

**CMST 7913: Evolutionary Communication across Subcultures  
Spring 2014, T 3-5:50, Prescott 120**

James Honeycutt, Ph.D.

*LSU Distinguished Professor*

230 Coates Hall, (225) 252-0032 (cell), [sphone@lsu.edu](mailto:sphone@lsu.edu)

Office hours: T 11-12, 1:30-2:45, Th 10:3--12, by appointment

I believe in intuition and inspiration. Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution. It is, strictly speaking, a real factor in scientific research.

– *Albert Einstein, On Cosmic Religion and Other Opinions and Aphorisms*

What is Man? Man is a noisome bacillus whom Our Heavenly Father created because he was disappointed in the monkey.

– *Mark Twain*

The first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings.

--*Albert Schweitzer*

You shall love your neighbor as yourself—Jesus Christ

We live in the Age of the Higher Brain, the cerebral cortex that has grown enormously over the last few millennia, overshadowing the ancient, instinctive lower brain. The cortex is often called the new brain, yet the old brain held sway in humans for millions of years, as it does today in most living things. The old brain can't conjure up ideas or read. But it does possess the power to feel and, above all, to be. It was the old brain that caused our forebears to sense the closeness of a mysterious presence everywhere in Nature."

– *Deepak Chopra, The Book of Secrets: Unlocking the Hidden Dimensions of Your Life*

**Overview:**

This seminar offers an introduction to evolutionary psychology and costly signaling approaches to the evolution of human communication. Topics include but are not limited to: language, gossip, pathogen avoidance, deception, laughter, norms, aggression, hierarchies, mating, physiology, imagined interactions, religious beliefs, daydreaming, pheromones, prejudice, and coalitional behavior. My goal is to enable students versed in the standard social science model to apply evolutionary thinking to their areas of interest.

Note: I am currently investigating bereavement from a cross-cultural perspective and the use of mental imagery in body image, bullying, teasing, and physiological correlates. One of the major topics that I am interested in that derives from an evolutionary perspective is the use of prenatal communication with a developing fetus. This is known as preverbal interaction in symbolic interactionism and reflects a type of imagined interaction. It is imagined since the developing

fetus does not have the language capability to respond. Does this reflect pre-bonding, catharsis, or other-understanding with the developing fetus? Following is a sample of research topics; the first two projects are definitive. Others are in various stages of development.

Note: Along with Robert McCann of UCLA and Courtney Wright of the University of Tennessee, I will be investigating the evolutionary bases of bereavement from a cross-cultural perspective. Following is a sample of research topics; the first two projects are definitive. Others are in various stages of development.

**Sample Topics for Research:**

1. An Analysis of Imagined Interactions with Pro Ana (Anorexia): Implications for Mental and Physical Health Physical Health --with Stephanie Houston Grey
2. Evolutionary perspectives on the basis of teasing from the teasers perspective: Use of IIs to prepare for teasing and response to teasing attempts--with Courtney Wright of the University of Tennessee
3. Social Darwinism and the Evolutionary basis for Taking Conflict Personally-- with Dale Hample of the University of Maryland
4. Attachment bonding and origins of forgiveness
5. Meta-Analysis of Dreaming Narratives—why do people dream from an evolutionary perspective? What functions are served?
6. Cardiovascular Correlates and Effects of Visual and Verbal Imagery on Positive and Negative Dream Recall
7. Pheromones and Relational Outcomes
8. Evolutionary origins of religions--Attachment, Evolution, and the Psychology of Religion
9. Prejudice and Discrimination of Marginalized Groups— In a diverse culture, why are certain subgroups the object of ridicule from an evolutionary perspective
10. Topics that you generate derived from the list of journal readings.

**Two major books that we will read are:**

Baumeister, R. F. (2005). *The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kirpatrick, L. A. (2004). *Attachment, evolution, and the psychology of religion*. New York: Guilford.

Don't Panic! There are lots of readings. Think of this as a Vegas-style buffet, and you are going to read and (potentially) report upon what you do and don't like.

The point of this class is to have a forum for learning about evolutionary ideas and their application to understanding communication. The purpose of this class is to have fun with ideas, and to develop your own thinking. I think you will find that the material is exciting and rather entertaining.

**Assessment****Assignment                      Percentage of Final Grade**

Two discussions	12%
Reaction Papers	10%
Solo-Authored Paper	25%
Joint Paper	10%
Mid-term Reports	3%
Final report	3%
Mid-term exam	15%
Final exam	22%

1. Leading two discussions on Readings: We have lots of Readings. So, I will ask you to give me your rank order for 5 readings that you would be interested in leading discussion on. You will prepare a brief PowerPoint presentation which will be uploaded to Moodle. The PowerPoint will summarize the highlights of the readings and contain summary, discussion questions which also be in a separate document before the given class session.
2. Writing reactions papers to the readings. You will share a series of 5 reaction papers (3-4 pages) in which you note the strengths and weaknesses of an article exclusively or compare it to others in the given set of readings. Each reaction paper will contain a list of references derived from the assigned set of readings. These reaction papers will be shared in a series of Moodle forums.
3. Writing a solo-authored paper. You can write a theoretical paper, do a critical overview of an area, make a start on a review for a meta-analysis, or write a research proposal. I expect a conference paper resulting in eventual journal submission to be the goal. I expect to talk with you about your interests, and to help you decide on what you want to do.  
  
--Alternatively, you can write a grant proposal in consultation with Ann Whitmer and me dealing with any of the subtopics.
4. Working on a joint research paper with other seminarians and myself—Some of you have existing projects, Ad infinitum. Consult with me and others about the formation or continuation of these research teams. HOWEVER, any continuing project must be modified in the context of evolutionary communication and intergroup differences (e.g., Hence, the literature review could contain a section dealing with an evolutionary perspective as well as discussion section).
5. Mid-term reports of the solo and joint-authored papers. These will be ten-minute presentations using Powerpoints.
6. Final report on your projects—Again, I would like seminarians to do 10 minute presentations of their paper.

7. Mid-term test: You will be tested **outside of class** in which you sit in the lab (déjà vu).
  8. Final exam: This is a final take-home exam that helps prepare for general, comprehensive exams. I created this idea a long time ago which others have copied. The idea is to integrate the readings in terms of theoretical foundation. You will have one day to do the final take-home.
- 

### **Tentative Seminar Dates and Topics**

#### **1. (Tuesday, Jan. 21) Introduction & Evolutionary Psychology**

- Tooby, J., & Cosmides, L. (2005). Conceptual foundations of evolutionary psychology. In D. M. Buss (Ed.), *The handbook of evolutionary psychology* (pp. 5-67). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Miller, G. F. (1998). How mate choice shaped human nature: A review of sexual selection and human evolution. In C. Crawford & D. Krebs (Eds.), *Handbook of evolutionary psychology: Ideas, issues, and applications* (pp. 87-129). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Chapter 1, "Beasts for Culture" from Baumeister, R. F. (2005). [The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

#### **2. (Tuesday, Jan. 28) Mating**

- Clark III, R. D., & Hatfield, E. (1989). Gender differences in receptivity to sexual offers. *Journal of Psychology and Human Sexuality*, 2, 39-55.
- Koziel, S., Kretschmer, W., & Pawlowski, B. (2010). Tattoo and piercing as signals of biological quality. *Evolution & Human Behavior*, 31, 187-192.
- Confer, J. C., Perilloux, C., & Buss, D. M. (2010). More than just a pretty face: Men's priority shifts toward bodily attractiveness in short-term versus long-term mating contexts. *Evolution & Human Behavior*, 31, 348-353.
- Thornhill, R., Gangestad, S. W., & Comer, R. (1995). Human female orgasm and mate fluctuating asymmetry. *Animal Behavior*, 50, 1601-1615.
- Pradhan, G. R., Engelhardt, A., van Schaik, C. P., & Maestripieri, D. (2006). The evolution of female copulation calls in primates: A review and a new model. *Behavioral Ecology and Sociobiology*, 59, 333-343.
- Møller, A. P. (1990). Fluctuating asymmetry in male sexual ornaments may reliably reveal male quality. *Animal Behaviour*, 40, 1185-1187.

#### **3. (Tuesday, Feb. 4) Attachment Theory**

Kirpatrick, L. A. (2004). Attachment, evolution, and the psychology of religion. New York: Guilford. Chps. 1-7

#### **4. (Tuesday, Feb. 11) Attachment Theory Continued**

Kirkpatrick, L. A. (2004). Attachment, evolution, and the psychology of religion. New York: Guilford. Chps. 8-13

**5. (Tuesday, Feb. 18) Pathogen avoidance**

Haldane, J. B. S. (1949). Disease and evolution. *La Ricerca Scientifica*, 19, 68-76.

Fincher, C. L., & Thornhill, R. (2012). Parasite-stress promotes in-group assortative sociality: The cases of strong family ties and heightened religiosity. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 35, 1-59.

Reid, S. A., Zhang, J., Anderson, G. L., Gasiorek, J., Bonilla, D., & Peinado, S. (2012). Parasite primes make foreign-accented English sound more distant to people who are disgusted by pathogens (but not by sex or morality). *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 33, 471-478.

Chapter 2, "The Human Psyche at Work" from Baumeister, R. F. (2005). [The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

Hackman, J., & Hruschka, D. (2013). Fast life histories, not pathogens, account for state-level variation in homicide, child maltreatment, and family ties in the U.S. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 34, 118-124.

Miller, S. L., & Maner, J. K. (2012). Overperceiving disease cues: The basic cognition of the behavioral immune system. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 102, 1198-1213.

**6. (Tuesday, Feb. 25) No class--I will be visiting the University of Tennessee as part of the SEC Faculty Exchange Scholars Program. However, I expect you to read the following chapters prepare your reports for the initial paper reports on March 11th. Readings that I want you read for this week include:**

Chapter 3, "What People Want" from Baumeister, R. F. (2005). [The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 4, "How People Think" from Baumeister, R. F. (2005). [The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

Chapter 5, "How and Why Emotions Happen" from Baumeister, R. F. (2005). [The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

**7. (Tuesday, Mar. 4) No class; Mardi Gras Holiday**

Even though we have no class; the following readings concerning language are required. You will turn in a reaction paper for this set of readings that is due the week by Monday, March 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Language**

- Bickerton, D. (1984). The language bioprogram hypothesis. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 7, 173-221.
- Dunbar, R. I. M. (2003). The social brain: Mind, language, and society in evolutionary perspective. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 32, 163-181.
- Pinker, S. (2010). The cognitive niche: Coevolution of intelligence, sociality, and language. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107, 8993-8999.
- Berg, K. S., Delgado, S., Cortopassi, K. A., Beissinger, S. R., & Bradbury, J. W. (2012). Vertical transmission of learned signatures in a wild parrot. *Proceedings of the Royal Society, Biology*, 279, 585-591.
- Slobodchikoff, C. N., Paseka, A., & Verdolin, J. L. (2009). Prairie dog alarm calls encode labels about predator colors. *Animal Cognition*, 12, 435-439.

### 8. (Tuesday, Mar. 11) Costly signaling theory

Chapter 7, “How People Interact” from Baumeister, R. F. (2005). [The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life](#). New York: Oxford University Press. (Yes, I know chapter 7 is listed before chapter 6!)

- Zahavi, A. (1975). Mate selection—a selection for a handicap. *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 53, 205-214.
- Krebs, J. R., & Dawkins, R. (1984). Animal signals: mind reading and manipulation. In J. R. Krebs, & N. B. Davies (Eds.), *Behavioural Ecology: An Evolutionary Approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (pp. 380-402). Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications.
- Sosis, R., Kress, H. C., & Boster, J. S. (2007). Scars for war: Evaluating alternative signaling explanations for cross-cultural variance in ritual costs. *Evolution & Human Behavior*, 28, 234-247.
- Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J. M., Sundie, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Miller, G. F., & Kenrick, D. T. (2007). Blatant benevolence and conspicuous consumption: When romantic motives elicit strategic costly signals. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 93, 85-102.
- Reed, L. I., Zeglen, K. N., & Schmidt, K. L. (2012). Facial expressions as honest signals of cooperative intent in a one-shot anonymous prisoner’s dilemma game. *Evolution & Human Behavior*, 33, 200-209.

**Note, the mid-term will take 1.5 - 2 hours. My preference for the exam is Friday afternoon, Mar. 14 from 2-4; whereupon I will buy you a margarita or glass of water at Ninfa’s at 5 pm.**

### 9. (Tuesday, Mar. 18) Chemical Communication

- Ackerl, K., Atzmueller, M., & Grammer, K. (2002). The scent of fear. *Neuroendocrinology Letters*, 23, 77-82.
- Gelstein, S., Yeshurun, Y., Rozenkrantz, L., Shushan, S., Frumin, I., Roth, Y., & Sobel, N. (2011). Human tears contain a chemosignal. *Science*, 331, 226-230.
- Miller, G., Tybur, J. M., & Jordan, B. D. (2007). Ovulatory cycle effects on tip earnings by lap dancers: Economic evidence for human estrus? *Evolution & Human Behavior*, 28, 375-381.

- Thornhill, R., Gangestad, S. W., Miller, R., Scheyd, G., McCollough, J. K., & Franklin, M. (2003). Major histocompatibility complex genes, symmetry, and body scent attractiveness in men and women. *Behavioral Ecology*, *14*, 668-678.
- Haselton, M. G., & Gangestad, S. W. (2006). Conditional expression of women's desires and men's mate guarding across the ovulatory cycle. *Hormones & behavior*, *49*, 509-518.

### 10. (Tuesday, Mar. 25) Laughter and humor

Chapter 6, "How People Act and React" from Baumeister, R. F. (2005). [The cultural animal: Human nature, meaning, and social life](#). New York: Oxford University Press.

- Bachorowski, J-A., & Owren, M. J. (2001). Not all laughs are alike: Voiced but not unvoiced laughter readily elicits positive affect. *Psychological Science*, *12*, 252-257.
- Dunbar, R. I. M., Baron, R., Frangou, A., Pearce, E., van Leeuwen, E. J. C., Stow, J., Partridge, G., MacDonald, I., Barra, V., van Vugt, M. (2011). Social laughter is correlated with an elevated pain threshold. *Proceedings of the Royal Society, B*.doi:10.1098/rspb.2011.1373
- Davila-Ross, M., Owren, M. J., & Zimmermann, E. (2009). Reconstructing the evolution of laughter in great apes and humans. *Current Biology*, *19*, 1106-1111.
- Platow, M. J., Haslam, S. A., Both, A., Chew, I., Cuddon, M., Goharpey, N., Maurer, J., Rosini, S., Tsekouras, A., & Grace, D. M. (2005). "It's not funny if they're laughing": Self-categorization, social influence, and responses to canned laughter. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *41*, 542-550.
- Provine, R. R. (1993). Laughter punctuates speech: Linguistic, social and gender contexts of laughter. *Ethology* *95*:291-298.

**11. (Tuesday, Apr. 1) Spirituality and Religion** (Note, we will watch as the legislature decides to fund higher education at the top of Southern States and provide annual pay raises to all graduate students; Unfortunately, that is an April Fool's joke harkening back to last week)

- Atkinson, Q. D., & Bourrat, P. (2011). Beliefs about God, the afterlife and morality support the role of supernatural policing in human cooperation. *Evolution & Human Behavior*, *32*, 41-49.
- Fincher, C. L., & Thornhill, R. (2008). Assortative sociality, limited dispersal, infectious disease and the genesis of the global pattern of religion diversity. *Proceedings of the Royal Society, Biology*, *275*, 2587-2594.
- Sosis, R., & Bressler, E. R. (2003). Cooperation and commune longevity: A test of the costly signaling theory of religion. *Cross-Cultural Research*, *37*, 211-239.
- Sosis, R. (2006). Religious behaviors, badges, and bans: Signaling theory and the evolution of religion. In P. McNamara (Ed.), *Where God and man meet: Evolution, genes, and the religious brain* (pp. 61-86). Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT.,
- Shariff, A. F., & Norenzayan, A. (2007). God is watching you: Priming god concepts increases prosocial behavior in an anonymous economic game. *Psychological Science*, *18*, 803-809.

- 12. (Tuesday, Apr. 8) Imagined Interactions, Prenatal Communication, and Daydreaming:** Readings are being developed in terms of imagined interactions, physiology, and Alzheimer's
- 13. (Tuesday, Apr. 15) No class—Spring Break** Work on your projects and continue reading.
- 14. (Tuesday, Apr. 22) Communicating Emotion through Pheromones: Hatcher reading and others.**
- 15. (Tuesday, Apr. 29) Paper Presentations**
- 16. *Take-home final is due on Wednesday, May 7; noon***