

Anthropology 305: Evolution of Sociality

MW 9:30-10:45

Beach Hall 428

Spring 2000

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This class is designed as a graduate-level introduction to the evolution of human sociality. The principal purpose of the class is to provide students with a broad, but deep, overview of the major theoretical issues concerning the evolution of human sociality and of the empirical data that have been brought to bear on those issues. The approach to our subject will be cross-disciplinary and readings will be drawn from anthropology, biology, economics, political science, and psychology.

This class will have a seminar format. All students are *required* to read all assigned readings *before* the class, and must be *prepared to discuss* them in class. Preparation for discussion implies both note-taking and time allocated to synthesizing the material. Students should expect to be called on and to evidence preparation for discussion. The general tone of the discussion should be supportive of a free exchange of ideas. 40% of the grade for the class will be based on the *quality* of class participation. 25% of the grade will be based on a class presentation. The remainder of the grade (35%) will be based on a critical literature review or research paper that explores one of the topics covered in class. All presentation and paper topics will need to be approved. Determination of whether to pursue a critical literature review or a research paper should be based on where you are in your own research program in graduate school.

Book chapters and journal articles will be placed in the Anthropology Reading Room. Readings may only be removed to photocopy and may not leave the 3rd floor of Manchester Hall. In addition to book chapters and journal articles, there are three required texts for this class, which are available at the UConn Co-op.

The Evolution of Cooperation by Robert Axelrod

Passions Within Reason by Robert Frank

The Evolution of Culture by Robin Dunbar, Chris Knight, and Camilla Power

The following is list of possible presentation topics. Other topics may be pursued if approved.

alloparental care	hierarchy
cooperation and punishment	inter-group competition
cooperation and uncertainty	optimal group size
cooperative foraging	origins of art
costly signaling	prisoner's dilemma (theory, laboratory experiments, computer simulations)
cultural evolution	public goods
cultural transmission models	reciprocity
ESS theory	sexual division of labor
evolution of morality	social contracts and cheater/altruist detection
evolution of religion	social dilemmas / collective action problems
fairness	social organization
food sharing	trust
group selection	
handicap principle	

The following is a tentative schedule of readings. Dates are not posted since they are likely to change depending on the pace of the class. Additional readings may be added. Student presentations will be interspersed with class discussions.

Wed., Jan 26

Introduction

The evolution of human sociality: clarifying the problem

1. Mon., Jan 31 The evolution of cooperation

Readings:

The Evolution of Cooperation, Chapters: 1, 2, 3

2. The evolution of cooperation

Readings:

The Evolution of Cooperation, Chapters: 5, 6

3. The evolution of cooperation

Readings:

The Evolution of Cooperation, Chapters: 7, 8, 9

4. Beyond self interest

Readings:

Caporael et al. 1989

Selfishness examined: cooperation in the absence of egoistic incentives

5. Moral sentiments

Readings:

Passions Within Reason, Chapters: 1, 2, 3

6. Reputation and Signaling

Readings:

Passions Within Reason, Chapters: 4, 5, 6

7. Fairness

Readings:

Passions Within Reason, Chapters: 7, 8, 9

8. Altruism

Readings:

Passions Within Reason, Chapter: 11

9. Group Selection

Readings:

Wilson and Sober 1994

Reintroducing group selection to the human behavioral sciences

10. Social organization

Readings:

Rodseth et al. 1991

The human community as a primate society

11. Social Organization

Readings:

The Evolution of Culture, Chapters: 1, 2

12. Symbolism

Readings:

The Evolution of Culture, Chapters: 3, 4

13. Origins of art

Readings:

The Evolution of Culture, Chapter: 6

14. Supernatural beliefs

Readings:

The Evolution of Culture, Chapter: 8

15. Evolution of Language

Readings:

The Evolution of Culture, Chapter: 9

16. Evolution of Language

Readings:

The Evolution of Culture, Chapters: 10, 11

17. Food Sharing

Readings:

Gurven et al. 2000

'It's a wonderful life': signaling generosity among the Ache of Paraguay

18. Sexual division of labor

Readings:

Bliege-Bird 1999

Cooperation and conflict: the behavioral ecology of the sexual division of labor

K. Hill et al. 2000

Title TBA

19. Social Niche Hypothesis

Readings:

L. Sugiyama

Title TBA

20. Inter-group competition

Readings:

J. Rabbie

Title TBA