

## **Evolutionary Psychology Psych 487 - CRN 31584**

Wednesdays, 5-7:50pm, Forestry Building 105

Professor: Ethan Gahtan: Email: [eg51@humboldt.edu](mailto:eg51@humboldt.edu) (preferred) Tel: x4545

Office hours: 11am-noon, Mon-Thurs, BSS 428 (office) or 122 (lab)

Teaching Assistants:

Kevin Simonson, Cell / Molec Biology Major. [kcs15@humboldt.edu](mailto:kcs15@humboldt.edu)

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### **Course description & learning objectives:**

One mission of the senior capstone course in psychology is to provide a theoretical perspective that unites the many different sub areas of psychology. Evolutionary Psychology (EP) does exactly that. It is not a field of psychology, it is an approach to psychology in which principles of evolutionary biology are applied to questions about the human mind and behavior. According to John Tooby and Leda Cosmides, two leading EP theorists, EP "is a way of thinking about psychology that can be applied to any topic within it." The course will review basic elements of evolutionary biology and theory, including principles of genetics, reproduction, natural selection and heritability. Has contemporary psychology under-emphasized the role of evolutionary influences on the mind and behavior? Is that trend changing? We will address these question and others as we study EP perspectives on a range of psychological topics, including emotion, motivation, family relationships, sexual behavior, and aggression. Evolution provides a unifying theoretical foundation not only for these diverse topics in psychology, but for all of the life sciences. Students in this class will be encouraged to view their accumulated knowledge of psychology in this broader context.

"Is it not reasonable to anticipate that our understanding of the human mind would be aided greatly by knowing the purpose for which it was designed?" George C. Williams

### **Required Materials**

1. Text book: David Buss: Evolutionary Psychology, The New Science of the Mind. 3rd Edition. Jul 2007, Hardback, 496 pages ISBN13: 9780205483389 ISBN10: 0205483380 – At HSU bookstore
2. Readings posted on the course Moodle site

### **Student responsibilities and grading**

**Assignments = 40%. Assignments Breakdown:**

Brief written report = 10%

In-class presentation = 15%

In-class assignments, including audience questions on presentations = 15%

\*see 'Assignment Details' Moodle page or syllabus section for detail on each

**Exams = 60%**

Three exams, 20% each (exam 3 is the final and is cumulative ).

Format: Exams 1 and 2 are open book take home tests; final is in-class. MC and SA questions.

**Attendance:** Three unexcused absences = loss of a full letter grade; Each additional unexcused absence = additional loss of a full letter grade.

**Participation\_** Can definitely help your grade, but lack of participation will not hurt your grade.

**Additional critical information- read carefully**

**Students with Disabilities:** Persons who wish to request disability-related accommodations should contact the Student Disability Resource Center in House 71, 826-4678 (voice) or 826-5392 (TDD). Some accommodations may take up to several weeks to arrange. <http://www.humboldt.edu/~sdrc/>

**Add/Drop policy:** Students are responsible for knowing the University policy, procedures, and schedule for dropping or adding classes.  
<http://www.humboldt.edu/~reg/regulations/schedadjust.html>

**Emergency evacuation:** Please review the evacuation plan for the classroom (posted on the orange signs) , and review [http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/emergencyops/campus\\_emergency\\_preparedness.php](http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/emergencyops/campus_emergency_preparedness.php) for information on campus Emergency Procedures. During an emergency, information can be found campus conditions at: 826-INFO or [www.humboldt.edu/emergency](http://www.humboldt.edu/emergency)

**Academic honesty:** Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding academic honesty: [http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/judicial/academic\\_honesty.php](http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/judicial/academic_honesty.php) or <http://www.humboldt.edu/~humboldt/catalogpdfs/catalog2007-08.pdf>

**Attendance and disruptive behavior:** Students are responsible for knowing policy regarding attendance and disruptive behavior:  
[http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/judicial/attendance\\_behavior.php](http://studentaffairs.humboldt.edu/judicial/attendance_behavior.php)