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2023

### PSY 390 Evolutionary Psychology

Dan McCloskey

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# Psychology 390 College of Staten Island Fall 2023

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## Meeting Times

Fridays 10:10AM- 2:15PM

Meetings held in person (1P-109)

Professor Dan McCloskey

email: dan.mccloskey@csi.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00- 11:30 AM 4S-230

## Description:

Overview of the scientific perspective of evolutionary psychology, which investigates psychological mechanisms from the standpoint that they arise from the function of the brain, which has been shaped by the process of biological evolution. The course covers the basic principles of biological evolution and addresses the evolutionary forces that are likely to have influenced the development of specialized psychological mechanisms such as individual survival, reproduction, group/social living, and biological constraints on learning (ontogeny). The course will also cover emerging topics in evolutionary psychology such as the development of culture and the potential role of memes in manipulating human behavior.

## Learning Objectives:

It is expected that by the end of this class you will:

1. Understand the study of Evolutionary Psychology and its foundations.
2. Understand ways in which the brain shapes behavior and environmental pressures shape the brain.
3. Enhance your skills in designing conducting an applied research project using the scientific method and principles learned in this course.
4. Develop good organizational habits, teamwork and communication skills.

## Course Organization and Grading

This class is organized as a **Flipped Class** with background material for each topic presented as readings and videos which should be reviewed prior to class. Each class will begin with a brief review of the material, followed by a quiz. Class time will be largely devoted to the experimental methodology for the final project. There is **no textbook** for this course, but there are required readings for each week.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

1. Quizzes (top 10): 60%
2. Class Participation: 10%
3. Homework assignments (10): 10%
4. Final Research Project: 20%

1. Quizzes will consist of a combination of multiple choice and essay questions to be completed, closed book, during class time.

2. Class participation will be measured by your contributions to class discussions and by posting a response video to weekly topic videos.

3. Homework assignments are a variety of assignments to be turned in on your own.

4. The Final Research Project is a group project conducting a real or simulated experiment based on an evolutionary psychology concept. Your grade will be based on: a) individual contribution, b) APA research paper, c) experimental design, and d) a presentation by your group.

If you need an accommodation because of a documented disability, please register with the [CSI Center for Student Accessibility](#).

This course follows the [CSI Guidelines for Academic Integrity](#). Cheating on quizzes or plagiarism in HW will result in an undroppable zero.

A note about inclusion and discussion:

As an upper division course that is based more on class discussion than lecture, my hope is that we can have an open dialogue about race, gender, religion and viewpoint that respects and celebrates differences. Please remember that none of us can know everything. We all come to this class with different experiences and knowledge bases. Let's use those differences as a community so that we all can benefit by learning from one another.

## Class Schedule

Class	Date	Topic	Class Video	Supplemental Video	Reading	Assignment	Quiz
1	Friday, August 25	Class Overview	<a href="#">Say Hello on Flipgrid</a>	<a href="#">Sapolsky: Behave</a>			
2	Friday, September 1	Human Origins	1. <a href="#">Human Origins</a> 2. <a href="#">Our Primate Family</a>	<a href="#">AMNH Video</a>	<a href="#">Cosmos Primer on Human Evolution</a>	<a href="#">Phylogenetic tree</a>	1
3	Friday, September 8	Evolutionary Biology	1. <a href="#">The Beagle and the Sea</a> 2. <a href="#">Population Genetics</a>	<a href="#">Human Natural Selection</a>	<a href="#">Darwin Letter to Asa Gray</a>	<a href="#">Peppered Moth Netlogo project</a>	2
	Friday, September 15	NO CLASS					
4	Friday, September	Neuroscience	1. <a href="#">Cognitive Psychology</a>	1. <a href="#">Kohler Ape Intelligence</a>	1. <a href="#">Overview of Kohler's research on insight</a>	<a href="#">Comparative Brain Study</a>	3

	mber 22		<a href="#">2. Brain Evolution</a>	<a href="#">2. Brain Evolution</a>	<a href="#">2. Comparative primate brain anatomy</a>		
5	Friday , September 29	Food & Eating	<a href="#">Feeding Behavior</a>		1. <a href="#">Capuchin stone tool use</a>  2. <a href="#">Evolution of human food preference</a>		4
6	Friday , October 6	Fear & Arousal	<a href="#">EVOPSY6 : Fear and Arousal</a>		1. <a href="#">Observational conditioning of fear in monkeys</a> 2. <a href="#">Evolution of fear in humans</a>	<a href="#">Thrill seeking behavior survey</a>	5
7	Friday , October 13	Stress	<a href="#">EVOPSY 7: Stress</a>		<a href="#">Social Rank and Stress</a>		6
8	Friday , October 20	Aggression	<a href="#">EVOPSY8 : Aggression</a>		<a href="#">Evolution of Aggression</a>	<a href="#">Dehumanization and warfare</a>	7
9	Friday , October 27	Mate Selection	<a href="#">EVOPSY9: Mate Selection</a>		<a href="#">Evolution of Human Mate Selection</a>		8

10	Friday, November 3	Sexual behavior	<a href="#">PSY10: Sexual Behavior</a>		<a href="#">Evolution of Sexual Behavior</a>	<a href="#">I'm glad I'm not...</a>	9
11	Friday , November 10	Social Perception	<a href="#">EVOPSY1 1: Social Perception</a>		1. <a href="#">The social brain: von economy neurons</a> 2. <a href="#">Evolution of social gaze</a>	<a href="#">Mirror neurons</a>	10
12	Friday, November 17	Social Groups	<a href="#">EVOPSY1 2: Social Groups</a>		<a href="#">The evolution of cooperation</a>	<a href="#">Theory of mind</a>	11
	Friday, November 24	NO CLASS					
13	Friday , December 1	Morality & Altruism	<a href="#">EVOPSY1 3: Morality and Altruism</a>		1. <a href="#">Brain activity in moral judgement</a> 2. <a href="#">Evolution of Suicide</a>		12
14	Friday, Dece	Final Project Presentations					

	mber 8						
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