

**ANTH 1313  
Human Variation  
Syllabus**

**Spring 2026 (CRN 27355)**

Delivery Method: In-person

Meeting Day and Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00 AM – 10:20 AM

Location: Texas Western, room 317

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Dr. Kyle Wiley (he/him)

Email: [kwiley@utep.edu](mailto:kwiley@utep.edu)

Office Location: Old Main, room 316 (enter through room 311 – grad computer lab)

Office Hours:

- Face-to-Face: Tuesdays, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm, or by appointment
- Virtual: I am also available on Zoom by appointment.

**TEACHING ASSISTANT INFORMATION**

TA: Pranta Sikder

Email: [psikder@miners.utep.edu](mailto:psikder@miners.utep.edu)

Office Location: Old Main, room 213

Office Hours:

**Course Description:**

Introduction to how evolution has shaped contemporary human biological, phenotypic, and demographic variation and diversity using evolutionary and life history theory. We will also draw on biocultural perspectives, integrating human biology and physiology with social and cultural forces, to help us understand human variation and diversity in topics such as growth, maturation, reproductive function, and senescence. We will also explore how evolutionary biology, life history theory, and biocultural perspectives illuminate the study of contemporary human health and disease patterns.






There is no prerequisite for this course. However, a previous introduction to evolutionary biology, life history theory, or biological anthropology will be beneficial. That said, we will cover all necessary theoretical background material in class.

Instructor notes on course context:

- This course will feature lectures and discussions on potentially sensitive content, including topics related to evolution, race & ethnicity, and sex & gender. I expect you to engage with the course content using the theatrical frameworks and evidence that we cover in class, regardless of your personal beliefs on these topics.
- This course content is evidence-based. You should feel free to speak openly and critically about any of the issues we cover in class. However, recognize that your personal opinion is not the same thing as an evidence-based interpretation or argument.
- This class will also include respectful discussion with the instructional team and your peers. Debate is encouraged – indeed, at the heart of much of what we will discuss – but personal attacks will not be tolerated.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND UNIVERSITY LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

<u>Student Learning Objectives</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Be able to evaluate the ethics of research being done with contemporary human populations	 Social Responsibility
Gain perspective on the how evolutionary and biocultural forces have shaped human biological variation, health, and disease patterns	 Global Awareness
Critically evaluate biomedical constructions related to race, ethnicity, gender, sex, aging, health, and disease, and describe how evolutionary, life history, and biocultural perspectives inform the study of these topics	 Critical Thinking Skills
Become familiar with peer-reviewed journal articles and critically evaluate and present their content	 Critical Thinking Skills
Find effective means of communicating with fellow students about potentially controversial topics or topics for which we have little data through class discussion and presentation	 Communication Skills

**COURSE COMMUNICATION:** How we will stay in contact with each other

Here are the ways we can keep the communication channels open:

- Office Hours: I will have office hours for you to present your questions and comments about the course. My office hours are in-person; however, you can request a virtual meeting, and I will send you a Zoom link. Please see the days and times at the top of this syllabus.
- Email: UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 48 hours of receipt; however, I do not check emails over the weekend. When emailing me:
  - Be sure to email from your UTEP student e-mail account (assume email messages are permanent and public).
  - Include the course number in the subject line.
  - In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question.
  - At the end of your e-mail, be sure to include a closing with your first and last name
- Announcements: Check your email and the Blackboard announcements and messages sections frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages (at least once each day).

**Course Textbooks**

There is no assigned textbook for this course. For each lecture, textbook chapters or peer-reviewed scientific publications are assigned as required reading. These readings provide a foundation for the information I present in class. Assigned readings are available on Blackboard.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

The breakdown of your final grade distribution is as follows:

100%-90% = A    89%-80% = B    79%-70% = C    69%-60% = D    59% and Below = F

The following table is a breakdown of how your final grade is calculated, including how each type of assessment is weighted:

ASSESSMENT	WEIGHT	DUE DATE
Final Presentations	20%	May 5 May 7
Exam 1	20%	February 17
Exam 2	25%	March 31
Exam 3	25%	May 12, 10 am - 12:45pm (tent.)
Participation	10%	-

**Attendance Policy:**

I strongly encourage you to attend all of the lecture meetings. The uploaded lecture slides are developed as supporting material for the oral presentation by the instructor and to facilitate discussion. Interpretation of the uploaded slides will be greatly facilitated by attending lectures and taking notes. I will also include iClicker questions and discussion activities during the lectures to vary the mode of instruction and to periodically gauge student knowledge and understanding of the material. All information discussed in class (e.g., questions from students, discussion following a lecture) CAN BE included in the exams.

**Final Presentations:**

In the last week of class, small groups of 3-4 students will present a scientific article related to the course content. I will provide you with a list of articles to choose from and form groups based on a poll of your interests. Each group will present an overview of the assigned paper in the style of a 15-minute talk. I will provide the list of paper options and assign groups after spring break. Students will need to find time to organize and create their presentations. Further details and a rubric will be posted to Blackboard.

**Exams:**

There will be three exams over the term (two during normal class time and one during finals week. The exams are designed to test your understanding of the course material and your ability to connect and critically evaluate course topics. They will include a mixture of multiple choice, key terms, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, and short essay questions. Exams will not be cumulative in terms of topics, but they will rely on an understanding of evolutionary theory and other foundational concepts built over the course. The topical focus of the exams will be on the content presented after the previous exam.

You will complete exams in two stages. In the first stage, you will take the exams individually, as one might normally complete an exam. I will collect the exams after the completion of stage one. In the second stage, you will get into groups of four and retake the exam together. Each group will receive one copy of the exam and is expected to reach a consensus for each answer.

2-stage Exam Grading: The individual component of the exam will be worth 90% of your final exam grade, and the group re-take will be worth 10%. They are not weighted equally to encourage you to study while also taking the pressure off if you miss a question here or there. If you score better on the individual component of the exam, I will use only the individual grade for your final score.

**A note on extra credit:**

I do not typically offer extra credit assignments. IF I decide to offer extra credit assignments, the extra credit points will be applied to your final grade. There may be extra credit questions on exams that will apply to your exam grades.

No student can receive over 100% on an assignment, exam, or paper. If a student receives more than full credit on any of these, their grade on that assignment will be recorded as 100%.

## ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Our class meetings are in person.

While attendance is generally not mandatory, participation in the course is determined by participation in the course's learning activities, including in-class activities. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners.

Participation is determined by the completion of the following activities:

- Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
- Participating in engaging discussions with your peers.
- Participating in in-class clicker questions that I will periodically release during lectures
- Other activities and assignments as indicated in the syllabus

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.

## DEADLINES, LATE WORK, ABSENCE POLICY

Important deadlines are noted in the course schedule and on Blackboard. As you have plenty of notice for the due dates, I will not generally accept late submissions. See the late work policy below.

Late work policy: I will accept late work in the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as an emergency. Please email me as soon as you can safely do so to determine what accommodations we can make.

## MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

If you have a documented excuse for missing an exam, you will be expected to take the exam within 24-48 hours of the original exam date, ideally as early as safely and reasonably possible.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Some course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

**IMPORTANT:** If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#), as they are trained specifically in assisting with the technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

## **ILLNESS PRECAUTIONS**

Please stay home if you have symptoms of a communicable illness. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES AND/OR COURSE DROP POLICY**

I will not drop you from the course. I will reach out to students who are in danger of not adequately fulfilling course requirements to pass the class at several points before the drop date. If you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the [Registrar's Office](#) to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an "F" for the course. If you wish to discuss your standing in the course, please reach out to me to set up a one-on-one meeting.

## **INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY**

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY**

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148, email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal. It is your responsibility to seek accommodations with CASS. Follow up with them as needed to make sure your request is processed.

## **SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as one's own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the [Office of Community Standards](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

**GUIDANCE ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

The use of AI for course assignments is prohibited.

Use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, is **not allowed** for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

**PLAGIARISM DETECTING SOFTWARE**

Some of your coursework and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism-detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND ASSIGNED READING:**

I reserve the right to update the course readings and schedule over the term to accommodate student interests and the pacing of lectures.

Week	Date	Topic	Assigned Reading and Deadlines:
1	20 - Jan	Course Intro	Explorations, Ch. 1
	22 – Jan	Ethics in Human Sciences	Turner. Ethical Issues in Human Population Biology.
2	27 – Jan	Biological Basis of Life	Explorations, Ch. 3
	29 – Jan	Intro to Evolutionary Theory 1: Natural Selection	Explorations, Ch. 2
3	3 – Feb	Intro to Evolutionary Theory 2: Genes, Traits, and the Synthesis	Explorations, Ch. 4
	5 – Feb	Epigenetics	Thayer & Non. Anthropology Meets Epigenetics: Current and Future Directions.
4	10 – Feb	Life History Theory 1: Intro	Human Behavioral Ecology, Ch. 2
	12 – Feb	Catch Up & Review	
5	17 – Feb	<b>Exam 1</b>	
	19 – Feb	<b>Exam 1 – Second Stage</b>	
6	24 – Feb	Human Diversity 1: Genetic Diversity	Human Evolutionary Biology, Ch. 15
	26 – Feb	Human Diversity 2: Race and Skin Color	Human Evolutionary Biology, Ch. 12
7	3 - Mar	Energetics	Pontzer, et al. Hunter-Gatherer Energetics and Human Obesity.
	5 – Mar	Diet	Basics in Human Evolution, Ch. 28
8	10 – Mar	Stress and Human Biology	Basics in Human Evolution, Ch. 32
	12 – Mar	Adaptation to Extreme Climates and Ecologies	Basics in Human Evolution, Ch. 18

	17 – Mar	<b>Spring Break – No Class</b>	
	19 – Mar		
9	24 – Mar	Evolutionary Medicine: Why does disease exist?	Barrett et al. Emerging and Re-Emerging Infectious Diseases: The Third Epidemiologic Transition.
	26 – Mar	Catch Up & Review	
10	31 – Mar	<b>Exam 2</b>	
	2 – Apr	<b>Exam 2 – Second Stage</b>	
11	7 – Apr	Life History Theory 2: Human & Primate Life Histories	The Evolution of Human Life History, Ch. 2.
	9 – Apr	Infancy and Childhood	Human Biological Diversity, Ch 9
12	14 – Apr	Adolescence and Maturity	Human Biological Diversity, Ch 9
	16 – Apr	Female Reproductive Ecology: The Ovarian Cycle	Basics in Human Evolution, Ch. 21 (p 296-300); Human Evolutionary Biology, Ch 19
13	21 – Apr	Female Reproductive Ecology: Pregnancy and Reproduction	Human Evolutionary Biology, Ch. 20
	23 – Apr	Male Reproductive Ecology	Human Evolutionary Biology, Ch. 21
14	27 – Apr	Aging: Male and Female Aging; Degenerative Diseases	Bribiescas. Aging, Life History, and Human Evolution.
	28 – Apr	Social Environments and Human Health	Sweet et al. Short-term lending: Payday loans as risk factors for anxiety, inflammation, and poor health.
15	5 – May	<b>Final Presentations</b>	<b>Reading assigned by group #</b>
	7 – May	<b>Final Presentations</b>	<b>Reading assigned by group #</b>

**Optional readings:** These are some suggested texts that may help you further understand the course material or that you can check out if you are interested in exploring some of the topics further:

Bribiescas RG. 2006. *Men: Evolutionary and Life History*. Harvard University Press.

Bribiescas, RG. 2016. *How Men Age: What evolution reveals about male health and mortality*. Princeton University Press.

Clancy K. 2023. *Period: The Real Story of Menstruation*. Princeton University Press.

Ellison PT. 2001. *On Fertile Ground: A Natural History of Human Reproduction*. Harvard University Press.

Gurven, M. 2025. *Seven Decades: How We Evolved to Live Longer*. Princeton University Press.

Jasienska G. 2013. *The Fragile Wisdom: An Evolutionary View on Women's Biology and Health*. Harvard University Press.

Miller E. 2023. *Thicker Than Water: A Social and Evolutionary Study of Iron Deficiency in Women*. Oxford University Press.

\*Shook B, Braff L, Nelson K, Aguilera K. 2023. *Explorations: An Open Invitation to Biological Anthropology*

\* This is a useful and open-access textbook that provides an introduction to biological anthropology. We will use several chapters of this book in the first few weeks of the course.

**COURSE RESOURCES:** Where you can go for assistance

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support. Please refer to the QR code below for a listing of campus resources, or visit [https://www.utep.edu/advising/student\\_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html](https://www.utep.edu/advising/student_resources/student-success-resource-hub.html).



Anthropology Resources:

- Sociology and Anthropology Department website: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/sociology-and-anthropology/>
- Advising information: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/sociology-and-anthropology/about/advising.html>
- UTEP has an Anthropology club! Contact Dr. Wiley for more information.
- For information about careers in Human Biology or Biological Anthropology, reach out to Dr. Wiley.

Technology Resources:

- Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Help Desk for assistance.
  - Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus

Academic Resources:

- UTEP Library: Access a wide range of resources, including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- University Writing Center (UWC): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help, and explore other writing resources.
- Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
- History Tutoring Center (HTC): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
- RefWorks: A free bibliographic citation tool. Check out the RefWorks tutorial, Fact Sheet, and Quick-Start Guide.
- The Miner Learning Center: Join peer-led study sessions in person or online to review content and discover study strategies in core curriculum courses.
- UTEP Edge: UTEP's cross-campus framework for student success and empowerment – develops students' assets through high-impact experiences made possible by the expertise and dedication of faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.

Individual Resources:

- Student Success Help Desk (SSHD): Students experiencing challenges or obstacles to academic success, including registration, financial, food, housing, and transition resources, may submit a ticket to request assistance to [studentsuccess@utep.edu](mailto:studentsuccess@utep.edu)
- Military Student Success Center: Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- Center for Accommodations and Support Services: Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- Counseling and Psychological Services: Provides a variety of counseling services, including individual, couples, and group sessions, as well as career and disability assessments.
- UTEP Food Pantry: Non-perishable food items are available to students who are currently enrolled in classes. Bring a Miner Gold Card to Memorial Gym, Room 105, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.