

Introduction Letter – Online Course

Anthropology 101

Welcome to Anthropology 101 online!

The following is information to help you succeed in this class. Please **read it carefully** and feel free to email me (Rebecca Stein - steinrl@lavc.edu) if you have any questions.

What you should know about the content of the class

This course is an introduction to the anthropological study of human biology and human evolution. Topics include the mechanisms of evolutionary change, genetics, human variation, and the reconstruction of human evolutionary history through an examination of the fossil record and through the use of comparative studies of our closest biological relatives, the living monkeys and apes. The course will also explore what implications evolutionary theory has for understanding modern humans.

The perspective of this course is that in order to understand modern human anatomy and behavior, you need to have an understanding of how humans evolved. There are four steps to this process, which correspond roughly to the four units of the course. First, we need to understand how evolution works, including a discussion of natural selection and human genetics. Second, we can look at how evolution works specifically on the Order Primates (which includes prosimians, monkeys, apes, and humans). Through comparative studies of natural history, anatomy, behavior, and DNA, we gain many useful clues about human evolution. Third, we need to look specifically at the history of the human lineage, examining the fossil record to determine where our ancestors came from and what they were like. Finally, we look at modern humans, including the examination of contemporary human variation.

What you should know about the structure of the class

- The class is entirely on-line – there are no required on-campus meetings.
- The class will be available starting the first day of the semester through the ETUDES-NG website. A link to the website and information on how to figure

out your username and password can be found at:

<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/studentLoggingInOnline.html> . A tutorial on

how to use ETUDES can be found at:

http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/ols/Welcome_Main_Menu.html.

- This class proceeds at the same pace as the in-person sections. You will need to log on several times every week. Content and assignments will open and close on specified dates – you can't do it all the last week. In addition, the class content is constantly building on previous knowledge. It is very important to keep up and make sure you understand all of the current material before moving on.
- An online class is not any easier nor does it take any less time than the in-person version. You need to have the time and be self-motivated and self-disciplined to succeed. If you are not sure if an online class is really for you, take the quiz at: http://www.foothill.edu/fga/pre_assessment.php.
- Due to the nature of the online environment, there will be a lot of reading and writing involved in this class.
- **In other words, this is a difficult class. Taking it online makes it more difficult, not easier.**
- You do need to have the textbook – Physical Anthropology, 10th edition, by Stein and Rowe (ISBN 978-0-07-340531-5). It is important to have the current edition as the information is always changing with new discoveries.

What you need to do:

- Make sure that you have easy and reliable internet access.
- Check to make sure that your computer system is adequate and that you have all the needed software
(<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/studentThingsToKnow.html>).
- Have a back-up computer (such as the computer labs on campus) in case of problems. Technical difficulties will not be an acceptable excuse for late or missed work.
- Have a working email address that you check regularly and make sure to enter that email address in your ETUDES profile.

- **Log on at least once during the first two days of the semester and post your introduction in the discussion forum** (if you do not do so, I will drop you from the class as a “no show”).
- Log on several times a week after that.
- Read all of the content materials (located in the “Modules” online and in the textbook), complete the assignments and exams, and participate in the discussions.
- Ask questions whenever you have them.
- Learn some new interesting, fun and useful (honest!) things!

How to contact me

I look forward to meeting you all in the discussion forums online during the first week of classes. If you need to contact me before then (or during the class), my email address is steinrl@lavc.edu.

My campus phone number is 818-947-2538 and if you are on campus, my office is in AH&S 305.