

ANT 260G: SOCIETY, BIOLOGY AND CULTURE. Summer 2008
Tuesday and Thursday 6:00 PM - 9:20 PM

Instructor: Dr. Vance Geiger

Course Description: A comparative look at theories of human social and cultural behavior specifically contrasting biological determinism with cultural materialism, historical analysis and contingency. Ethnographic cases are presented to illustrate the different theoretical perspectives when applied to the same set of data. Contemporary issues are also explored including IQ, racism, the Human Genome Project and Evolutionary Psychology.

TEXTS

Mismeasure of Man by Stephen J. Gould
Galapagos by Kurt Vonnegut
Biology as Ideology by R.C. Lewontin
Cultural Materialism by Marvin Harris
Evolutionary Psychology 2nd Edition by Steven Gaulin and Donald
cBurney

Requirements: Reading: This class requires a lot of reading. The reading, however, is to acquaint you with a broad range of topics more than to delve very deeply into any one of them. Consequently, the material that you will be reading is no technical as much as it is informative. In essence, the reading should not be that difficult.

Tests: There will be two tests. Tests will consist of from 5 to 10 essay questions.

Grades: Grades will be achieved by performing all the required tasks delineated above. I will apply a point system as follows:

Tests (2): 100 points each = 200

SOCIETY, BIOLOGY AND CULTURE:

Class 1: Anthropology and the Culture Biology Debate

Class 2: The Basis of the Problem: Determinism versus Contingency

Class 3: Cultural Determinism

Reading: Harris Chapters 1 - 4

Class 4: Cultural Determinism Cont'd

Reading: Harris Chapters 5 - 11

Class 5: An Unpleasant Alternative: Cultural Contingency

Reading: Boas

Class 6: Evolution: The Basis of Biological Determinism: What it is and What it is not

Exam 1

Reading: Galapagos, Biology as Ideology

Class 7: Sociobiology and Evolutionary Psychology

Reading: Evolutionary Psychology Chapter 1- 3, 6

Class 8: Evolutionary Psychology Cont'd

Reading: Evolutionary Psychology Chapters 7, 12, 13

Class 9: Evolutionary Psychology Cont'd

Reading: Evolutionary Psychology Chapter 14, 15

Class 10: Contemporary Issues: Mismeasure of Man versus The Bell Curve

Reading: Mismeasure of Man

Class 11: Contemporary Issues: Mismeasure of Man versus The Bell Curve

Reading: handout

Class 12: Summing Up: Final Exam