Welcome to Online Introduction to Physical/Biological Anthropology!

Before our class begins on August 18, 2014, I want to apprise you of a few details about your instructor and this course. The detailed information below is intended to be honest and helpful, but not to scare you. So here is what you need to know, and thanks in advance for the time you will take to read what follows.

Description:

Anthropology 101 is an introductory course offering a survey of topics in biological (or physical) anthropology. The central focus of this class is the scientific study of human origins. We will approach this study by many lines of evidence in an attempt to form a single and total picture of the emergence of why our species looks and acts the way we do.

First, we will look at the actual mechanisms by which evolution works. This will involve a brief study of genetics, natural selection and human variability. Second, we will deal with the primate background of the genus Homo. We are primates and a lot can be learned about human anatomy and behavior from studying our non-human primate relatives. Finally, we will study the primary data itself: the fossil evidence of our evolution.

All along the way we will try to see the meaning of evolution to our own lives and to our understanding of the nature of our species. One issue that is currently being raised again is the apparent conflict between the evolutionary and biblical views of human origins. My purpose in this class is not to present you with evolutionary dogma, but to present you with information and data and allow you to evaluate the evidence upon which the evolutionary interpretation is based.

Therefore, this course will cover the concepts, methods and theory of biological evolution, and its application to us as an animal species. There will be a specific focus on molecular, Mendelian and population genetics, mechanisms of evolution, primatology, paleoanthropology, biocultural adaptations and human variation. Evolution, and its evidence as derived from the scientific method will serve as the foundation and guiding paradigm of this course.

Access Requirements:

This section of Introduction to Physical/Biological Anthropology is a completely online learning experience. No mandatory campus visits are required to take this course. However, it has the same content and rigor as a conventional lecture course and will use the same textbooks as the face-to-face class. Instead of attending lectures, you will be reading and using online lectures.

The course will be administered using a class web site in Moodle that is accessed via the MyCOM student portal. This class and its content are equivalent to the face-to-face version of class which meets 3 hours a week. Students are expected to access this web site a minimum of 2 (two 1.5 hour sessions with the material) to 3 times (three 1 hour sessions) per week. Additionally, it is suggested that you put
in a minimum of two hours of study time for every hour we meet. That is 6 hours a week in addition to the 3 hours of study time in order to be truly successful in the course.

Furthermore, I will make most of the class material (readings and assignments but not tests) available to you on the first day of class. However, this course is not intended to be a self-paced course. I expect us, as a class to move through the material each week, reading, learning and discussing any questions or issues that may come up. Though I will not require weekly discussion posts, I highly encourage you to participate and interact as an online community, as this will enhance your success in this class! To be successful in this course you need to plan on dedicating roughly 6 to 9 hours a week to this class depending on the lecture material and assignments (excluding weekends).

**Important Note:**

Please keep in mind that distance learning is not for everyone. Online classes are not easy. In order to get a good grade in the course, you must be self-motivated. It is important to keep up with the assigned reading and any other assignments every week. Most students consider the course material to be very interesting, so this should not be too much trouble. However, you are more likely to succeed if you get organized, schedule a regular block of time to study each day, and stick to it! Students must also feel at home navigating online.

You must be a self-starter who feels confident about learning from reading, as there is a lot to read, and who is comfortable working independently. In a nutshell, this course is designed for the highly motivated, computer-savvy, and self-directed student who wishes to pursue a quality education. But before you have second thoughts about whether you can succeed in an online environment, rest assured that you'll likely have more interaction with me than you would have with an instructor in a traditional, large-lecture classroom setting. Granted, you won't necessarily meet with me face to face, but there will be forms through which you can contact me. In addition, you can always contact me via email (see contact information below.)

**Instructor Communication Policy:**

The best way to contact me is email. You can email me through Moodle at jpark11@mycom.marin.edu or my COM email jessica.park@marin.edu. When you email me, please identify yourself with your name and section number (80542) so that I can more quickly identify you. If you do not identify yourself it may take me longer to get back to you as I teach three ANTH 101 classes and a total of five anthropology classes. I cannot always remember which students are in which classes/sections.

Furthermore, when you contact me via e-mail please expect up to 48 hours for a response, excluding weekend. Though I may choose to contact you over the weekend, I generally do not check or return emails over the weekend. For example, if you were to contact me on Friday, you may not hear from me until Tuesday. If you do not hear from me in 48 hours, please resend your message.

In the event that Moodle is ever down please contact me through my COM email address Jessica.park@marin.edu.

If the College of Marin server is down and you can not contact me via Moodle or my school email you can contact me via my personal email carbn14@gamil.com, but PLEASE, ONLY in an emergency.

If you have trouble getting through by email you can also leave a voicemail for me at (707) 583-4806, but, again, ONLY in an emergency. In your voicemail make sure you identify yourself, what class you
are in (80542) your message and a number where I can reach you. If you do not leave a message I will not call you back. Please give me 48 hours to respond to you.

First Day of Class Instructions:

All enrolled students are required to login to the class Moodle website by 12 am Wednesday, August 20th, 2014 to hold their spot in the class. If a registered student does not login to the class site by this date, his or her spot may be given to a student on the waitlist. (Generally the waitlist is long and there is a shortage of class spots to meet the demand; so know that I will honor the waitlist if you do not confirm your spot and begin the course as required.)

IMPORTANT!!!! Waitlist and Add Codes:

If you are on the waitlist and a spot in the class opens up, you will automatically be added to the class. If a spot does not open up, I may be able to give out add codes during the first week of class. I will give out add codes starting Wednesday August 20th 2014 but not before that. Once the class starts, if you have not automatically been added into the class, please email me to let me know if you are still interested and want an add code. When contacting me regarding an add code please include your name and the section number of the class you wish to add; I get a lot of requests for adds from students not on the wait list. I will honor the official waitlist, adding students in the order they appear on the waitlist.

Prerequisites:

There are no official prerequisites for this course, however, due to the amount of reading and writing and technical vocabulary in this course, it is highly recommended that students be eligible for ENGL 120 or ENGL 120SL.

Course Materials:

Required Textbook


Recommended Textbook *(If you choose to do the optional paper this book is required)*


Book Purchases:

Students may purchase the Larsen text online by visiting COM’s online bookstore, or by visiting the COM campus bookstore. You can purchase David Buss’s book online at amazon, barnes and noble or other online options.

The Larsen text can also be purchased in an e-book format:
Larsen: If you choose the ebook option you can either download it or buy access to an online version of it that will last for 180 days to a year from the date of purchase. 180 day purchase is more than enough. You can find it at the Norton and Company website:

**Downloadable ebook version ($70):**  

**Website access only version ($35.42 for 180 days):**  

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**What To Do When You First Access The Course Online:**

Be advised that Moodle works best with Firefox. Not all features function with Safari for Mac users. If you run into any technical problems, check your browser using the helpful information at the following link: [http://ilearn.csumb.edu/BrowserTestFiles/index.php](http://ilearn.csumb.edu/BrowserTestFiles/index.php)

You can also access moodlehelp@marin.edu for assistance.

Take some time to familiarize yourself with these 2 helpful Moodle FAQs for students and bookmark them for future reference:

[http://www.marin.edu/DE/faq.html](http://www.marin.edu/DE/faq.html)  

Finally, there is an important note that you should read and heed at the top right of your Moodle home screen: "**Closing this browser does not end your session. In order to end a session you must click on Logout (top right side of browser window). If you do not log out, your session will remain active. The next person to use this computer will have full access to your account.**" Make yourself a sticky note to remind yourself to log out!

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I hope this letter answers your preliminary questions. If you have others, please email me.

I love my job and I love Anthropology! I am very excited about this upcoming semester and I look forward to working with you and furthering your knowledge of how we humans came to be the way we are; why we look and act the way we do.

Here’s to a wonderful semester!

Best, Jessica

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