

**ANT 439/550 Primate Religion & Human Consciousness**

Topics in the Anthropology of Religion

Spring 2019 / Tues/Thurs 3-4:15PM / Rowand-Johnson 37

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**Classroom Conduct**

Leave your phones hidden in your backpacks and in airplane mode or turned off. If you text in my class, check your social media, or engage in any other rude and unseemly behavior, I'll ask you to leave class; and you'll be marked as absent.

**Course Description:** Human consciousness is often held aloft as one of the distinguishing characteristics of humanity with higher consciousness, self-awareness, and truth generally considered worthwhile lifelong pursuits. But at what cost? Have evolutionary mechanisms propelled humans toward “analysis paralysis”? Do cultural and psychological adaptations maintain the blinders of blissful ignorance? We will consider these questions in reading about the 'religious' behavior of non-human primates and altered states of consciousness, and engage in activities to expand and limit our own consciousnesses. Additionally, you will participate in research as part of the Belongingness Ecology Study, which will may involve establishing relationships and collecting data among a local group of your choice. The course will consist of a series of readings, discussions, and activities to explore human consciousness from psychological, biological, and cultural aspects with a focus on operationalizing it for a practical research agenda.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** By the end of this course, students should be able to

* Define a complex system like human consciousness in operationalizable terms—that is, define it by parts or mechanisms that theoretically comprise it and how to test for them
* Provide examples for elaborated culture (such as religious behavior) in non-humans and humans and examples of behavior that does not require consciousness in human behavior.
* Summarize technical material and communicate it experientially or in lay terms to a group of peers.
* Collaborate with a group to design and conduct a pilot study, write up the results as a scientific paper, and give a presentation to an educated audience.
* Recognize the synergistic outcomes of mind/body processes in behavior and culture.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**Blackboard**

Readings will be posted to Blackboard, and I will use this avenue to contact the class about syllabus changes. The syllabus is likely to be altered slightly over the course of the semester. I will not reprint it, but you can download and print the most current version from the link on Blackboard at any time. I will contact you when it has been substantively revised. Access Blackboard via myBama. There is a box called Blackboard on the Academics tab that should list your courses that are currently let up with Blackboard.

We will also use Blackboard to turn in all assignments. I STRONGLY recommend you set up Blackboard to send you email notifications when things are posted, updated, due, or have been graded. To do this, follow these instructions:

1. Log in to Blackboard
2. Toggle the arrow next to your name at the upper right hand corner of your screen
3. Select "Settings" at the bottom of the screen that appears
4. Select "Edit Notification Settings"
5. Select this course from the list
6. Under "2. Settings," check the box above Email so it notifies you when any actions are taken.
7. Be sure to click the "Submit" button to save these settings.

**Facebook**

This course has a Facebook group for sharing information relative to the course. Please join us for online discussions at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/uh300.37/>. This group is used to share relevant information from media sources, and facilitate discussion. Please request to join the group. If you are not on Facebook, you will need to join, if only to participate in our group (you can make your profile private so no one finds out).

While you're at it, "like" the [UA Department of Anthropology](http://www.facebook.com/UAAnthroDept) on Facebook so that we can keep in touch with you and you can stay informed about our events and activities.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Attendance**

As this course involves active participation and activities, attendance is expected and mandatory on days you are scheduled to present. If you are absent without a valid excuse on a day you are scheduled to present, you will receive a 0 for that portion of your presentation grade, regardless of the preparation you may have otherwise done for the presentation. If you are aware of a conflict in your presentation date, it is up to you to arrange with classmates to switch presentations with someone.

**Written Commentaries:** You will be expected to write EVERY WEEK via our course Discussion Board on Blackboard in response to a discussion question there. **You turn these in online AND in class.** Your response should be relevant to the week’s readings and integrate your thoughts, our class discussions, and other readings. Posts for each article should be ~500 words. This is a major part of your grade, so DO NOT GET BEHIND. I expect your writing to be coherent. This means you should watch your spelling and grammar, though stylistically discussion posts tend to be somewhat 'looser' than other academic writing. I will give you feedback on your writing periodically. Four of these commentaries should be reports on the progress you are making in your group projects. **I strongly suggest you keep field notes when you are engaged in the group projects outside of class, then summarize your notes for these entries.**

**Reading Presentations**: You will be responsible for generating discussions related to assigned articles. Each Thursday, one student is assigned to (1) generate AN ACTIVITY for group work and (2) generate discussion (see schedule below). The activity should be related to the reading for that date and enable us to engage the material experientially. Examples include finding the questionnaires used in articles we read so that we can take them and generate class data, as well as discuss study methodologies based on firsthand experience, or developing games that draw on material in the article. Following is the rubric I will use to evaluate your presentation and that you should use to prepare.

***Reading Presentation Rubric***

Presentations will be graded as 1=poor 2=satisfactory 3=good on the following criteria:

* Presentation content (material appropriately summarized, balance of word/pictures)
* Presentation style (grammar, spelling)
* Presentation presence (comportment in front of class, articulated lesson)
* Activity creativity (fun, age appropriate, effortful)
* Activity relevance (made sure to relate it to reading)

**Group Research:** The class will be divided into groups. Each group will collect and present data as part of the Belongingness Ecology Study Tuscaloosa (BEST). This is a systematic study of local group life from an ecological perspective. Each group will choose or be assigned a group to work with and study. Instructions and materials to conduct this project will be provided.

**Group Presentation:** Each group will give a 15-20 minute presentation on their project at the end of the semester. Instructions and expectations for this presentation will be provided.

**Group Research Paper:** Research papers should be 10-12 pages and use a scholarly style guide. Every scholarly journal published its “author guidelines,” which include a style guide. Here is an example from *Ethos*, the journal for the Society for Psychological Society: <http://www.wiley.com/bw/submit.asp?ref=0091-2131>. These guidelines will give you the required manuscript style of the respective scholarly journal (obviously, the page count specified here supersede those of your respective style guide). When you turn in your report, you will include a professional cover letter that indicates what journal’s style you are using for your report and the roles taken by each group member in your collaboration. I recommend you use RefWorks bibliographic software, as it will drastically improve your efficiency and accuracy and is free through the UA library (http://refworks.ua.edu/). In using RefWorks, I also recommend choosing a journal style that is loaded in RefWorks.

I recommend preparing your paper before your group presentation, as you will use the same material in the presentation. You will then use the constructive feedback you receive the presentation to improve the report. For writing projects, your group will spend about a third of the time researching your topic and the rest composing and revising your presentation and report. The process of writing should inevitably send you back to your sources to clarify points so there is some additional research time folded into writing time. Research papers usually represent approximately 4-8 hours of research and 8-16 hours of writing. You will use primary sources for theoretical background and discussion. This means that, while being integrative and creative, your project will build on research that has come before. This will provide your validity. Reports must be grammatically and carefully proofread and, therefore, not suffer the flawed organization and logical gaps that first and second drafts almost always do. In writing, keep in mind your audience. Papers written “for the instructor” often make unwarranted assumptions about the expertise of the reader. The result is that you may assume the reader “knows what you mean” and you may fall into the trap of obscuring an otherwise good (or hiding poor) results and implications with jargon. Despite all these restrictions in terms of format that have the tendency to suck the life out of an otherwise fun project, I want you to convey the excitement of your results. Given the limited potential for interpreting pilot data from a small, biased sample, I want you to go out on a limb and be more speculative than you otherwise would for a true scholarly publication. Let me know how neat and fun this study or its results are.

You will be evaluated using 1=poor 2=fair 3=satisfactory 4=good 5=exceptional for:

* **Coherence** (adherence to style, internal logic, organization, spelling/grammar, prose style)
* **Intellectual merit** (relevance to course,relevance to previousresearch)
* **Broader impacts** (importance or implicationsto discipline or society)
* **Source material** (choice of appropriate sources & comprehension of them)
* **Overall impression** (originality/creativity,collaboration,compelling/convincing,interesting)

**GRADING POLICY**

15% = Reading presentations

50% = Commentaries

15% = Group presentation

20% = Group research paper

**GRADUATE STUDENT REQUIREMENTS (ANT 550)**

Graduate students in the course will complete all of the above requirements in addition to reading the additional articles in bold in the Outline of Topics below and preparing biographical information for the class (to be presented, not handed out) for all the authors we read in a given week. Grad students should be prepared to tell the class about the authors on Thursdays. Some of them I will tell the class about on Tuesday when I lecture. Grad students are not required to prep anything on those, but they must be prepared to tell everyone the significance of the other authors we read within their respective fields or the course.

**OUTLINE OF TOPICS**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Topic** | **Reading** | **Assignment** | **Presenter** |
| WEEK 0  Thurs 1/10 | Intro | * Guest | Who are we? |  |
| WEEK 1  Tues 1/15 | Neuroanthropology of religion | Stanford (both chapters);  Kling & Wright 2018  **Lynn 2005** |  |  |
| Thurs 1/17 | King “Evolving God” (ch 1 & 2)  **Lende 2012 (ch 13)** | Commentary 1 due (Blackboard & in class) |  |
| WEEK 2  Tues 1/22 | What is transcendence? | Beauregard  Ustinova  **Goodman 1988 ch 1** |  |  |
| Thurs 1/24 | Goodman 1988 ch 6  Lende 2005  **Stromberg et al.** | Commentary 2 due (Blackboard & in class) |  |
| WEEK 3  Tues 1/29 | Cognitive science of religion | Whitehouse 2008  Atran 2006  Irons ch 13  **Boehm**  **Richerson & Newson** | BLOG 1 DUE |  |
| Thurs 1/31 | Boyer  Alcorta 2008  Barrett 2008  Schjodt 2008  **Slone**  **McCorkle**  **Bering** | Commentary 3 due |  |
| WEEK 4  Tues 2/5 | Diversity is our business | **Strathern** | Complete "Research brainstorming" assignment (Blackboard) |  |
| Thurs 2/7 | Storm & Wilson  Wilson ch 4-5  **Herbert ch 1 & 3** | Commentary 4 due |  |
| WEEK 5  Tues 2/12 | Consciousness | Alexander  Humphrey 1982  **Brereton 2000** |  |  |
| Thurs 2/14 | Kohn  James  **Kokoszka & Wallace** | Commentary 5 due |  |
| WEEK 6  Tues 2/19 | Research development/  Consciousness (cont’d) | **Hobson ch 1-2** | Discuss literature review & research plan BLOG 2 DUE |  |
| Thurs 2/21 | Damasio  Sacks  Morin 2005  **Hobson ch 3** | Commentary 6 due |  |
| WEEK 7  Tues 2/26 | Self-awareness & theory of mind | Keenan ch 1  Focquaert & Platek  **Brüne 2005** | Literature Review due |  |
| Thurs 2/28 | Leary & Buttermore  **Call & Tomasello 2008** | Commentary 7 due |  |
| WEEK 8  Tues 3/5 | Primatological cognitive studies | Nystrom  de Waal & Ferrari 2010  **Gouzoules & Gouzoules** | Complete "Research Purpose and Background" assignment (Blackboard) |  |
| Thurs 3/7 | Beran et al 2016  Povinelli & Cant  **Caldwell & Whiten** | Commentary 8 due |  |
| Tues 3/12 | SPRING BREAK | | | |
| Thurs 3/14 |
| WEEK 9  Tues 3/19 | Dissociative family of experiences | Luhrmann, et al.  Klass 2003  **Ludwig** | Commentary 9 due |  |
| Thurs 3/21 | Castillo 1995  Snodgrass, et al.  **Presti** |  |  |
| WEEK 10  Tues 3/26 | Trance states & social functions of dissociation | Newberg 2006  Lynn  **Lynn et al. 2015** | BLOG 3 DUE |  |
| Thurs 3/28 | Sosis 2006  Boddy  Cohen 2007  **Newberg 2003** | Commentary 10 due |  |
| WEEK 11  Tues 4/2 | Neural correlates of consciousness | Crick & Koch  Seligman & Kirmayer  **Koch & Tsuchiya** |  |  |
| Thurs 4/4 | Edelman 2001  Andrews-Hanna 2012  **Searle 1998** | Commentary 11 due |  |
| WEEK 12  Tues 4/9 | Behavioral allostasis | Schaller  Fincher & Thornhill 2008  Graham & Haidt 2010 |  |  |
| Thurs 4/11 | Xygalatas et al 2013  Geary 2007  **Brewis et al 2019** | Commentary 12 due |  |
| Tues 4/16 | Primate religion | Winkelman |  |  |
| Thurs 4/18 | Rossano | Commentary 13 due BLOG 4 DUE |  |
| Tues 4/23 | DEAD WEEK | | | |
| Thurs 4/25 |
| Mon, 7-9:30PM | Group presentations | | | |
| Tues, April 30 | Group papers are due by midnight. | | | |

**POLICY ON MISSED EXAMS & COURSEWORK**

**Online Commentaries:** You will receive at most half credit for any late commentaries or blogs.

**Presentations**: If you cannot attend class on a day you are scheduled to present, I expect you to have made arrangements with a classmate to switch slots in the schedule. I WILL NOT DO THIS FOR YOU. If you are sick on a day you are scheduled to present or have some other emergency, I expect documentation to justify the inconvenience it causes the rest of us. Without such documentation, you will receive a 0 for your presentation score. The course timetable has little flexibility, so presentations will not be rescheduled.

**Research Presentation:** If you miss your own presentation for any reason whatsoever, you can make it up by writing a 25- page research paper on a topic of my choosing using the same format outlined for the group research paper above. This will be due by exactly two weeks after the final exam date. You will take an incomplete for the course until the paper is turned in. If it is not turned in within two weeks, you will receive a 0 and grade turned in accordingly

**Research Paper:** Collaboration is essential on this project. No excuses will be accepted. If any group members do not pull their weight, they will be penalized individually, but this will not be an acceptable excuse for not completing assignments as directed. Late submissions will only be accepted by prior arrangement and/or with a very good reason. Otherwise, I will deduct 10% from each group member’s paper grade for each day (or part of a day) they are late. Many assignments being due at the same time is never a good reason, and extensions will never be authorized on that basis, so please don’t ask. No extensions will be authorized during the 3 days immediately prior to the due date except in the case of a legitimate medical emergency.