

# HUMAN BEHAVIOURAL ECOLOGY

Fall 2012

**T**he objective of this course is to provide an introduction to the process of evolution by natural selection in relation to its implications for the study of human behaviour. If human action was easy to understand, there would be no



need for the discipline of psychology. Given that our reasons for doing the things that we do are often opaque, we need to find ways of looking at ourselves from a number of overlapping vantage points, while never forgetting that a proper understanding requires an integration of these various perspectives. Perhaps the primary difficulty is caused by the fact that we are both biological creatures and cultural creations at one and the same time. The entanglements of our biology and cultures are so deep and fundamental that it is difficult to know how to begin to tease apart their influences, or even whether it is even sensible to do so. Nevertheless, we have to start somewhere and so we are going to address *this* question as a way of doing so: *What do we gain in understanding by considering ourselves as animals with a particular evolutionary history?*

## Instructor:

Peter **Henzi**; Room C878 (Phone: 403-317-2839); peter.henzi@uleth.ca. Consultations either after class or by appointment.

## Teaching Assistants:

Kerri **Norman** (kerri.norman@uleth.ca); Shelley **Gross** (shelley.gross@uleth.ca)

## Lectures:

Tuesday: 1800-2050 in room PE250

## Textbook:

There is NO textbook for this course. I will provide readings for each topic as well as PDFs of the lectures themselves.

**\*\*Please note that ALL materials and examination results will be posted on Moodle.**

## Assessment:

Two midterm tests (30% each) and one final exam (40%) - all multiple choice questions - based on material from both lectures and readings.

**Grading:**

Final letter grades for the course will be determined using the following scheme:

<b>A+</b>	90-100	<b>C+</b>	68-69
<b>A</b>	83-89	<b>C</b>	63-67
<b>A-</b>	80-82	<b>C-</b>	60-62
<b>B+</b>	78-79	<b>D+</b>	57-59
<b>B</b>	73-77	<b>D</b>	50-56
<b>B-</b>	70-72	<b>F</b>	< 50

**Required disciplinary note**

All students in the course are subject to the student discipline policy for academic and non-academic offenses in accordance with the University Calendar.

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## Course Topic Areas

1. An evolutionary approach to human behaviour
2. Human origins, modes of subsistence and biogeography
3. Human life histories
4. Parental investment
5. Sexual selection, conflict and mate choice
6. Kin selection, altruism and cooperation
7. The evolution of complex societies

**Midterm 1 (30%) ~ Week 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> October**

**Midterm 2 (30%) ~ Week 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> November**

**Final Exam – registrar scheduled (40%)**

**Experimental Research Participation:**

This course is designed to provide students with an opportunity to participate in active research programs of faculty members. Calls for volunteers to assist in these projects will be made during the semester, via announcements on WebCT. If you are asked to volunteer, and you accept, each project usually requires one hour or less of your time, but this will depend on the individual research project. In recognition for your time, and in recognition that you are learning something about the discipline of psychology, beyond what you would in the normal classroom environment, an extra credit of 1% to 2% for each study in which you participate will be added to your total grade to a maximum of [2%]. Note that there is no guarantee that all students will be able to achieve the maximum extra credit. These extra credits are added only after all grade

cutoffs have been established such that students who choose not to participate are not disadvantaged. Please check with the Research Assistant for the Experiment to ensure that you have not completed this study previously or have done a similar study.  
NOTE: The studies will run September 17 to December 4 2012.