

## Syllabus

**ANTH 26 Biological Anthropology, 3 credits, Spring 2020**

Tu/Th 1:15 - 2:30 pm in Fleming Museum 101

**Instructor Contact Information**

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Associate Professor and Acting Chair of Anthropology  
University of Vermont  
Department of Anthropology

My **office hours** are Wednesday from 5:30 to 7:30 pm in my office (Williams Hall 508). I encourage students with any problems, concerns, or additional interest to meet me during office hours. At other times, I am generally fulfilling the research, administrative, and service portions of a professor's contract (only 26% involves teaching and advising!), so I am not always immediately available. However, I will answer emails at least once a day, and, **if we plan in advance**, we can arrange to meet or talk by phone outside of office hours if there is no alternative. So I can best focus my energies on you, I just ask that you please look through the resources I provide (e.g., your syllabus, Blackboard materials, course readings, dictionaries or glossaries, or the teaching assistants and class reference librarian) beforehand.

*Email:* [Deborah.Blom@uvm.edu](mailto:Deborah.Blom@uvm.edu) This works best for quick communications.

*Phone:* If you would like to talk by phone during non-class/office hour times (and there are many good reasons to do so), please send an email to make an appointment for me to call you. Be sure to leave your number and, if you call and I don't answer, leave a message (or text). My office number is (802) 656-2932 and my cell number is (802) 999-4063 (note: I am lousy at texting, so email if you want anything more than a brief response; also, if you text, make sure I know who you are).

**Addressing me:** Please feel free to call me "Deborah" (or "Dr. Blom" if you were socialized to be formal and are uncomfortable with first names). I didn't get my Ph.D. so people would call me "Dr."

**Teaching Assistants****To Schedule a Meeting or Request help to the TAs in General**

Send an email to: [Melissa.Beer@uvm.edu](mailto:Melissa.Beer@uvm.edu); [Caliann.Murray@uvm.edu](mailto:Caliann.Murray@uvm.edu); [Tara.Lewis@uvm.edu](mailto:Tara.Lewis@uvm.edu)

**Cali Murray (Senior TA)**  
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**Course Catalog Description**



## Course Overview and Learning Objectives

How do we explain the human diversity in this world? How did we get all the different sizes, colors, and textures that we see today, and are we really all that different under our skins? Why can the Aymara people with whom I work move around energetically at 12,000 feet above sea level in the Bolivian highlands while it takes me days there to even walk comfortably up a small hill? How does an environment in which children are raised permanently affect their biology?

Biological Anthropology, one of the core courses in Anthropology, will introduce you to the subfield and provide you with the basics of evolutionary theory, genetics and inheritance, nonhuman primates (monkeys and apes), and the fossil hominid record so that you can better understand the ways that human individuals and populations adapt to physical and cultural environments. We will explore the concept of "race" biologically and culturally and study the effects of human genetics and the many aspects of our physical bodies that are products of our environments rather than our genes.

Throughout the semester, we will develop the necessary skills to fully consider humans as biocultural beings, neither solely products of our biology nor our culture, but a dynamic combination of the two. We will also explore how science is represented in the popular press, how science is a product of culture and focus on critically evaluating material presented in scholarly and popular venues. More than anything, we will heavily engage with the question: What does it mean to be human?



## Prerequisites

This class has no prerequisites. While it is assumed that enrolled individuals possess college-level reading and study skills, this class is appropriate for students with no previous biology or anthropology coursework.



## Requirements Satisfied

This class counts both as a Social Science and as a D2 course for purposes of distribution requirements.



## How this Course Space is Set Up

The course is comprised of 17 modules, which will appear in the Modules link (to the left). Thirteen of these modules roughly correspond to chapters 1-7 and 10-12 in the Larsen textbook (with chapters 2, 5 and 12 broken into two modules each). The remaining four modules cover the course introduction and three exams which are given at the conclusion of Parts I, II, and III. Each of the three parts includes homework assignments, tests, and an exam. All the materials for each section and a listing of assignments can be found in the **Modules** link (to the left) and the deadlines for this work are located in the **Course Schedule** (link to left). **Grading Criteria and Suggestions** and the course **Grades** are also linked to the left.



## Readings and Other Materials

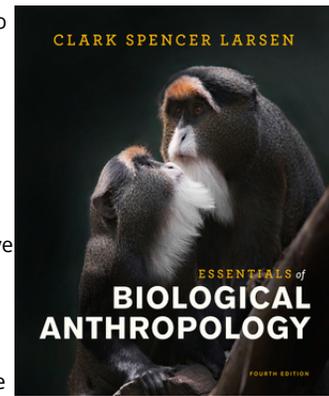
The assigned readings for this course are from the text, published articles in scholarly venues and popular press, websites, and film clips. They serve several functions. Some are readings designed to teach content at face value (e.g., the Larsen text). Others bring in additional perspectives and/or content, present the material in different ways (written, audio and video), and provide opportunities to think critically and explore the representation of anthropology in popular media. In some cases, you will be asked to absorb and understand information, but I will often ask you to step back and analyze the sources, rather than take them at face value.

For the class, you should get the following textbook as well as an online tool for the textbook called **InQuizitive**.

**Larsen, Clark Spencer. (2018). *Essentials of Biological Anthropology, 4th Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-64054-0.**

The book can be purchased as a paperback and/or as an e-book. Your options are to get one of these (see <https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393667431> for all options):

- a new paperback copy (comes with e-book and InQuizitive; ISBN 978-0-393-66743-1)
- a new looseleaf copy (comes with e-book and InQuizitive; ISBN 978-0-393-66744-8)
- the e-book (comes with InQuizitive; ISBN 978-0-393-66742-4)
- a used or rented paperback or e-book and, if it doesn't have a fresh InQuizitive code, get InQuizitive from the Norton website (see Purchase Option on the right at [digital.wwnorton.com/essanthro4](https://digital.wwnorton.com/essanthro4))



Textbooks can be purchased from the UVM bookstore, Norton, or any textbook vendor, such as Amazon. Some students ask if they can use an earlier version of the text. It is not ideal but can work as a last option.

Note: We use textbooks and select popular sources (e.g., Newsweek, National Geographic, Wikipedia) in this class because they are easily accessible and allow for a broad view of what is available. However, it should be noted that these sources are rarely suitable on their own for research papers in college classes (unless you are using them to demonstrate what is in the popular press). Instead, you should reference the scholarly literature that these sources cite, as well as others available through your library access (see the [UVM Library](#) for more information). Please ask if you have any questions about this.



### **Norton Inquizitive and Ebook Support**

These are the folks to contact if you have technical issues.



### **Assigned Work and Grade Distribution**

<b>Assigned Work</b>	<b>% of Overall Course Grade</b>
InQuizitive	15%
Tests	20%
Ethics Assignment	15%
Information Literacy Assignment	15%
Exams	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



### **Assigned Work**

Grades will be assigned based on the following work. Please see the "Course Schedule" and "Grading Criteria and Suggestions" links to the left for more information.

#### **InQuizitive**

Each chapter includes a section in InQuizitive. According to its developer, InQuizitive is "a formative, adaptive quizzing tool that ... ensure(s) students come prepared to lectures, quizzes, and exams" (and they claim it improved student scores by nearly a letter grade). Students have found it to be an engaging and interactive way to test understanding of the material in the Larsen text. The biggest nerds among us found the way you can bet points based on how well you know the content to be addictive and fun. The Inquisitive modules will be due before most class periods. Their purpose will be to measure your preparation and effort, so grades are focused mainly on completion. In theory, everyone can get 100%, as long as you get your work completed by the deadline.

#### **Tests**

Three multiple-choice tests, which will be given on Blackboard to test your knowledge on the sections covering genetics, primates, and early hominins. You may use all the course materials and notes for these tests. As long as you complete your first attempts by the due dates, you may take the tests two additional times before the upcoming exam. Each time a test is taken, a subset of questions will be drawn randomly from a question bank. The highest

grades from your attempts on each test will be used to calculate your final grade. Their purpose will be to practice and improve your mastery of the material.

### Information Literacy Assignment

This will consist of an assignment that will allow you to briefly research the scholarly literature on a topic of your interest and to allow you to demonstrate your information literacy skills.

### Ethics Assignment

This is a 600-800 word paper that you will write on a case study that focuses on ethics in human biology. You will be given a choice of two case studies that I will present to you.

### Exams

There will be three exams to break up the course and conclude groups of information. They will include multiple-choice, true or false, and an optional essay question. The exams are not cumulative and will cover all class material, including lecture material not covered elsewhere. Their purpose will be to test your mastery of the class learning objectives.



## Expectations on Attention and Engagement in this Course

These days we have gotten used to only half-reading all the information with which we are bombarded every day. We are distracted by text messages, etc. while reading or listening. Some are even claiming we have [an attention span shorter than a goldfish](#). All claims aside, I have found that in the last year that students have been asking the same question in class within minutes of one another; recently students have also had trouble following the same instructions that I have used without a problem for many years.

When we are only paying half attention, it often takes repetition for everyone to hear or absorb something. Similarly, substance use can impair the ability to learn and retain information. Ultimately, you play the largest role in determining the success of your education and making your experiences meaningful. Please take our time together as an opportunity to do everything you can to focus and to participate in the moment. This way, you can get as much as possible out of the course, and we can all complete the work as efficiently and successfully as possible.

I have found that students using laptops and other technology generally result in more disruptions than benefits. Studies also show over and over again this is true (e.g., [here](#)) and that the use not only hurts the student using the technology but also other students in the class. Therefore, I have decided on a **Class Technology Use Policy** for this class which prohibits the use of laptops, tablets, and cell phones in class, with the exception of individuals who have prior permission (e.g., note takers working for Student Accessibility Services). *Please feel free to discuss this policy with me.*



## Expectations for Compassionate Communication in This Course

While I wrote this section with Jeanne Shea when we taught ANTH 172 (Gender, Sex, Culture, Race and the Body), I now feel like it is relevant for all courses. College is a space of learning with students and instructional staff coming from many different backgrounds, sexes, genders, racial categories, ethnicities, age cohorts, cultures, subcultures, regions, and socioeconomic classes. This diversity means differences in perspectives, understanding, exposure, experiences, identities, and ways of talking. In this educational environment, we need to come together with a **spirit of curiosity, ready to learn from course materials and from each other.**

All members of this class are expected to follow [UVM's Common Ground](#) and to do their best to treat each other with respect and compassion, to stop and think before speaking, to reach out for help when needed, and to apologize when we make mistakes.

**Respect:** In order to treat each other with respect in this class, we should not use terms that we know to be sexist or racist in referring to others. However, it is appropriate to discuss the sexism or racism connoted by a term that others have used or that we ourselves have used in the past. For example, whereas you would not call another student in this class the "N-word," you could say, "in the U.S. the 'N-word' has been used to imply that Black people are lesser than White people." Respect also involves listening respectfully when someone tells us that something we said carried sexist or racist connotations. Respect also means making an effort to change our speech patterns within the context of this class having learned that our words have had a negative impact on class members.

**Compassion:** In order to treat each other with compassion in this learning environment, we also need to avoid calling each other out in a shaming manner. Issues of sex, gender, race, and ethnicity are complex and vary over place, time, and circumstance. We all make mistakes. Many times people are unaware of the sexist or racist connotations of things they say or they misspeak out of a habit they picked up in another social context. In trying to persuade others to modify their speech, it is helpful to talk with them in a way that does not assume that they harbor ill intent, while at the same time working to teach them about the negative impact of their words. In doing this work of educating others, it is important to use "I" statements, be specific about what and why, and open up a space for growth. For

example, you could say: "When you said, 'they gypped me,' I know you probably didn't mean it that way, but I felt like that phrase carried racist connotations, because I learned in my European history class that 'gypped' refers to 'gypsies' or Roma people and stereotypes that Romani are cheaters and thieves. Have you heard about that before?" This allows the other person to be a learner who is capable of change, rather than jumping into self-defense mode. Compassion also means understanding that class members are juggling many different things and that learning takes time. For example, someone may accidentally call you by the wrong name or pronoun more than once. Please patiently continue to correct them, but in a non-accusatory way. For example, "Whoops! You called me 'Mrs. Jones' and 'she/her/hers.' Please try to remember that I would like to be called 'Professor Jones' and 'ze/zir/zirs'."

**Calling In Versus Calling Out:** Along these lines, take a look at this post describing the difference between "calling people out" and "calling people in:" <https://www.bustle.com/p/what-does-call-in-mean-when-call-out-culture-feels-toxic-this-method-can-be-used-instead-9056343>. Since this class is a learning environment, we should try to "call in" each other, rather than "call out" each other.

**Teacher As Co-Learner:** Sometimes the Teaching Staff or the Blackboard site may inadvertently use language, ideas, or examples that some students find questionable. Please don't hesitate to tell us if you come upon something like that. Sometimes it may be a matter of providing you with more context to understand how, in a scholarly context, the content means something different from what you had thought. Other times, things may have changed or what is acceptable in one age cohort or social circle may not be in another. Please email the Professor or the TA to call us in. We are learning all the time. Every time we teach a class, we learn many new things.

**Stop and Think and/or Reach Out for Help:** Remember we can step away and think or consult others before we respond. If you intend to call someone in, think about how to do it compassionately. If you are called in, take some time to cultivate some compassion for yourself and others before you respond. If you don't feel comfortable educating your peers or if there is a repetitive pattern that is not suitable for calling in, please don't hesitate to contact the professor for help. We understand that sometimes it might not feel safe to call in a classmate or you might not know how to do it compassionately. We also know that it can become a burden on people with underrepresented identities to be put in a position of being expected to educate others. The Professor is happy to help.

**Many Personal Truths:** Another thing to remember is something we emphasize in anthropological training: our individual personal truths may differ from the truths of others. For example, one person may believe in monogamy and marriage as offering the comfort of predictable commitment, while for another person, monogamy and marriage may feel like a sexist or heterosexist cage. Use "I" statements in expressing personal truths helps prevent the implication that other' personal truths are wrong. Remember, in many situations, there is more than one right answer. It varies by person and context. This does not negate that data can be collected empirically. It is simply a comment on interpretation. This will be one theme in this course.



### Unacceptable Requests in this Course

The following requests will not be accepted in this course:

- Asking for extra credit: in addition to it being utterly unfair, it takes time away from the actual graded coursework so is counterproductive
- Asking if there is "anything you can do" to get more points in the class other than improving your performance in class: grades in this class are earned based on academic performance
- Asking if we can't "just give you a break because you have studied too hard for the grade we 'gave you!'" unfortunately, we have to assign the grade you earned based on mastering the course learning objectives and not effort, which we have no way of measuring in any case
- Asking us to give you a higher grade than you earned because "I really know the stuff even though you can't tell from what I handed in:" unfortunately, we do not grade on perception of knowledge but on knowledge displayed
- Asking us to give you a higher grade than you earned because "this one class is going to mess up my GPA and my future career aspirations": We can reassure you that one class cannot do that since your GPA is built from 120 credits worth of grades (even an F in one class will only affect your cumulative GPA by ~0.1 points). To put things in perspective, even medical schools consider your transcript as a whole and know that students always have a class here or there that doesn't work well for whatever reason.



### Course Policies Regarding Absences, Missed or Late Work

See *Grading Criteria and Tips* (to the left) for specific policies for this class.



### Attendance, Accommodations and Other Course-Related Policies

Following are UVM's policies related to this course.

**Students experiencing difficulties should be proactive in contacting Student Services and other support services listed below for help in accessing the wonderful resources available at UVM to help you (you have already paid for them after all!). For CAS students, the Student Services office is at 438 College Street, and their phone number is 656-3344.**

**University Attendance Policy (relevant excerpts):** "Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes. The instructor has the final authority to excuse absences. ... It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor regarding the reason for absence or tardiness from class, and to discuss this with the instructor in advance whenever possible. The instructor has the right to require documentation (\*When a student is unable to attend class for a health reason, the student may give permission for the instructor to discuss the situation with a representative from the Center for Health and Wellbeing. As with all absences, the faculty member has final authority to excuse students from classes) in support of the student's request for an absence from class. If an out-of-class exam is scheduled which conflicts with a regularly scheduled class, the regularly scheduled class has priority."

**University Policy on Religious Holidays:** Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.  
<https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/religious-holidays>

**University Policy on Athletic-Academic Conflicts:** "Students participating in intercollegiate athletics should plan their schedules with special care, recognizing the primary importance of all of their university academic responsibilities. Each semester, members of UVM varsity and junior varsity teams are responsible for documenting in writing any conflicts between their planned athletic schedule and the class schedule to their instructors by the end of the second full week of classes. Students and instructors should then discuss potential conflicts between course requirements and intercollegiate competitions. When an unavoidable conflict exists, the student and instructor should seek a resolution which permits the student to address the course requirement and participate in the athletic competition. The instructor has final authority on this matter."

**Student Learning Accommodations:** In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact SAS, the office of Disability Services on campus. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course. A student's accommodation letter lists those accommodations that will not be implemented until the student meets with their faculty to create a plan. Contact SAS: A170 Living/Learning Center; 802-656-7753; [access@uvm.edu](mailto:access@uvm.edu); or  
[https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student\\_accessibility\\_services](https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student_accessibility_services)

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to adhere to UVM's Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf>) in this class. Offenses against academic integrity are any acts which would have the effect of unfairly promoting or enhancing one's academic standing within the entire community of learners, such as through plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating. Any suspected violations of the policy will not be tolerated and all allegations or suspicions will be forwarded to the Center for Student Conduct (<http://www.uvm.edu/sconduct/?Page=students.html&SM=menu-student.html>).

**Copyright Policy:** Students must read and abide by the UVM copyright policy ([https://www.uvm.edu/policies/general\\_html/copyright.pdf](https://www.uvm.edu/policies/general_html/copyright.pdf)). Materials to which students have access in this course may be protected by copyright. Copying, downloading or transmitting course materials may be a violation of the copyright laws of the United States.

**Grading:** For information on grading and GPA calculation, go to <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/grades>. To understand how this course converts percentages into grades, see Grading Tips and Criteria (to the left).

**Final Grade Appeals:** If you would like to contest the final course grade submitted to the registrar, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy: <https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf>

**Final Exam Policy:** The University final exam policy outlines expectations during final exams and explains the timing and process of the examination period. <https://www.uvm.edu/registrar/final-exams>

**Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities:**  
<http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/rightsandresponsibilities/>

**FERPA Rights Disclosure:** The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. <http://catalogue.uvm.edu/undergraduate/academicinfo/ferparightsdisclosure/>

**Promoting Health & Safety:** The University of Vermont's number one priority is to support a healthy and safe community. The following resources are available to aid in that endeavor.

- *Center for Health and Wellbeing:* <https://www.uvm.edu/health>

- *Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS):* (802) 656-3340
- *C.A.R.E.* If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the Dean of Students website at <https://www.uvm.edu/studentaffairs>



### **Course Evaluation**

All students are expected to complete an evaluation of the course at its conclusion. These evaluations will be anonymous and confidential, and the information gained, including constructive criticisms, will be used to improve the course.



**This syllabus is provisional and may be subject to modification by the professors during the course of the semester in the event of unexpected opportunities or unforeseen challenges encountered by the class.**

## Course Schedule



### Anth 26 Course Schedule – Spring 2020

Attached Files: [Anth 26 Course Schedule Spring 2020.docx](#) (14.729 KB)

[Anth 26 Course Schedule Spring 2020.pdf](#) (106.668 KB)

Class meets on Tuesday and Thursday of each week. Work for each Module due by end of the week listed unless specific date noted. “End of the week” can be read as Friday if you do not want to work on the weekends, but work will not be considered late until Sunday at midnight. Required readings can be found in each Module folder.

#### Part I

Week 1 (1/13-1/19)	Module 1	Introduction and Overview
	Module 2	Anthro & Biological Anthropology (Inquizitive [IQ]1)
Week 2 (1/20-1/26)	Module 3	The Development of Evolutionary Theory: Explaining Variability (IQ2)
Week 3 (1/27-2/2)	Module 4	Mendelian Genetics and Inheritance
Week 4 (2/3-2/9)	Module 5	Molecular Genetics (IQ3, Genetics Test)
Week 5 (2/10-2/16)	Module 6	Population Genetics: Microevolution and the Evolutionary Forces (IQ4, Frequency Homework)
Week 6 (2/17-2/23)	Module 7	Epigenetics and Part I Conclusion <a href="#">Exam 1 [Th 2/20]</a>

#### Part II

Week 7 (2/24-3/1)	Module 8	Variation and Adaptation (IQ5) <b>Ethics Assignment</b>
Week 8 (3/2-3/8)*	Module 9	Race: Scientific Racism and the Biological Effects of a Social Construct (Film Response*)
Week 9 (3/9-3/15)	SPRING BREAK	*Module 9 will be considered “on time” if turned in by midnight of 3/15
Week 10 (3/16-3/22)	Module 10	Primate Biology (IQ6)
Week 11 (3/23-3/29)	Module 11	Primate Behavior (IQ7, Primate Test)
Week 12 (3/30-4/5)	Module 12	Paleoanthropology and Part II Conclusion <a href="#">Exam 2 [T 3/31]</a>

#### Part III

Week 13 (4/6-4/12)	Module 13	Early Hominins (IQ10)
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		Information Literacy Assignment
Week 14 (4/13-4/19)	Module 14	Evolution of <i>Homo sp.</i> (IQ11; Early Hominin Test)
Week 15 (4/20-4/26)	Module 15	Archaic Humans (IQ12)
Week 16 (4/27-5/3)	Module 16	Early Modern Humans Exam 3 [optional time: Sun 5/3 1:00-3:00pm]
Week 17 (5/4-5/8)	Module 17	Part III Conclusion Exam 3 [optional time: Wed 5/6 11:00-1:00pm] Exam 3 [regular time: Friday 5/8 1:30-3:00pm]