

# PSYCHOLOGY 124: The Evolution of Human Social Behavior SYLLABUS

## INSTRUCTOR:

TBD

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As the geneticist, Theodosius Dobzhansky once famously said, “Nothing in biology makes sense except in light of evolution.” And of course the same is true of the biology of social behavior in humans. This course is an introduction to that evolutionary history: how humans evolved their particular form of social organization, what this means for human social interactions and what this can tell us about how humans will evolve in their future, virtual social worlds. To understand where human social behavior comes from, the course embeds questions about human social behavior in the larger context of the evolution of social behavior in all animals. After an introductory week reviewing evolutionary principles, the course will address questions such as: Why be social in the first place - what factors produce complex social systems, as in humans, in other species? Humans have diverse mating systems - how do mating systems evolve, why is the human condition similar to or different from other primates or even other vertebrates? What kinds of intelligence do we find in social animals - in terms of communication, cooperation, mimicry and teaching - and how do humans differ from other species in this regard? What are the dark sides of sociality - other social animals can also be violent, can steal, can lie and cheat - how are humans different? Keeping the peace in complex societies leads to social rituals, stereotyped signals, conforming behaviors and even policing and punishment. How are human expressions of these social behaviors different and how might they have evolved? Conflict, aggression, dominance and struggles for power are found in all animals, as are altruism, cooperation and even democracy and voting for the general good - how are the human forms of these behaviors, found in diverse animals with very different brains from our own, similar or different? We will then address how humans interact socially with other types of animals, such as pets, and engineered agents, such as robots, and how this relates to other types of social interaction. Finally, we will conclude by examining how our use of social media and the internet can be understood in light of our social evolution so far.

## **PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS**

Through a mixture of course lectures, readings, section exercises and discussions, as well as exams, this course aims to address facets of each of the seven program learning goals of the Psychology Major at UC Berkeley, **with particular emphasis on Program Learning Goals #1-3 and #7.**

1. Understand basic concepts that characterize psychology as a field of scientific inquiry, and appreciate the various subfields that form the discipline as well as things that differentiate it from other related disciplines (**lectures, readings, and discussion sections**)
2. Develop an understanding of the central questions/issues in contemporary psychology as well as a historical perspective of psychological theories and key empirical data (**lectures, readings, and discussion sections**)
3. Develop a thorough understanding of one of the major content areas of psychology (i.e., Social/Personality, Developmental, Clinical, Cognitive, Biological) (**lectures, readings, discussion sections, section exercises, exams**)
4. Develop skills to critically evaluate the presentation of scientific ideas and research in original scientific papers as well as in the popular media (**section exercises**)
5. Become familiar with research methods used in psychological research, and become proficient in basic concepts of statistical analyses and familiar with more advanced methods in data analyses and modeling (**lectures, section exercises**)
6. Learn to develop, articulate, and communicate, both orally and in written form, a testable hypothesis, or an argument drawing from an existing body of literature (**section exercises and exams**)
7. Apply a psychological principle to an everyday problem, or take an everyday problem and identify the relevant psychological mechanisms/issues (**lectures, section exercises, exams**)

**Psychology 124: The Evolution of Human Social Behavior** (Last updated 1/15/18)

<b>Psychology 124: The Evolution of Human Social Behavior</b> (Last updated 1/15/18)					
			<i>SYLLABUS</i>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignment due</b>
Week	<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Topic</b>	
1	TBD		1	The evolutionary approach to human behavior	1: 1-7; Box 1.4 & 1.5 None
	TBD			<i>No Discussion</i>	
	TBD		2	Levels of analysis: the case of cognitive sex differences	<i>PDF: Sherry &amp; Hampson</i>
2	TBD		3	Evolutionary processes	1: 1-7; 2:22-44
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 1
	TBD		4	Shaun O'grady Guest Lecture: Evolutionary game theory	1: 29-34
3	TBD		5	Kin cooperation	3:45-56, 64-66
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 2
	TBD		6	Reciprocity and fairness	4: 67-92
4	TBD		7	Mating systems	<i>PDF: Alcock Chapter 11</i>
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 3
	TBD		8	The biology of mate choice	5: 93-113
5	TBD		9	Mate choice strategies I	5: 114-136
	TBD			<i>Exam Review</i>	Problem Set 4
	TBD			<b>MIDTERM 1: Lectures 1-8</b>	
6	TBD		10	Mate choice strategies II	5: 114-136
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 5
	TBD		11	Life History and reproduction: optimizing family size	6: 137-157
7	TBD		12	Life History: Alloparenting	6:158-169
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 6
	TBD		13	Parenting: the family group	7: 171-184
8	TBD		14	Parenting: conflict	7: 178-202
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 7
	TBD		15	Human-nonhuman social relationships	TBA
9	TBD		16	Marriage	8: 204-213
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 8
	TBD		17	Inheritance	8:214-234
10	TBD		18	<i>Guest Lecture: Alison Gopnik</i>	<i>Gopnik: TBA</i>
	TBD			<i>Exam Review</i>	Problem Set 9
	TBD			<b>MIDTERM 2: Lectures 9-17</b>	
11				<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
12	TBD		19	The individual in society	9: 236-260
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 10
	TBD		20	War, conflict and religion	9: 260-268
13	TBD		21	Emotion and personality	10: 288-294
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 11
	TBD		22	Development of social cognition	11: 296-321
14	TBD		23	Language	12: 322-350
	TBD			<i>Discussion</i>	Problem Set 12
	TBD		24	Evolution of culture	13: 352-367
15	TBD		25	Group selection and culture	13: 370-382
	TBD			<i>Exam Review</i>	Project Due
	TBD		26	Conclusion: Homo deus?	<i>Harari: TBA</i>
	TBD				
	TBD			<b>FINAL EXAM: Lectures 18-26</b>	