AIMS OF THE COURSE

The study of human origins is an interdisciplinary endeavor that involves a synthesis of research from a number of different areas of natural science, including genetics, evolutionary theory, geology, comparative anatomy, paleontology, primate behavior, ecology, forensic anthropology, and archaeology. The aim of this course is to introduce students to the various approaches and methods used by scientists to investigate the origins and evolutionary history of our own species. Class work will be problem-oriented, focusing on critically reviewing the different kinds of information and techniques that are currently available. Laboratories emphasize hands-on activities through experiments and demonstrations, computer simulations and media, and working with skeletal materials and fossil casts.

INSTRUCTOR AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Instructor: Professor Terry Harrison  
Department of Anthropology, 25 Waverly Place, Office 801  
⑦ 212-998-8581 (but best to use e-mail)  
✉️ terry.harrison@nyu.edu  
Office hours: Thursday 3:30-5:00 (and by appointment)

Teaching Assistants (and office hours):  
Alex Decasien  ✉️ alex.decasien@nyu.edu (25 Waverly Place, Rm 403 – TR 3:30-5:00)  
Elissa Ludeman  ✉️ elissaludeman@nyu.edu (25 Waverly Place, Rm 901 – R 10:00-12:00)  
Sandra Winters  ✉️ sandra.winters@nyu.edu (25 Waverly Place, Rm 403 – W 1:30-3:30)

READINGS

❖ The following is the assigned textbook for the course. It is available in the NYU Bookstore. 
NYU CLASSES

❖ The syllabus, laboratory grades, and exam grades will all be posted on NYU Classes.
❖ Hand-outs will be posted on NYU Classes (Resources) after each class. Be sure to download them if you miss a class.
❖ The Powerpoint presentations from each class will be made available on NYU Classes (Resources) as pdfs for use as study guides.

LABORATORIES

❖ Each week there is a laboratory that examines in greater detail some of the concepts, techniques and materials that we have discussed in class.
❖ Labs meet every week (unless stated otherwise in the course schedule) in Lab 204, second floor, in 25 Waverly Place (Anthropology Department). There is no lab meeting the first week of classes.
❖ The lab manual is available to download from NYU Classes (Resources). Each week you will need to print out the relevant file and bring that with you to the lab.
❖ Attendance is required. There will be no make-up labs or quizzes, no extensions on projects, papers or lab assignments, and no incompletes given for the course. Only exceptional circumstances will be considered. If you miss a lab or class, it is imperative that you contact your TA at the earliest opportunity to find out what you have missed.
❖ You must come to the labs fully prepared. You should be up-to-date with the readings and have familiarized yourself with any pre-lab materials or worksheets provided beforehand.
❖ It is important to remember that each lab/recitation has a written assignment associated with it. All assignments are due by the next lab date.

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

❖ Attendance: In order to do well in this course it is essential that you attend classes. Much of the material covered in labs will have been dealt with in class, but not covered fully in the reading materials. Failure to attend class will inevitably result in a low grade.
❖ Courtesy: Do not disturb the class! There is an expectation of punctuality.
❖ Classroom rules: No food or drinks are allowed in the classroom or lab. Sitting in the aisles is not permitted and exits must not be obstructed.
❖ Cell phones and laptops: Cell phones must be turned off before entering the lab and classroom. Laptops should only be used to record lecture notes.
❖ Recording the lectures: You are free to make audio recordings of the lectures for your own personal use (but these must not be circulated or posted online). Lab sessions must not be recorded without permission of your lab instructor.
❖ Readings: Readings for each week should be completed prior to attending your designated lab section.
❖ Laboratory/recitation assignments: Lab reports, written assignments, attendance and participation all contribute to your grade. The lab/recitation component comprises 30% of your final grade.
❖ Extra Credit: Extra credit will be given for a visit to the American Museum of Natural History OR the Bronx Zoo (not both). A report on your visit must be submitted to your TA by
May 1. No late reports will be accepted. See instructions in NYU Classes under Resources, Extra Credit. Extra Credit comprises 2% of your final grade.

❖ **Mid-Term Examination:** Includes a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. Comprises 30% of your final grade.

❖ **Final examination:** Includes a combination of multiple choice, short answer questions and essays. It will be cumulative covering material from the entire course (but weighted heavily towards the second half of the course). Comprises 40% of your final grade. You must take the final exam on the predetermined date (May 15 @ 2:00-3:50) – there will be no exceptions.

### STUDENT RESOURCES

❖ **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**  
Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities  
726 Broadway  
[www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd)

Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980).

❖ **UNIVERSITY LEARNING CENTER**  
University Hall, 110 East 14th Street  
[www.nyu.edu/ulc](http://www.nyu.edu/ulc)

The University Learning Center’s mission is to assist students in developing the knowledge base, skills, and strategies that will help them to become confident, independent, and active learners. Its various academic support services are intended to help students meet the challenge of NYU’s rigorous academic standards.

❖ **WELLNESS EXCHANGE**  
726 Broadway  
[212-443-9999](tel:212-443-9999)

The Wellness Exchange is your key to accessing the University’s extensive health and mental health resources designed to address your needs. You can call a private hotline (212-443-9999), available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which will put you in touch with a professional who can help to address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.
COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 23   The place of humans in nature.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 1 & Appendix A (familiarize yourself with the World Political Map at the back of the book)

Jan 25   Introduction to the living primates.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 6.

NO LAB DURING FIRST WEEK

Jan 30   Primate origins and the comparative approach I.

Feb 1    Primate origins and the comparative approach II.

LAB 1: Orientation and discussion. The human skeleton

Feb 6    Humans the peculiar primate.

Feb 8    Primate locomotor and dietary behavior: humans in perspective.

LAB 2: Comparative anatomy: Humans as peculiar primates

Feb 13   The social life of primates.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 7.

Feb 15   Case studies: chimpanzees and bonobos.

LAB 3: Primate behavior I

Feb 20   The historical development of evolutionary theory.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 2.

Feb 22   Darwin and natural selection.
Readings: required readings for Lab 6 on NYU Classes (Resources)

LAB 4: Primate behavior II

Feb 27   The biological basis of life.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 3.

Mar 1    The principles of inheritance.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 4.

LAB 5: Anthropometry & forensics
Mar 6  Case studies in human genetics.

Mar 8  Adaptation and natural selection.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 14: 430-435.

**LAB 6: Darwin and Evolution – a discussion**

Mar 12-16  **SPRING RECESS**

Mar 20  Human adaptability to the environment.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 15: 437-457.

Mar 22  Speciation and phylogeny.

**LAB 7: Human genetic traits & variation**

Mar 27  How to reconstruct phylogenetic relationships.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 5

Mar 29  Human evolution: the time scale and the fossil record.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 9

**LAB 8: MIDTERM EXAM**

Apr 3  Human origins.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 10: 293-297.

Apr 5  Early hominins: *Australopithecus*.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 10: 297-309.

**LAB 9: Phylogenetic relationships**

Apr 10  Early hominins: *Paranthropus*.

Apr 12  The origins of bipedalism: an important first step.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 10: 287-293.

**LAB 10: The fossil record for human evolution**

Apr 17  The earliest members of our own genus.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 10: 310-316.

Apr 19  Out of Africa: *Homo erectus* and *Homo floresiensis*.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 11.
LAB 11: Bipedalism

Apr 24  Middle Pleistocene hominins.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 12: 347-358.

Apr 26  The neandertals and Denisovans.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 12: 358-380.

LAB 12: The fossil record for human evolution II

May 1  The African origins of modern humans.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 13: 383-392

May 3  Modern humans go global.
Readings: Jurmain Ch. 13: 392-409.

LAB 13: The fossil record for human evolution III

May 15  FINAL EXAM (2:00-3:50) - under no circumstances will students be allowed to take the exam at any other time.