

ANT 474/574: NEUROANTHROPOLOGY

Fall 2017 / Tues 2-4:30 / ten Hour 259

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Prerequisites: ANT 270, BSC 300, PY 413, or permission of instructor.

Course Description: This course provides an introduction to evolutionary and biocultural approaches within anthropology to the central and peripheral nervous systems and their interconnections. Topics include the evolution of the brain; how culture and social structure shape the brain, its development, and its activity; and anthropological perspectives on connections among culture, behavior, brain, mind, and body.

This is a writing course, so writing proficiency within anthropology is required for a passing grade in the course. You will be expected to complete three short research proposals and reading summaries and reflections on the course blog. Assignments due before mid-semester (some reflections and summaries and one research proposal) will be graded and feedback provided before mid-semester to provide a clear sense of the quality of your writing and suggestions for improvement.

Required Texts:

Lende, Daniel H / The Encultured Brain: An Introduction to Neuroanthropology (Required)

Other Course Materials: Additional readings and other material will be posted on Blackboard. Be sure your Blackboard account is set up correctly so that you receive messages relevant to the course in your email inbox.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of the semester, you should be able to

1. Display competency in the current state of knowledge regarding the biocultural evolution of the human brain.
2. Display competency in the current state of knowledge regarding enculturation effects on the functioning of the nervous system.
3. Outline theoretical and methodological issues in the anthropological study of culture-mind-body-behavior connections through the use of case studies in various populations.
4. Lead a classroom discussion and participate in online discussion by drawing in new material relevant to the course content.

Attendance and Participation: This is a discussion-oriented class; attendance is required and will be monitored. Unexcused absences will lower your grade. Classroom participation is important and will figure in your final grade.

Nondiscrimination Policy: In this class, we discuss many controversial social issues. As an academic community, our educational mission is enhanced by the robust exchange of ideas that occurs among a diverse student body, faculty, and staff within a respectful and inclusive learning environment. In that spirit, any opinion is welcome in class discussion, provided it is presented in a respectful way.



The University of Alabama is committed to providing an inclusive environment that is free from harassment or discrimination based on race, genetic information, color, religion, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, political beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, age, ability, size, or veteran status. The University of Alabama prohibits any verbal or physical conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any individual or group, including physical abuse, verbal abuse, threats, stalking, intimidation, harassment, sexual misconduct, coercion, or other communication or conduct that creates a hostile living or learning environment. Harassment or other illegal discrimination against individuals or groups not only is a violation of University Policy and subject to disciplinary action but also is inconsistent with the values and ideals of the University.

The UAct website (www.ua.edu/uact) provides a list of reporting channels that can be used to report incidents of illegal discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, sexual violence, retaliation, threat assessment or fraud.

ASSIGNMENTS

Research Proposals

Your primary assignment for this course is three proposals for possible research projects. You will choose three topics related to the course that you'd like to know more about and outline research projects by which you could theoretically make unique contribution to knowledge in neuroanthropology. To do so, you must read about what we already know regarding the topics and figure out how to conduct neuroanthropological research (generally speaking, entailing some combination of ethnography and neurosciences). You should include at least 2 sources assigned in the course AND at least 3 other reliable, appropriate academic references you find on your own in developing each proposal. In other words, the assignment is much like a term paper in including a short review of relevant literature; but you will also be asked to propose the methodology you would use to conduct said research, how you would analyze the data you propose to collect, and what the significance of the research is. This will require serious critical thinking and reading not just about topics of interest but methodology as well.

This format is consistent with the application for funding for undergraduate research at UA, so we will use the directions and formatting for that application. Use the following format for each of the three proposals, numbering all pages except the title page.

- Page 1:
 - Title of the proposed project, along with your name, academic rank, and affiliation (i.e., your major department or program).
 - Abstract of the proposed work—This should not exceed 100 words and be suitable for general publication or dissemination to the general public. This should be double-spaced in 12-point type with 1-inch margins.
- Pages 2-4:

- Proposal—The proposed work should be described (double-spaced; 12-point type with 1-inch margins). The proposed work should be described in sufficient detail to evaluate its impact within neuroanthropology but still at a level general enough for the non-specialist to appreciate. The proposal should address the following questions/areas:
 - What is the aim of the proposed work? Why is it important?
 - What is the plan for completing the project?
 - What is novel or creative about the project?
 - How is the project interdisciplinary or neuroanthropological?
- Page 5:
 - Reference List [1-page max]—Include at least 2 readings from class and 3 you have found. Citations should be used within the proposal, and all citations referenced in a consistent and appropriate scholarly style. Single or double-spacing is acceptable.
- Page 6:
 - Resume/Curriculum Vitae [1-page max]—This is typical for research proposals and funding; and you should get used to compiling vitae of all your professional, scholarly, and service activities. The resume should include (i) name and departmental affiliation/address; (ii) college level (i.e. freshmen, sophomore, etc.); (iii) synergistic activities to support the research or activity, and (iv) honors/awards. After the first proposal, your resume/CV will merely be revised based on feedback or new additions.

Peer Review: You will complete a peer review of proposals of at least one other member of the class for each proposal. A portion of your proposal grades will be based on providing constructive, thoughtful comments on other students' proposals.

Turn in all of these assignments in class (except the peer review) AND via Blackboard.

Blogging

Discussant Summaries: For most weeks, two student discussants will be scheduled to compose a summary for 2-3 articles/chapters and post it to the course blog ([Neuroanthropology: The Course](#)). The discussants will decide between themselves how to divide the labor. These blog summaries should briefly pull out the gist of the article or chapter and be used to facilitate discussion online and in class. Each summary should be 500-1000 words and include:

- A blog title that sums up your point for the summary,
- 1-2 paragraph summary of the take-home messages and methods for each article,
- 1-2 paragraphs comparing the article/chapter to other material we have read in the course,
- 1-2 paragraphs discussing what you liked or didn't like about the article or how it relates to other material you have been exposed to or are interested in, and
- 3-5 incisive questions your classmates can address in their reflections or that we can discuss in class.

Since the blog is public, summaries will be accessible to the public and used by other students and researchers and should be composed using coherent, logical, and carefully edited prose. More detailed instructions are available on Blackboard, including an instructional video.

Summaries must be posted to course blog no later than 6PM the Sunday before class.

Reflections: Everyone not assigned to summarize/present as discussant on a given date must provide two written reflections on each blog post. The first reflection must be done before we discuss the reading in class. The second reflection must be done before mid-semester, if reading is assigned during the first half of the course, or before December 5, if assigned during the second half. Reflections need not summarize the reading but should make it clear that you read and thought about the piece. The second reflection must show integration of material—that is, I want to see what you've learned and how other readings and discussion have shed new light on each respective reading.

Summaries and reflections posted by mid-semester will be graded and feedback provided before mid-semester to give a clear idea of the quality of your writing and suggestions for improvement.

Post all of these assignments to the Neuroanthropology course blog AND bring printed copies to class. Directions and access for blogging will be provided via Blackboard.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Presentations: Assigned discussants will also give a PowerPoint presentation of their assigned reading and lead discussion on the assigned date. That means presenters must read the commentaries of classmates, collect their discussion comments, and use these as a means of generating conversation. Presentations can include traditional lectures, discussions, and/or activities (please!) that enable the class to process and integrate the material. Really and truly, creativity in this regard is encouraged, appreciated, and rewarded. Again, it is up to the discussants to divide and share the labor.

Presentations/discussions should include a PowerPoint outlining the points of the articles, present any theory introduced, include relevant visuals, and promote discussion. PowerPoints should be composed to be professional—use fewer words and more pictures to convey ideas. Slide titles should summarize each slide. Discussants are responsible for prompting conversation about the articles, which may involve calling on people to answer questions. It is recommended but not required that discussants come up with activities to facilitate the discussion through experience. Discussants should be prepared to fill the entire class period but may have to share the time with other course business. As discussants will work as pairs, confidential self- and partner-assessments will be used to evaluate teamwork.

Discussion: Bring readings to class every week so you have them available for discussions. Everyone is expected to participate in class and will be held accountable for doing so. I am watching and have my ways.

This may seem like a lot, but note, THERE ARE NO EXAMS.

ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS FOR ANT 574 STUDENTS

- Grad students will be discussants more than once and assist undergraduates as discussants some weeks.
- Complete a Wikipedia article or article revision. Details will be provided.
- All assignments will be evaluated according to a standard appropriate for graduate-level coursework.

COURSE GRADING POLICY

- Research proposal 1 (Includes peer review) = 20%
- Research proposal 2 (Includes peer review) = 20%
- Research proposal 3 (Includes peer review) = 20%
- Blogging (Discussant summaries and two peer reflections per reading) = 20%
- Participation (Discussant presentations and interaction during discussions) = 20%

IMPORTANT NOTE: Because this is a writing course, to pass you MUST receive at least a passing grade in the final writing assignment. To receive a passing grade, you will need to show (at minimum) that you write with the skill normally required of an upper division student in Anthropology. This is true regardless of how well you do in other aspects of the course!

OUTLINE OF TOPICS

Dr. Lynn will lecture or lead discussion if no discussant indicated. This outline is subject to change without notice.

Part I: The Encultured Brain

WEEK 1:

8/29 Introduction and syllabus. Nerves, synapses, & the brain

Read: Kalat chaps 2-4 (Blackboard)

Due: Complete a blog post introducing yourself and your favorite hobby using Tinbergen's 4 Why Questions.

WEEK 2:

9/5 The encultured brain

Read: EB chaps 1-2 (Downey & Lende), Roepstorff & Frith 2012 (Blackboard)*

**Complete reflections on thread on Blackboard without summary.*

WEEK 3:

9/12 Primate social cognition

Read: EB chap 3 (MacKinnon & Fuentes), Dunbar & Shultz 2007 (Blackboard)

Discussant: **Rob Else**

WEEK 4:

9/19 Evolution & the brain

Read: EB chap 4 (Downey & Lende), Balsters et al 2009 (Blackboard)

Discussant: **Mandy Guitar**

Part II: Research Methodologies in Neuroanthropology

WEEK 5:

9/26 Methods and writing a research proposal

Read: Lynn, Stein, & Bishop 2014; Seligman & Brown 2009; DeCaro 2016 (Blackboard)*

Part III: Human Capacities & Skills

WEEK 6:

10/3 Mind & body

Read: EB chap 5 (Hay); Laughlin 1997 (Blackboard)

Discussant: **Monika Wanis**
Due: Research Proposal #1

WEEK 7:
10/10 Embodiment
Read: chap 9 (Campbell), Worthman 1999 (Blackboard)
Discussant: **Katherine Beidler/Rob Else**
Due: Peer review #1

WEEK 8:
10/17 Human development
Read: Stevenson & Worthman 2014 (Blackboard); DeCaro & Worthman 2008 (Blackboard)
Discussant: **Connor Fasel/Mandy Guitar**
Due: Reading summaries and reflections. (Will be graded with feedback by midterm.)

Part IV: Human Activities

WEEK 9:
10/24 Physical activity
Read: EB chap 6 (Downey); Heywood 2011 (Blackboard)
Discussant: **Abbie Gibson/Monika Wanis**

WEEK 10:
10/31 Religious consciousness
Read: Beischel et al 2011 (Blackboard); Lynn et al. 2015 (Blackboard)*

WEEK 11:
11/7 Arts
Read: Mason 2009 (Blackboard); Trevarthen 2013 (Blackboard)
Discussant: **Lennon Hayes/Rob Else**
Due: Research Proposal #2

Part V: Human Problems & Pathologies

WEEK 12:
11/14 Consciousness disorders & arts therapies
Read: Fachner 2011; Vogl et al 2015; Jeong et al. 2005 (Blackboard)*
Guest: Loretta Lynn
Due: Peer review #2

WEEK 13:
11/21 Autism-dissociation spectrum
Read: EB chap 11 (Brezis); Seligman & Kirmayer 2008 (Blackboard)
Discussant: **Megan Hill/Mandy Guitar**

WEEK 14:
11/28 Smoking & addiction
Read: EB chap 12 (Stromberg); EB chap 13 (Lende)
Discussant: **Lauren McGuire/Monika Wanis**

WEEK 15:

12/5 Depression & anxiety

Read: chap 14 (Dressler); Kohrt et al. 2012 (Blackboard)

Discussant: **Tori Morgan/Rob, Mandy, & Monika**

Due: Research Proposal #3

12/7

Due: Peer review #3; Reading summaries & reflections

POLICY ON MISSED EXAMS AND COURSEWORK

All summaries and reflections posted after the assigned date/time will still be accepted but only eligible for half credit. Your research proposals must be submitted in paper AND electronically, using the appropriate Blackboard dropbox, by 11:59 pm on the day they are due for full credit. If you cannot attend class, you can turn the paper copy in later but must still submit it electronically by the due date. Turning things in late via Blackboard undermines the mechanisms set up to facilitate peer review, so assignments related to the research proposal that are turned in late, except by prior arrangement and with a very good reason, will lose 10% credit off of the maximum of 100% 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 not be authorized on that basis.

SOCIAL MEDIA

I use Twitter as a way to share information during and between classes. We use hashtag #ant474. You can follow me @Chris_Ly and the department @BamaAnthro. *HOWEVER*, it is extremely rude to be constantly texting or using your smartphone if you are not doing it for class and only with express permission. Therefore, if I see you on your device during class, I will be looking for course-relevant tweets. If you need to use your devices for anything but coursework, take it into the hallway, or I will ask you to do so. I will warn you once if I see you using social media during class except to tweet notes about the class using the #ant474 hashtag. After the first warning, I will ask you to leave class and count you as absent that session.

Notification of Changes: I endeavor to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, I reserve the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, I will notify you in class or via email and endeavor to provide reasonable time for you to adjust to any changes.

Statement on Academic Misconduct: Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official [Code of Academic Conduct](#) provided in the Online Catalog. The [UAct website](#) provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.

Statement on Disability Accommodations: Contact the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

Severe Weather Protocol: Please see the latest [Severe Weather Guidelines](#) in the Online Catalog.