

COURSE INFORMATION & SYLLABUS
PSYC 4223 – Evolutionary Psychology
Spring 2025

M/W/F 12:00 – 12:50p.m. Room: PY 102 Office: OD 117 M/W 11:30 – 11:50

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Don Knox

Email: don.knox@msutexas.edu

TEXTBOOKS: Workman and Reader: **Evolutionary Psychology**; Cambridge Press

Recommended:

Meston, C. “Why Women have Sex”

Wrangham, R. and Peterson, D. “The Demonic Male”

Diamond, J “Third Chimpanzee”

PSYC 4223 – Evolutionary Psychology

Course Description: Background: Origin of Species

“In the distant future I see open fields for more important researches. Psychology will be based on a new foundation that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation” (Darwin, 1859).

It is now some 150 years later and although science looks at Evolutionary Psychology as a rather new branch of psychology in reality it has been here for quite a long time waiting to answer the questions of the origins and nature of the human mind. No longer will the human mind consist in psychological terms as a blank slate that parents, caregivers, teachers, and one's cultural context all contribute. The biological components of ecological systems evolved together forming the human brain. Behaviors are thus adaptations to environmental circumstances that existed in the past as well as in the present.

Designed from millions of years of adaptations, the human mind developed from circumstances our ancestors confronted. Evolutionary Psychology demands that we examine these adaptations and attempt to understand their evolved functions. What did natural selection want to accomplish with behaviors? Why are there universal patterns in behavior? Why do we fall in love? Is it possible that infanticide served a purpose at some particular time? Why do we get jealous, aggressive, fight wars, and engage in altruistic behaviors?

Prerequisites for this course - PSYC-1103 and PSYC-2203

Course Outline: This course will examine the mechanisms of the human mind through the understanding of evolutionary psychology. We will evaluate the origins of many models of

behavior (many still expressed by cultures still relatively untouched by “civilization”) that attempt to explain our current lives. Topics such as Sex and mating, how we parent, global kinship patterns, war and aggression, jealousy, and dominance hierarchies will be discussed as incorporated from outside readings along with the required texts. Finally, this course will attempt to use evolutionary psychology as a unifying theme for the many related field of science.

Operational Definitions for this course:

For the purposes of this course, there are two sexes. Female (XX) and Male (XY) – (Buss). We will discuss gender and differences in sex chromosomes (XXX; XYY; X etc) but from the Evolutionary view of change/inclusiveness/differences. We will also discuss gender roles/sexual orientation and other issues but always from the Evolutionary Psychology view. Understand that we are learning about a theory.

Course Outcome Competencies: By the conclusion of the course, the student will understand and will be able to:

- Define Evolved Psychological Mechanisms
- Be able to evaluate topics such as Sex and mating, how we parent, global kinship patterns, war and aggression, jealousy, and dominance hierarchies in terms of evolutionary psychology.
- Understand that Evolutionary Psychology is another theory in psychology that helps us to explain human behavior as an adaptation.

Course requirements: (Note – the journal assignments have to be turned in using D2L).

- 1) **Exams:** Four Exams (total of 80%)
- 2) **Research Paper:** Four Journal reviews (20%)

GRADING SCALE:

4 Exams – 800 points (200 points each exam)

1 Research paper – 200 points (Due

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE 1000 pts

The University has a standard grade scale:

A = 90-100, B = 80-89.9, C = 70-79.9, D = 60-69.9, F= below 60, W = Withdrawal, WP = withdrew passing, WF = withdrew failing, I = incomplete.

Exams

There will be four exams. These exams will require a scantron. Questions will be multiple-choice or True/False.

Research Paper

Twenty percent of your grade will be determined by a written research paper. The topic of the paper can be chosen from the list provided in the course D2L page. These papers are a formal writing assignment. APA style will be followed and the additional rules of Academic Honesty listed in the syllabus will be strictly adhered to for this assignment. These papers will be turned in through D2L and they will be checked for plagiarism and the use of AI and /or ChaptGPT or assist programs such as Grammarly and other similar services. Purchasing a paper from a company like termpapers.com is a form of academic dishonesty.

All paraphrased information must be cited (using in-text citations) as well as direct quotes. At least 6 academic sources are required. The only approved academic resources to be used will be provided by the instructor on D2L. These papers will be at a minimum of 2500 words (does not include cover page, abstract, reference page). Do not animate your paper (papers do not prove anything (This paper will...)). Do not write in first person or refer to yourself in 3rd person.

III. RELEVANT CLASS, PROGRAM AND SCHOOL POLICIES

Late submission of papers. Not allowed.

Academic Dishonesty: Please do not cheat or plagiarize. The MSU policy on cheating and plagiarism is in the MSU Student Handbook and Activities Calendar (Code of Student Conduct, Item 11) and I encourage you to review it. Additional information regarding the Academic Dishonesty policy is available from the Dean of Students office, in Clark Student Center. Cheating or engaging in plagiarism will result in a grade of zero (0) and/or a letter grade of “F” for the course!!!!!! If you find yourself even *thinking about* cheating on an exam or copying someone else’s work, please *talk to me* instead of doing it!!! This includes the use of AI and/or ChatGPT.

Wikipedia

At no time will a student be allowed to use Wikipedia as a source for any project or paper in this class. If it is determined that Wikipedia was used as a source for a project or paper, the student will be given a grade of zero automatically.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Written assignments will be run through a plagiarism and AI checker called Turn It In. If at any point Turn It In identifies that a student used AI to complete an assignment (such as ChatGPT), an automatic grade of zero will be given to the assignment.

Dropping the course: Please let me know if you plan on dropping the course. Often times, a student will decide to drop a course based upon their own perception of their progress. If I notice a student dropping back, I will do everything possible to bring that student up to speed. Let me help you make the decision to drop. This course is laid out so that a good portion of the grading will be completed prior to the drop date. I will have a section in the “my grades” that will indicate your progress to date to help you in your decision-making process.

Instructor Drop: An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor's drop of a student takes precedence over the student-initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 9 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10 week summer term, or the 12th class day of a 4 or 5 week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar as the official drop date. A student dropped from a class by a faculty member for disruptive behavior has the right of appeal to the Student Conduct Committee through the Student Conduct office.

I will closely follow this policy in terms of your conduct in class. Anything that is disruptive to the class will result in you being Instructor Dropped from the class with a grade of F. I will enforce this policy in that my obligation is to provide the best and most informative course that I can. I cannot do that when there is behavior that disrupts the class. This also includes attempting to dominate or "teach" the class, interrupting the course frequently with stories that are not facilitative or relevant to the flow of the class, using electronics during class that are not directly related to the class material, and talking frequently to one's peers while course is being held. Any other behaviors that are deemed disruptive will also be enforced as deemed by our Code of Conduct policy. Remember that there are stories and questions that are facilitative to our class discussions, and some that are obstructive.

Informed Consent: This information is to inform the student of the limits of confidentiality while enrolled at MSU Texas or any other state school. Due to federal and state law, faculty and staff working for an university are required to report any information that falls under Title IX. Any student who indicates experiencing sexual abuse/misconduct, physical/emotional abuse, domestic violence, stalking, suicidal/homicidal ideation, or related experiences will have an incident report sent to either the MSU Texas Title IX and/or the Dean of Student's office. Student disclosure may occur via a face-to-face meeting, in-class self-disclosure, email, statement made in a written assignment, etc. If a student asks a faculty or staff person not to share the information, please note that by law, we have to report and I will report. Please note that as students, you may be aware of classmates/dormmates struggling and can make an incident report at: [Student Referrals and Incident Reporting Forms](https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas) or <https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?MSUTexas>

Report forms are:

Bias Incident Reporting Form

Sexual Misconduct Report Form

Campus Incident Report Form

Student Alert Form

Concerning Student Behavior Form

General Student Complaint Form

College Policies and Procedures

Can be found at the bottom of the MSU home page or at [Human Resources Policy](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. Any evidence of cheating will result in a grade of "F" and being reported to the [Dean of Students](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU TEXAS. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the FBI video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department's webpage: ["Run. Hide. Fight."](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Student Code of Conduct

MWSU's official policy in the University's Code of Student Conduct on page 52, states:

Instructor Drop: An instructor may drop a student any time during the semester for excessive absences, for consistently failing to meet class assignments, for an indifferent attitude, or for disruptive conduct. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to dropping the student from the class. An instructor's drop of a student takes precedence over the student initiated course drop of a later date. The instructor will assign a grade of either WF or F through the first 9 weeks of a long semester, the first 6 weeks of a 10 week summer term, or the 12th class day of a 4 or 5 week summer term consisting of 20 days. After these periods, the grade will be an F. The date the instructor drop form is received in the Office of the Registrar as the official drop date. A student dropped from a class by a faculty member for disruptive behavior has the right of appeal to the Student Conduct Committee through the Student Conduct office.

Midwestern State University Student Honor Creed

"As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so."

As students at MSU, we recognize that any great society must be composed of empowered, responsible citizens. We also recognize universities play an important role in helping mold these responsible citizens. We believe students themselves play an important part in developing responsible citizenship by maintaining a community where integrity and honorable character are the norm, not the exception. Thus, We, the Students of Midwestern State University, resolve to uphold the honor of the University by affirming our commitment to complete academic honesty. We resolve not only to be honest but also to hold our peers accountable for complete honesty in all university matters.

We consider it dishonest to ask for, give, or receive help in examinations or quizzes, to use any unauthorized material in examinations, or to present, as one's own, work or ideas which are not entirely one's own. We recognize that any instructor has the right to expect that all student work is honest, original work. We accept and acknowledge that responsibility for lying, cheating, stealing, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty fundamentally rests within each individual student.

We expect of ourselves academic integrity, personal professionalism, and ethical character. We appreciate steps taken by University officials to protect the honor of the University against any who would disgrace the MSU student body by violating the spirit of this creed.

Written and adopted by the 2002-2003 MSU Student Senate.

Cell Phones and Pagers: Please turn all cell phones and pagers off (no sound) during class. DO NOT text message during class. DO NOT answer your cell phone in class. Exceptions include emergency calls (e.g., birth of child, family member in hospital). Students who are unable to comply will not be allowed to attend class.

Taping, cell phones and laptops: NOT ALLOWED

Note

Students with disability must be registered with Disability Support Services before accommodations can be provided. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact

me and must provide documentation by Disability Support Services. The Director of Disability Support Services serves as the ADA Coordinator and may be contacted at (940) 397-4140, TDD (940) 397-4515, or 3410 Taft Blvd., Clark Student Center 168.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Midwestern State University does not discriminate on the basis of an individual's disability and complies with Section 504 and Public Law 101336 (Americans with Disabilities Act) in its admissions, accessibility, treatment and employment of individuals in its programs and activities.

A copy of the ADA Compliance Document is available online at [disability faq](#). It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any disabling condition that will require modifications. Students who require special accommodations must register with Disability Support Services before these accommodations can be provided. An Accommodation Request Form can be obtained at [Accommodation Request](#).

NOTE: THE COURSE SYLLABUS PROVIDES A GENERAL PLAN FOR THE COURSE; DEVIATIONS MAY BE NECESSARY. DUE DATES FOR JOURNAL REVIEWS ARE FIRM.

THIS IS JUST A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Readings
Week 1	Introduction	Ch.1,
Week 2	Principles of Evolutionary Change	Ch.2,
Week 3	Sexual Selection “Why Women have Sex”	Ch.3, Ch 1 - 6
Week 4	Evolution of Human Mate Choice “Why Women have Sex” Exam 1	Ch.4 Ch 7-11 Workman/Reader Chapter 1-4, Meston
Week 5	Cognitive Development	Ch.5,
Week 6	Social development “The Demonic Male”	Ch.6, Ch 7 - 13
Week 7	Kin Relationships	Ch.7,
Week 8	3 rd Chimpanzee” Exam 2	Ch 1-10 Workman/Reader Ch 5 – 7
Week 9	Catch up “3 rd Chimpanzee”	 Ch 11 - 19
Week 10	Reciprocity/Conflict	Ch.8,
Week 11	Evolution, Thought, Cognition	Ch.9,
Week 12	Language	Ch.10,

	Exam 3	Workman/Reader 8 – 10 3 rd Chimpanzee
Week 13	Emotion Paper due	Ch.11, 5/11 11:59 PM
Week 14	Psychopathology	Ch.12,
Week 15	Individual Differences/Culture	Ch.13, 14
Week 16	Final Exam:	Workman/Reader