

BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTH 2401

Anthropology—Fall 2026

Sul Ross State University

Lecture: Tues, Thurs 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Online synchronous



Professor: Dr. Justin Garnett

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Office Hours: online, Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. or by appointment.

***This document should be considered tentative, and subject to change as needed ***

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will offer an introduction to the anthropological study of the human being as a biological organism. Emphasis will be placed upon the evolutionary history of *Homo sapiens*, as well as our earliest non-human hominin ancestors and relatives. The formative history of the discipline will be addressed, as well as ongoing debates and new discoveries in the field.

Important considerations:

I do not offer extra credit. You must turn in your assignments on time. Use of generative AI in assignments will lead to failing grades on assignments, and possibly in the course.

This class is online and SYNCHRONOUS. All assigned work must be completed during class times.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOS)

- 1) The students will be able to describe and understand the basic objectives and methods of biological anthropology.
- 2) The students will acquire a basic vocabulary for discussing prominent issues within biological anthropology and neighboring social sciences such as human and primate anatomy, race, gender, sexuality, inequality, material culture, legal land claims, and medicine.
- 3) The students will demonstrate an understanding of the trajectory of anthropological thought and how it is linked to contemporary perspectives in biological anthropology.

- 4) The students will be able to demonstrate basic knowledge of human evolution and the trajectory of human cultures from the deep past to today.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This course aims to familiarize students with biological anthropology's historical development, methods, associated terms, and current objectives. This approach provides a foundation for students pursuing anthropology or its subdisciplines but is taught with the non-specialist in mind.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Required textbook (Free to access online)

Shook et al., 2023, Explorations: an Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology. 2nd edition. LibreTexts.

Hyperlink: [EXPLORATIONS: An Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology 2e - Social Sci LibreTexts](#)

(A link will also be provided in the Blackboard course shell)

Additional readings (pdf articles) will be assigned on the Blackboard webpage for this class and students will be instructed on how to access this material.

GRADING

Your grade in this class is based strongly on your willingness to attend lectures, be attentive, take notes and study them. Lecture materials are structured using the textbook, but the book does not cover all materials in lecture and is not a good substitute for being in class. Missing class, interrupting class, falling asleep in class or playing on your phone are the quickest way to damage your grade. If you must miss a class please inform me well ahead of the expected date so I may try to accommodate you, but do not expect me to account for extensive absences.

There are **1,000 points total** in the course, and no extra credit.

I will NOT take attendance. But being in class and participating is good idea.

EXAMS

There will be three **exams**. They will be worth **200 points** each. So you will receive a possible total of **600 points** from exams.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

There will be three short **one-page written assignments** over the assigned readings. These will be worth **100 points each**. They will be written in class and submitted on blackboard during class, so read the assigned readings in advance. You won't have time to skim the articles in class and get a good grade. If you use AI, your entire grade will be rejected.

CHECKS FOR UNDERSTANDING

Ten times over the semester you will turn in a one paragraph **"check for understanding"** where you will write down something from the course's material which you want clarification about. This helps my teaching improve. Write these down in class, and turn them in to me. These will be worth 10 points each, for a total of **100 points**.

This gives us the total of **1,000 points**. There are ***no other sources of points in the course***. Points are NOT transferrable from one category to another.

Assignments	Date	% of Grade
Exam 1	9/19	20 %
Exam 2	10/17	20 %
Exam 3 (Final)	TBA	20%
Written Assignment 1	9/26	10 %
Written Assignment 2	10/24	10 %
Written Assignment 3	11/21	10 %
Checks for Understanding	Announced in class	10 %
		<i>100.00</i>

This is the conversion between point percentages and standard letter grades:

Score	Grade
<59.9%	F
60-62.9%	D-
63-66.9%	D
67-69.9	D+
70-72.9%	C-
73-76.9%	C
77-79.9%	C+
80-82.9%	B-
83-86.9%	B
87-89.9%	B+
90-92.9%	A-
93-100%	A

CLASS POLICIES AND RESOURCES

TECHNOLOGY

You will be using Blackboard in this class to access materials. During class you are encouraged to take notes by hand, since studies indicate improved comprehension of materials. However, you may take notes digitally on a laptop or tablet. Surfing the internet is a distraction to yourself and others and is prohibited. Cell phones must be silenced or turned off and put away during class. This is required not only to improve your learning experience but those around you.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or contact Alejandra Valdez, at 830-758-5006 or email alejandra.valdez@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize him/herself with the requirements of such laws.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website.

Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

SRSU LIBRARY SERVICES

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offer FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu/. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

No matter where you are based, public libraries and many academic and special libraries welcome the general public into their spaces for study. SRSU TexShare Cardholders can access additional services and resources at various libraries across Texas. Learn more about the TexShare program by visiting library.sulross.edu/find-and-borrow/texshare/ or ask a librarian by emailing srsulibrary@sulross.edu. Mike Fernandez, SRSU Librarian, is based in Eagle Pass (Building D-129) to offer specialized library services to students, faculty, and staff. Utilize free services such as InterLibrary Loan (ILL), ScanIt, and Direct Mail to get materials delivered to you at home or via email.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students may not use generative AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

CLASSROOM RESPECT

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Core Curriculum Statement

The following statement is required for a core curriculum course, and certainly applies to anthropology:

- Personal Responsibility. Students will develop principles of personal responsibility for living in a diverse world; to include intercultural competency, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- Social Responsibility. Students will develop principles of social responsibility for living in a diverse world, to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Counseling

Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/365 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/SRSU). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC students.



Almost no one knows what biological anthropologists do. This image was generated by Bing AI from the prompt “a photograph of a group of biological anthropologists which clearly demonstrates what biological anthropologists do”. When you finish this class you will be able to do better.

Tentative Class Schedule Fall 2026

Week 1	8/25	Class 1: Introduction to Class <i>Introduction and review of the syllabus</i>	Reading: chapter 1
	8/27	Class 2: Intro to biological anthropology	
Week 2	9/1	Class 3: evolution as a concept	Reading: chapter 2
	9/3	Class 4: Evolution - mechanisms	
Week 3	9/8	Class 5: molecular biology	Reading: chapter 3
	9/10	Class 6: population genetics	
Week 4	9/15	Class 7: forces of evolution	Reading: chapter 4
	9/17	Class 8: forces of evolution	
Week 5	9/22	Class 9: exam review	Reading: as assigned
	9/24	Class 10: exam 1	
Week 6	9/29	Class 11: written assignment 1	Reading: chapter 5
	10/1	Class 12: Living primates	
Week 7	10/6	Class 13: Primate societies	Reading: chapters 6, 7
	10/8	Class 14: Intro to primate fossils	
Week 8	10/13	Class 15: Evolution of primates	Reading: chapter 8
	10/15	Class 16: early hominins	
Week 9	10/20	Class 17: early hominins	Reading: as assigned
	10/22	Class 18: Australopithecines and early Homo	
Week 10	10/27	Class 19: Archaic <i>Homo spp.</i> , Modern <i>Homo</i>	Reading: chapters 11, 12
	10/29	Class 20: exam review	
Week 11	11/3	Class 21: exam 2	Reading: as assigned
	11/5	Class 22: Written assignment 2	
Week 12	11/10	Class 23: Race and human variation	Reading: chapters 13, 14
	11/12	Class 24: Lecture: the study of humanity	

Week 13	11/17	Class 25: biology, genetics, health, social impacts of human biology	Reading: chapters 15, 16
	11/19	Class 26: human osteology	
Week 14	11/24	Class 27: Written assignment 3	Reading: appendix a, as assigned
	11/26	NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	
Week 15	12/1	Class 28: exam review	Reading: as assigned
	12/3	NO CLASS - DEAD DAY	
Week 16	???	Test 3: FINAL EXAM DATE/TIME yet to be determined.	Reading: n/a

December 14: All final grades post to Blackboard.