Fall 2012

Instructor: John Kappelman
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Meeting time: Monday 9-12 am, SAC 5.118

Introduction: This seminar examines the evidence for human origins and evolution as reconstructed from the fossil record and from patterns of anatomical, behavioral, and genetic similarity and difference among living primates. A wide range of evidence from the natural and social sciences is presented to reconstruct human phylogeny, to understand past anatomical and behavioral adaptations, and to view hominins as members of diverse animal and plant communities. The study of human evolution is eclectic, requiring many kinds of knowledge. Our goal is to understand what happened in human evolution and why.

This course will be of special interest to graduate students in anthropology, archaeology, geography, geology, and paleontology, and to other graduate students in anthropology who desire a current review of the literature on human evolution.

GRADING: The final grade will consist of the following:

Class participation (weekly seminar discussions, attendance counts!):	50 %
Term paper (~20 pp) and presentation (~30 minutes):	50%

Grade distribution: 90-100 =A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; <60=F

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Readings will be drawn from the literature and discussions organized and presented by students.

TOPICS: Possible seminar topics focusing on timelines, geography, anatomy, habitats, and behavior

Late Miocene hominoid evolution

Habitat reconstructions and environmental change in the Neogene (selection pressures for hominin origins?)

Phylogenetic reconstruction

The earliest hominins

The australopithecine radiation

The origin and evolution of *Homo*

Behavioral biology of Plio-Pleistocene hominids (locomotor, dietary, social behavior)

Evolution of the brain and origin of language

Evolution of body size

Homo in Asia

The muddle in the long middle: “archaic *Homo*”

Migrations (or not) of *Homo* out of Africa

Molecular genetics of recent and ancient humans

Origin of modern humans

Migrations (or not) of modern humans out of Africa

Migrations of modern humans into the Americas