**AHS 2206 Human Evolution**

**Course Objectives:** This course is aimed at conveying an appreciation and understanding of human biological and cultural evolution by identifying the roots of human distinctiveness and the evolutionary selective pressures responsible for the emergence of these traits.

**Course Description**

AHS 206 will introduce students to the study of human evolution-palaeoanthropology, a branch of anthropology that seeks to understand human uniqueness by studying the human past using scientific methods. The course will critically examine the hominid fossil and cultural evidence. Emphasis will be put on reconstruction of human behavior from archaeological and anatomical evidence and on evaluating how scientific theories about human evolution have been built, piece by piece from a variety of sources. The time range covered in this course is from 7 million to 12,000 years ago . The course will be accompanied by periodic excursions to the national museum to examine actual hominid cultural specimens. It is an appropriate course for archaeology, history, and anthropology majors.

**Assessment:** 30% Course Work; 70% Examination

**Course outline**

Topic 1: Who are we and what is Our Place in Nature?

* 1. humanity defined (bipedalism, Large brain size, teeth, culture)
  2. Classification of humankind

Topic 2: Plio-Pleistocene Hominids (5-1 million years ago)

2.1 Climate and hominid evolution

2.2 Sahelanhtropus

2.3 Genus orrorin

2.4 Genus Australopithecus: Adaptive radiation

2.5 Genus kenyanthropus

2.6 Genus Ardipithecus

2.7 Genus Homo: Adaptive radiation of early Homo

Topic 3: Early Tool Use and Manufacture (2.5 million-500K years ago)

3.1 Culture-history: terminology and nomenclature

3.2 Stone tool industrial complexes: Oldowan and Acheulian

3.3 Which hominid species made the early stone tools?

3.4 Raw material procurement

3.5 Techno-typological continuity and change.

Topic 4: inferred Early Hominid Behaviors and Activities

4.1 Osteodontekeratic culture

4.2 Home base/central place model

4.3 Meat eating: hunting versus scavenging

4.4 Food sharing and division of labour

4.5 Use and control of fire

4.6 Language capabilities

Topic 5: Archaic Homo and Peopling of the World (500,000-12K years ago)

5.1 Origins and dispersal of anatomically modern humans

5.2 Subsistence and symbolic behavior and land use patterns

5.3 Evolution and artistic capabilities

5.4 Language capabilities

5.5 Symbolic behaviors: stylized burials, rock art, bodily adornment, etc

Topic 6: MSA and LSA Tool Use and Manufacture

6.1 Culture-history: terminology and nomenclature

6.2 Stone tool industrial complexes: Oldowan and Acheulian

6.3 Raw material procurement

6.4 Techno-typological continuity and change and LSA Tool Use and Manufacture

**Basic readings**

Boyd, R and J. Silk. 1997.  *How Humans Evolved.*  WW Norton and CO

Jones, S et al. 1992. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution.*Cambridge: CambridgeUniversity Press

Klein,R G. 1999. The human Career: *Human Biological and Cultural Origins, 2nd ed.*Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Leakey, M. D. 1971.  *Olduvai Gorge* III.Cambridge: CambridgeUniversity Press

Leakey, M. G et al. 1995.New Four Million Year Hominid Species from Kanapoi and ALlia Bay, Kenya. *Nature vol376: 565-571*

Lewin, R. 1998. *Principles of Human Evolution.* Blackwell Sciences Inc

Tobias, P. V et al 2001 *Humanity from African Naissance to Coming Millenia:*Italy: Firenze University Press.