

Anthropology 4593-001
The Anthropology of Human Reproduction
Spring 2009

Dr. Kermyt G. Anderson
Office: 509 Dale Hall Tower
Office phone: 325-9179
Email: kganders@ou.edu

Time: Tu/Th 9:00 – 10:15 AM
Classroom: Dale Hall 031
Office Hours: Tu/Th 10:30 – 11:30 AM or by appt

Introduction:

This course will examine the major features of human fertility and reproduction, exploring the interactions between physiology, ecology, and behavior. We will apply an anthropological perspective to such issues as:

- cross-cultural patterns of fertility
- the timing and probability of conception
- the relationship between breastfeeding and ovulation
- age at first and last reproduction
- male reproductive physiology

Texts:

The main text for this course is Peter Ellison's *On Fertile Ground: A Natural History of Human Reproduction* (2001, Cambridge: Harvard University Press). This book is available from the Student Bookstore. Additional readings for the course are available online on D2L.

Course Requirements:

3 exams (75 points each)	225 pts
1 short paper (75 points)	75 pts
<u>5 reaction papers (15 points each)</u>	<u>75 pts</u>
Total	375 pts

The exams are closed-note, closed-book, and are not cumulative. They will consist mostly of short answer questions and essays, with a smattering of fill-in-the-blanks. The final exam is simply another exam; it is not cumulative.

- Please note that make-up exams will be given only when (a) there are exceptional circumstances preventing you from taking the exam on the scheduled day (e.g., a serious illness requiring hospitalization, death of a family member), (b) you can provide written proof of the exceptional circumstances (e.g., a note from a physician), and (c) you notify me of the situation prior to the time of the exam. Outside of these circumstances, you will receive a zero for a missed exam. Make-up exams are not granted for dental appointments, etc.

The short paper is an out-of-class writing assignment, approximately 5 pages long. It will be based on your interpretation of a pair of journal articles related to a specific research topic. I will provide further details about the paper well in advance of the due date, which is April 16.

The reaction papers are short (about a page) write-ups that react to the readings in the course. Each reaction paper will be based on a single assigned reading. The reaction paper will consist of a critical response to the reading (one to two paragraphs). The "critical response" should include your comments and reactions to the reading, and can cover such areas as whether you think the reading accomplished what it set out to achieve and why, whether you were convinced by the reading and why, or any questions

raised by the reading that you felt were not answered adequately. You should **not** provide a detailed summary of the reading. You must turn in **five** reaction papers over the course of the semester. **Reaction papers must be turned in during class; I will not accept copies via email or turned in to my departmental box.** You can write a reaction paper on any of the class readings, with two exceptions: 1) the Ellison book, and 2) the Anderson paper (April 28/30). Reaction papers are due the week the readings are assigned, and will not be accepted late (e.g., reaction papers for the reading assigned for Jan 27/29 must be turned in by Jan 29). *I strongly encourage you to write your reaction papers throughout the semester, rather than waiting until the end when there are few readings left to choose from.*

There will be no extra credit. Your total point score, divided by the highest score achieved in the class, will determine your grade for the semester. So, for example, if the highest score in the class is 370 points, your final grade will be (your score)/370. Letter grades will be assigned on a ten point scale. (A = 90+, B = 80-89, etc.)

Other Requirements and Expectations (the fine print):

- 1) Log in to Desire2Learn (D2L, <http://learn.ou.edu>) as soon as possible, and familiarize yourself with the site. You can always obtain a copy of this syllabus on D2L. Announcements, class notes, etc., will be posted on the site, and you are expected to check D2L on regularly.
- 2) Please read the assigned material **before** class meets. There is a substantial reading load for this course, and if you fall behind it will entail a large amount of work to catch up. The readings will form the basis of the class discussions; additionally, each exam will contain questions based on material covered only in the readings.
- 3) You are expected to come to class and participate in class discussions. Class participation is not explicitly graded, but it is expected that you will contribute to the discussions to the best of your ability. Lecture materials and videos presented during class time will form an important component of the exams; missing this material will disadvantage you. Lastly, the Faculty Handbook notes that “When absences seriously affect a student’s class work, the instructor will report this fact to the Admissions and Records Office, where the information will be directed to the dean concerned.”
- 4) You are expected to take notes in class. The lecture notes used in class will be made available on D2L (usually within 24 hours after class). However, the overheads are often sketchy and incomplete, and I always explain material verbally in class that is not written down on the slides. This oral material is important, and will be included on the exams. My experience from previous semesters suggests that students who rely solely on the overheads rather than taking notes in class receive lower grades on exams.
- 5) Please act respectfully and courteously toward the rest of the class, including the instructor. This means not reading newspapers, not sleeping during class, not using cell phones (cell phones and pagers should be **turned off** during class), not engaging in conversations with your classmates unless told to do so, and so forth. Laptops are allowed in class **only** for the purposes of taking notes. I reserve the option of deducting points from your grade for persistent disrespectful behavior.
- 6) Academic misconduct—cheating and plagiarism—will be treated as a serious offense. Cheating includes the use of notes or other materials during exams and discussion of exam questions with other students during the exam period. Plagiarism includes the presentation of the work or ideas of others as your own. You are expected to know and understand university policy regarding academic misconduct (see <http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity>). Academic misconduct may result in severe penalties, including a zero on the assignment in question, as well as further sanctions from the provost such as censure, suspension, or expulsion.
- 7) All students in this class are expected to sign the Honor Pledge on all assignments (reaction papers, short paper, and exams). The Honor Pledge reads: “*On my honor, I affirm that I have neither given nor received inappropriate aid in the completion of this exercise.*” Please write or type the pledge, and sign it, for every assignment you turn in. Any assignment turned in without the signed pledge will not

be accepted or graded. More information on the Honor Pledge is available at <http://www.ou.edu/honorcouncil/statement.pdf>.

- 8) The University of Oklahoma is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for all students with disabilities. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disability Services prior to receiving accommodations in this course. The Office of Disability Services is located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166, phone 405/325-3852 or TDD only 405/325-4173. Students whose first language is not English should discuss any concerns or needs with me as soon as possible.
- 9) Students who need to miss a class because of a religious holiday, a university-sponsored activity (e.g., a scholarly competition, fine arts performances, an academic field trip) or a legally required activity (e.g., emergency military service, jury duty), should contact me in advance regarding their absence from class.
- 10) If you prefer to use a non-OU address for your e-mail: please either check your OU address regularly, or set your OU address to autoforward mail to your preferred address, so that you can receive important announcements and last-minute information.

Schedule of classes and readings:

All Ellison chapters are from *On Fertile Ground*; everything else will be available on D2L.

Jan 20, 22 - Anthropological Demography

- Hrdy, Sarah B. 1999. Family Planning, Primate Style. Chapter 8 in *Mother Nature: Maternal Instincts and How They Shape the Human Species*, pp. 175-204. New York: Ballantine Books.

Jan 27, 29 - Anthropological Demography II

- Howell, Nancy. 2000. Fertility performance, 1963-1973. Ch. 7 in *Demography of the Dobe !Kung, Second Edition*, pp. 137-151. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Hewlett, Barry S. 1991. Demography and childcare in preindustrial societies. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 47: 1-37.

Feb 2, 5 - Anthropological Demography III

- Eion, Dorothy. 1998. How many children can one man have? *Evolution and Human Behavior* 19(6):413-426.
- Gould, Richard G. 2000. How many children could Moulay Ismail have had? *Evolution and Human Behavior* 21(4):295-296.

Feb 10, 12 - Menarche and Menstruation

- Small, Meredith F. 1999. A woman's curse? *The Sciences* (Jan/Feb): 24-29.
- Strassmann, Beverly I. 1997. The biology of menstruation in *Homo sapiens*: Total lifetime menses, fecundity, and nonsynchrony in a natural-fertility population. *Current Anthropology* 37(1): 123-129.

Feb 17 - Exam #1 (Tuesday)

- Covers all material from 1/20 through 2/12

Feb 19 - Conception and Pregnancy I

- Ellison Ch. 1 (Two births)
- Sievert, Lynnette Leidy, and Catherine A. Dubois. 2005. Validating signals of ovulation: Do women who think they know, really know? *American Journal of Human Biology* 17 (3): 310-320.

Feb 24, 26 - Conception and Pregnancy II

- Ellison Ch. 2 (Surviving the first cut)
- Bainbridge, David. 2000. Breaking the cycle. From *Making Babies: The Science of Pregnancy*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Mar 3, 5 - Conception and Pregnancy III

- Holman, Darryl J., and James W. Wood. 2001. Pregnancy loss and fecundability in women. In: Peter Ellison (ed.) *Reproductive Ecology and Human Evolution*, pp. 15-38. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Mar 10, 12 - Birth

- Ellison Ch. 3 (A time to be born)
- Pike, I.L. 2000. Pregnancy outcome for nomadic Turkana pastoralists of Kenya. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 113: 31-45.

Mar 17, 19 - SPRING BREAK (no class)

- No readings

Mar 24, 26 - Lactation

- Ellison Ch. 4 (The elixir of life)
- Small, Meredith. 1998. Food for thought. Ch. 6 in *Our Babies, Ourselves*, pp. 177-212. New York: Anchor Books.

Mar 31, Apr 02 - Timing of Reproduction

- Ellison Ch. 5 (Why grow up?)
- Gurven, M., and R. Walker. 2006. Energetic demand of multiple dependents and the evolution of slow human growth. *Proceedings of the Royal Society, Series B* 273: 835-841.

Apr 7 - Exam #2 (Tuesday)

- Covers all material from 2/19 through 4/02

Apr 9 - Energetics and Ovarian Function

- Ellison Ch. 6 (Balancing act)

Apr 14, 16 - Energetics and Ovarian Function

- Gibson, M A and Mace, R (2006) An energy-saving development initiative increases birth rate and childhood malnutrition in rural Ethiopia. *PLoS Medicine* 3(4): 476-484.
- **Paper Due Thursday April 16**

Apr 21, 23 - Age and Ovarian Function

- Ellison Ch. 7 (The arc of life)
- Peccei, Jocelyn S. 2001 Menopause: Adaptation or epiphenomenon? *Evolutionary Anthropology* 10 (2): 43-57.

Apr 28, 30 - Male Reproductive Physiology

- Ellison Ch. 8 (The body builders)
- Anderson, Kermyt G. 2006. How well does paternity confidence match actual paternity? Results from worldwide nonpaternity rates. *Current Anthropology* 48(3): 511-518.

May 5, 7 - The end and the beginning

- Ellison Ch. 9 (The journey and the procession)
- Small, Meredith. 1998. Unpacking the care package. Ch. 7 in *Our Babies, Ourselves*, pp. 213-232. New York: Anchor Books.

May 13 - Final Exam (Exam #3)

- 8:00 to 10:00 AM (Wednesday)
- covers all material from 4/9 through 5/7

A note on the timing of the final exam: this schedule is set by the University, and is beyond my power to change. Please do not ask me if you can take the final exam early so you can leave town. The University's policy on such matters is clear (<http://www.ou.edu/bulletins/01catalog/HTML/policies.htm>):

"An examination may be rescheduled for an individual student only in emergencies such as the illness of the student, a serious illness or death in the immediate family or an unavoidable academic conflict of compelling importance. For such a conflict to be considered as grounds for rescheduling a final examination, the activity must be directly related to the student's academic work in the University. Such rescheduling must have the approval of the instructor or instructors concerned, the department chair or chairs concerned, and the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled and should be timed in such a way to avoid compromising the integrity of the examination."