

ANTH 394 A01

THE HUMAN ANIMAL *-online course-*

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Melanie Chang

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

A central question in anthropology is “Why are we the way we are?” This term, we will examine how evolutionary forces have shaped our anatomy, biology, and behavior. 1. What selective factors have operated over the course of primate and human evolution, to shape human anatomy, physiology, genetics, and behavior? 2. What are the genetic and environmental bases of the human phenotype (both physical and behavioral) that underlie the variation among humans? 3. How do social and cultural factors interact with evolutionary and genetic factors to contribute to problems relating to human health? This course will explore topics in human evolutionary biology to explain what is unique about the human adaptation and the variation among modern human populations. The history of the “race” concept and mismatches between the environment in which our species evolved and our modern environment, will be central themes. This course takes a comparative evolutionary approach, and therefore primate and fossil hominin biology will also be examined.

Skills Development

Students who have learned successfully in this course will be able to:

- explain the relationships among human life history parameters, plasticity, phenotypic variation, and health
- explain how the interactions of genes and environment, and of biology and culture, affect patterns of human variation and health
- identify and synthesize ideas and evidence presented in the human evolutionary biology literature