

INTRODUCTION TO BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Fall 2022

Instructor: Dr. Thomas J. Siek
Email: siektj@mcmaster.ca
Phone: 905-525-9140 Ext. 24159
Office: CNH 513

Lecture: PGCLL 124, Mon/Wed,
08:30-09:20
Lab: Thurs, CNH 407 (L02-L05)
Office Hours: Wed, 13:30-15:30

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Course Description

The course introduces students to the broad discipline of biological anthropology and examines the biological basis for human variation, past and present. Students will be introduced to various concepts such as human evolution, genetics, primatology, bioarchaeology, forensics and paleoanthropology.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Conceptualize the diverse subfields of biological anthropology
- Define and articulate the principles of genetic heredity and evolution
- Conceptualize human biological adaptations and variations
- Identify, describe, and contrast Old World and New World primates
- Identify, describe, and contrast human ancestors in the fossil record

Required Materials and Texts

There is one required textbook for this course, and it is available for purchase through the McMaster Bookstore.

Larsen CS. 2022. *Essentials of Biological Anthropology*. Fifth edition. W.W. Norton & Company.

This textbook is available in either paperback or e-text.

Class Format

This class will have two in-person lectures per week, as well as an in-person lab component.

Lecture slides will be posted on Avenue to Learn at the end of the week in PDF format. These PDFs will be simplified versions of the lecture slides with only key terms and concepts; they are for reference only and are not meant to replace attending lectures.

A video recording of each lecture will also be posted on Avenue to Learn. These recordings will only be available for seven calendar days and are intended to act as a reference if something was missed during class; they are not meant to replace attending lectures. Moreover, these will be live recordings and I do not have control over the recording process. Keep in mind that video and audio quality may vary week to week. Sound may be muffled due to masks, you may hear background noises from students, rustling papers in the lecture hall, etc. On average, about 5-7% of in-class lectures in the past have a technical issue (no sound, low sound, etc.) that the professor cannot control or fix.

Remember: The onus is on the student to come to class, take notes, and use the videos and posted slides as referential backups of lectures, not replacements.

Lab Sections and TAs

There are four lab sections for this course, meeting every week on Thursday in CNH 407. Please only attend the lab session you are enrolled in. The lab will be a chance for you to further engage with the course materials, connect with your classmates, and work on your group project.

Each lab section will be led by a TA. Your TA's name, office hours, and contact information will be given in Lab.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Lab Attendance and Participation	10%
2. Midterm	25%
3. Group Project –	40%
a. Annotated Bibliography	(10%)
b. Outline	(10%)
c. Final Paper	(20%)
4. Final Exam	25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Lab Attendance and Participation (10%), Ongoing throughout the term

A portion of your grade will be based on your attending and participating in scheduled Lab sessions. At every Lab session, there will be a sign-in sheet to track your attendance and you are expected to stay for the entire scheduled session – please try not to book appointments during this time. The grade is broken down as follows:

Attend and participate in:

>11 lab sessions = 10%

9-10 lab sessions = 7%

6-8 lab sessions = 5%

<6 lab sessions = 0%

Midterm (25%), 24 October

The in-class midterm will include all previously covered material in class, including any online postings. Details regarding its format will be discussed in class.

Group Project (10% + 10% + 20% = 40%) Multiple Dates, See Below

In your Lab sections, you will be self-assigned into groups of four. Each group will assign roles and, together, research and develop an end-of-term paper on a particular subfield of biological anthropology. This project will be divided into three components, which will help contribute to the final paper. All group members are responsible for completing and submitting each part of the project for their own sections. Further details will be given in class.

Group Project – Annotated Bibliography (10%), due 05 October

Each group member will prepare an annotated bibliography for their self-assigned section of the final paper. An annotated bibliography consists of a list of bibliographic references, followed by a short statement for each reference. Further details will be given in class.

Group Project – Outline (10%), due 09 November

Each group member will prepare a detailed outline for their respective paper section. The group must also submit an outline for the entire final paper, which incorporates each member's section and shows how they will connect together. Further details will be given in class.

Group Project – Final Paper (20%), due 07 December

The group will submit one final paper to be graded. Part of your grade will be determined individually by your written section and another part will be based on the paper as a whole, which will be shared equally among the group.

Final Exam (25%), McMaster Final Examination Period

The final exam will be cumulative and be held during the university's final exam period (9-22 Dec). The date and time of the exam will be determined by the Registrar's Office. Details regarding its format will be discussed in the final week of class.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (7 September)

Introduction & Syllabus Review

Readings:

None

Note: No Lab Sessions this week.

Week 2 (12 & 14 September)

What is Biological Anthropology?

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapter 1

Note: Group project selection in Lab.

Week 3 (19 & 21 September)

Evolution

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapter 2

Week 4 (26 & 28 September)

Genetics

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapter 3 (skip sections 3.7 & 3.8)

28 September: In-class documentary viewing: NOVA. *Secrets in Our DNA*. 2021. Season 48, Episode 1.

Note: This documentary is available via Kanopy and can be accessed with your McMaster log in details

Week 5 (3 & 5 October)

Heredity

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapter 3 (section 3.8); chapter 4 (skip section 4.4)

Note: Group Project – Annotated Bibliography due 5 October on Avenue by 23:59 EST

Week 6 (10 & 12 October)

Reading Week ☺

Readings:

None.

Week 7 (17 & 19 October)

Human Variation and Adaptation

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapter 4 (section 4.4); chapter 5

Week 8 (24 & 26 October)

Midterm

Readings:

None.

24 October: Midterm

26 October: Documentary viewing: *Go Ape – The Fascinating World of Primates*. [Watch Here](#)

Note: The midterm will be held on 24 October at the regularly scheduled class time. There are no Lab Sessions this week.

Week 9 (31 October & 2 November)

Primates

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapter 6

Larsen 2022, chapter 7 & 9 (optional)

Week 10 (7 November & 9 November)

Paleoanthropology

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapters 10-12.

Larsen 2022, chapter 8 (optional)

Note: Group Project – Outline due 9 November on Avenue by 23:59 EST

Week 11 (14 & 16 November)

Bioarchaeology and Dental Anthropology

Readings:

Ward A. 2019. "Osteology (Skeletons/Body Farms) with Daniel Wescott". *Ologies with Alie Ward*. [Listen Here](#)

Guest lecturer: Matthew J Lee, "Introduction to Dental Anthropology"

Note: A transcript of the podcast is available on the website. Mr. Lee may assign an extra reading in preparation for his guest lecture. If so, you will be informed in advance.

Week 12 (21 & 23 November)

Forensic Anthropology

Readings:

Kendall A, Perrone A, Milligan C. 2019. "Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology". In Shook B, Nelson K, Aguilera K, Braff L (eds.). *Explorations: An Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology*. American Anthropological Association. Pp. 546-579.

Note: A PDF copy of this chapter can be found on Avenue to Learn.

Week 13 (28 & 30 November)

Agriculture and Food

Readings:

Larsen 2022, chapter 13

Week 14 (5 & 7 December)

Final Remarks and Review

Readings:

None.

Note: Group Project – Final Paper due on Avenue by 23:59 EST.

Course Policies

Email Policy

All emails to Dr. Siek and the course TA's must come from your McMaster email address and include the course code in the subject line. Please allow up to 48 hours for a reply. In general, emails sent during the weekend or in the middle of the night (i.e., after 22:00) will not receive a reply until the morning of the next business day. Before emailing with questions about course content, deadlines, assignments, etc., please refer to the course syllabus, the Anthropology Department website, and the university website. Please reserve emails to Dr. Siek and the TA's only when you have exhausted all other options or if it is a personal concern that will affect your performance in the class.

Submission of Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted to Avenue to Learn on the due date, by 23:59 EST. Please convert all assignment files to PDF before submission. File formats other than PDF will not be accepted unless stated otherwise. If you have technical problems when submitting an assignment, take a screenshot that shows your submission screen and desktop clock/date as a timestamp. Refer to Avenue to Learn Support page for help.

Late Assignments

You are expected to submit all assignments on the due date. All assignment deadlines are clearly marked in the syllabus and are made known to students at the beginning of the term by the instructor. There will be a 3% penalty for every day the assignment is late, for up to five calendar days, including

weekends. After five days from the original deadline, late submissions will not be accepted and you will receive a grade of zero (0%) for that assignment. If you feel that your assignment will be late due to reasons out of your control, please contact your TA at least 24 hours in advance of the due date to discuss the matter. Extensions will only be given under extenuating circumstances and will be no longer than one week after the original due date. Ensure you frequently make backup copies of your work and please note that having a lot of other course work is not grounds for an extension.

MSAF (McMaster Student Absence Form)

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please note that all coursework and exams must be completed. We do not re-weigh any assignments or tests. Please refer to the University’s policies concerning the use of MSAFs (McMaster Student Absence Forms) (<https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/>).

Assignment Reappraisal

Your assignments are marked by TA’s using a grading key provided by the instructor, which is based on the criteria outlined in the assignment guidelines. Grades are not awarded based on demonstrated effort, but on demonstrated achievement. It is normal for a student’s average grade in university classes to be lower than their average grade in high school. If you disagree with a grade that you have received, please follow these steps:

1. Wait 24 hours after viewing your mark, then re-read your assignment. Consider the assignment criteria guidelines and your TA’s feedback.
2. Seek more feedback: if you require more information about your grade, contact your TA and ask for further feedback.
3. Formally request a re-appraisal via email to Dr. Siek. Write a 300-word (min.) statement explaining why you believe the grader’s assessment was mistaken and submit it to Dr Siek along with the original assignment (with TA feedback). Your statement must directly reference the assignment guidelines.
4. Dr. Siek will re-assess your work using the same grading key as was used by your TA and return it to you within 72 hours.

Please note: requesting a re-appraisal does not guarantee that your grade will increase. Most re-appraisals do not produce a different mark than the original assessment, and some produce a lower mark.

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor. Technical questions regarding Avenue to Learn should be directed to the Avenue help desk (during business hours) - <https://avenue.mcmaster.ca/support.html>

Turnitin.com

In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please to go www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE	Qualitative Scale (Unofficial)
90-100	A+	Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization; capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
85-90	A	
80-84	A-	
77-79	B+	Competent performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
73-76	B	
70-72	B-	
67-69	C+	Adequate performance: understanding of the subject matter; ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material; acceptable but uninspired work, not seriously faulty but lacking style and vigour.
63-66	C	
60-62	C-	
57-59	D+	
53-56	D	
50-52	D-	
0-49	F	Inadequate performance: little or no evidence of understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited or irrelevant use of the literature.

University Policies

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Privacy Protection

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class.
2. Return of materials to students during office hours.
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail.
4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

ADVISORY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ON-LINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, usernames for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**. It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”: <https://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=44&navoid=9020#requests-for-relief-for-missed-academic-term-work>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

