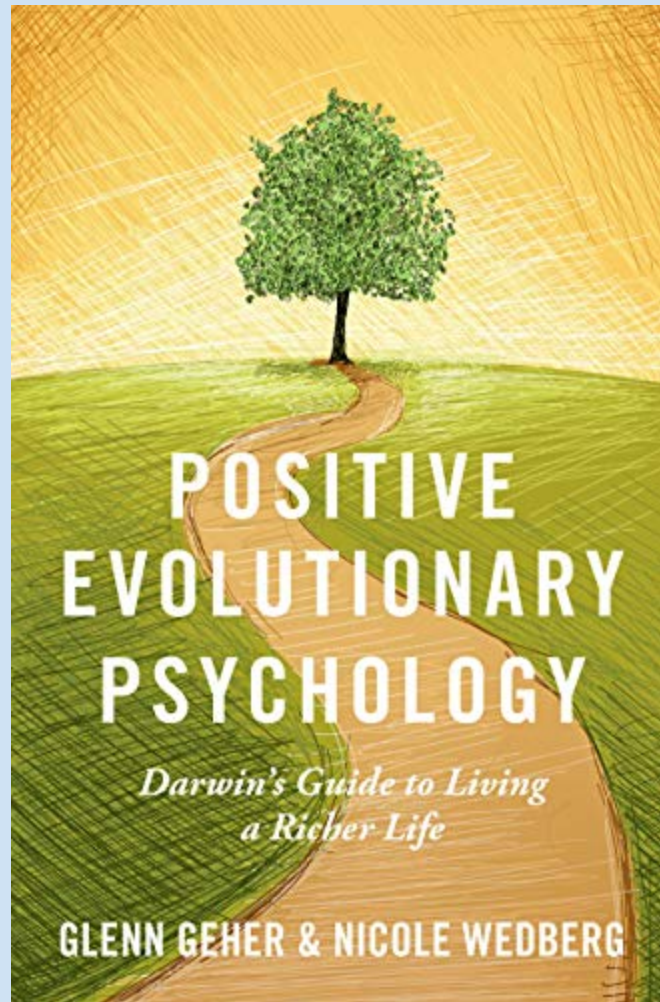


Syllabus
FALL 2020

HON 393: Evolution and the Human Condition



Professor: Glenn Geher

Class Time: Thursdays, 5:00-7:50

Office hours at: glenngeher.com (office is WH 347)

Email: geherg@newpaltz.edu

Phone: 845.257.3091

Course Summary:

This course will be a hands-on, research-based course related to the ways that evolution can help us better understand the human experience. Largely, this course will focus on Positive Evolutionary Psychology, which is an attempt to utilize the conceptual framework and research findings from the field of evolutionary psychology in a way that advances the agenda of positive psychology. Positive Psychology essentially is an approach to psychology that focuses not on where we go wrong but, rather, on what we do right. This approach to psychology works to make people be their best selves by cultivating effective behavioral strategies, facilitating positive emotional experiences, and helping to build and maintain positive communities at all levels of the human experience.

The evolutionary approach to psychology uses Darwin's big ideas on natural selection to help shed light on questions across the human experience. This approach to human behavior sees any class of human behavior in terms of human evolutionary history. By doing so, the evolutionary approach is uniquely positioned in the behavioral sciences to provide explanations of behavior that are large-scale and that are integrated into a coherent and powerful scientific framework (that of evolution).

In this course, you will read a new book related to positive evolutionary psychology as well as chapters from a book focusing on the importance of psychological research. This course will have a research focus, encouraging students to develop and pursue testable hypotheses that are related to the course material. Partly, this course will be run like a research team, with various projects being conducted and with all of us working together to help advance the project (or projects) that emerge from our work.

Thus, this class is designed both to (a) advance your understanding of the ideas that underlie positive evolutionary psychology and (b) cultivate your skills in the domain of behavioral research, ideally leading to actual academic products such as an academic presentation or a published article.

Last time that I taught a course with this structure, all the students got their names on two academic publications and about half the students were invited to present our research findings in January of 2020 at an international conference in Southern California (photo of our group is below!!!)



Shoot big. Always. Life is short. And reincarnation is unlikely.

Readings:

[Geher, G., & Wedberg, N. A. \(2020\). Positive Evolutionary Psychology: Darwin's Guide to Living a Richer Life. New York: Oxford University Press.](#) (available at amazon and other online retailers)

[Geher, G. \(2019\). Own Your Psychology Major! A Guide to Student Success. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.](#) (Chapters 4-9); purchase is optional; chapters will be available via BlackBoard

De Jesus et al. (in press). The four horsemen of the human moral experience. (available via BlackBoard)

Ruel et al. (under review). Why should I help you? A study of betrayal and helping. (available via BlackBoard)

Suggested Blog Posts:

[Geher, G. \(2015\). How to not plagiarize. Psychology Today.](#)

[Geher, G. \(2017\). How to really write a psychology paper. Psychology Today.](#)

[Geher, G. \(2018\). Writing tips. Psychology Today.](#)

[Geher, G. \(2018\). You cheater! Psychology Today.](#)

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the basic principles of evolutionary psychology
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of the basic principles of positive psychology
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of evolutionary psychology / positive psychology interface
- Develop software skills (e.g., SPSS, Qualtrics)
- Develop an understanding of basic areas of research in psychology
- Develop an understanding of basic methodologies used by researchers in this field
- Develop skills related to submitting research to the HREB
- Develop skills related to writing a research proposal
- Develop skills related to developing a hypothesis and operationally defining variables
- Develop skills in analyzing data
- Develop skills in data collection
- Develop skills in presenting results orally and visually
- Develop an understanding of the peer-review process

Assignments/Exams:

1. **Exam #1 (Geher, 2019; Chs. 4-9) (10%)**
2. **Exam #2 (Geher & Wedberg, 2020, Part 1) (10%)**
3. **Exam #3 (Geher & Wedberg, 2020, Part 2) (10%)**
4. **Lead class period (20%; PASS/FAIL);** each student will lead for ~30 minutes of one class period. The point will be to lead a discussion regarding research related to positive evolutionary psychology. The research that you present is totally up to you. It can be a study that you are doing, alone or in collaboration with others, that is complete, in-progress, in the idea stage, etc. It may relate to your thesis. It may relate to the group project that we will be conducting. It can be related to your major or another field of study. **The door is wide open!**
5. **Poster presented at poster session (20%; PASS/FAIL).** This poster (or PowerPoint, or comparable presentation) can take one of many forms as long as it focuses on research related to positive evolutionary psychology. It can focus on (a) the full group project, (b) a subset of the group project, (c) an individual project that you have completed, (d) an individual project that is in-progress, or (e) a proposed new research project. Or perhaps something else that you think of! We will be displaying them virtually during the final exam period.
The posters/presentations will be slated for about 15 minutes and will be given in a remote, WebEx environment during our final exam slot (found in course calendar).
<https://newpaltz.webex.com/meet/geherg>
6. **Written summary of research advances (pass/fail) -** made during the semester (on both the group project and on individual projects). This paper needs to be submitted individually via email (in text or as an attachment; email address is geherg@newpaltz.edu)

This assignment should be conceptualized as something of a progress report. It can be bulleted or narrative. 2-4 pages should be right. You might also envision it as a letter to me (or, better, to my mom). Basically, summarize your contributions to the projects (including your oral and poster presentations) from this semester - and what you learned. **(30%)**

GRADING: Each of the exams and assignments will be graded on a scale of 0-100. The formula for determining your final numerical grade will be as follows:

Exam1*.1+
Exam2*.1+
Exam3*.1+
LeadingClass*.2+
Poster*.2+
Paper*.3

Your final grade will be on a scale from 0 to 100. Final grades will be converted to letter grades using the following criteria:

94 – 100 = A
90 – 93 = A-
87 – 89 = B+
84 – 86 = B
80 – 83 = B-

77 – 79 = C+

74 – 76 = C

70 – 73 = C-

67 – 69 = D+

64 – 66 = D

60 – 63 = D-

Below 60 = F

Calendar

Date	Topic / Reading	Assignment/Exam
8/27	Syllabus / plan for course	
9/3	Research in the behavioral sciences (Geher, 2019; Chs. 4-9) ● Primer on Statistics and Research Methods (using Positive Evolutionary Psychology examples) ○ Significance ○ Effect Size ○ Type I Error ○ Type II Error ○ Power ○ Commonly Used Statistical Processes ■ ANOVA ■ t-tests ■ Correlation ■ Regression ■ Path models ■ Factor Analysis ○ The Abstract vs. Empirical World ○ Hypothesis Generation ○ Operationally Definitions ○ Psychological Measurement ○ Correlational Research ○ Experimental Research ○ Internal Validity ○ External Validity	EXAM 1 (in-class; five minutes): Geher (2019); Chs. 4-9
9/10	Workshop on Presenting Academic Information ● Proposals ○ WRITE PROPOSAL TOGETHER ● Conference Abstracts ● Oral Presentations (academic) ● Poster Presentations ● Academic Article ○ The many joys of the publication process! ● Presenting for general and mixed audiences	
9/17	Geher & Wedberg (2020); Chs. 1-5	EXAM 2: Geher & Wedberg (2020); (in-class; five minutes); Chs. 1-5
9/24	Geher & Wedberg (2020); Chs. 6-11 De Jesus et al. (in press). The four horsemen of the human moral experience.	EXAM 3: Geher & Wedberg (2020); (in-class; five minutes); Chs. 6-11 And De Jesus et al. (in press) AND Ruel et al. (under review)

	Ruel et al. (under review). Why should I help you? A study of betrayal and helping.	
10/1	Hypothesis Generation / Brainstorm	
10/8	Hypothesis Generation / Brainstorm	SPECIAL GUEST: Alex!
10/15	Hypothesis Generation / Brainstorm	
10/22	Student Presentations / Research Advances	Brianna F. Tiana
10/29	Student Presentations / Research Advances	Emma Dayna SPECIAL GUEST: SBK!!!
11/5	Student Presentations / Research Advances	Sam Brianna M. SPECIAL GUEST: Katie!
11/12	Student Presentations / Research Advances	Lauren Dalia
11/19	Research Advances	
11/26	THANKSGIVING -- Be altruistic, be grateful, be reflective. There is grandeur in life.	
11/30 (MON DAY)	OPTIONAL HOURS (5:00-7:50pm) ... I will be available during this slot, remotely, to discuss students papers, projects, and posters. Simply email me during this timeslot (not before, please, as my emails get VERY backlogged) if you are interested in meeting with me herein.	
12/3	Final Exam / Poster sessions (to be held virtually); AND paper is due!	5-7pm -- WebEx link is here: https://newpaltz.webex.com/meet/geherg

Course Policies

1. **Cheating**. DO NOT CHEAT. Any student caught cheating on an exam will automatically fail that exam and, perhaps, the course. In addition, his or her name will be reported to the administration. [Expanded Cheating Policy is here](#).

2. **Plagiarism**. Plagiarism occurs when material is taken from a source without proper citation. If you quote something directly (i.e., if you use another authors EXACT WORDS), you **must** use quotation marks. If you borrow an idea and reword it, you **must** report your source. Any student caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment and, perhaps, the course. In addition, his or her name will be reported to the administration. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.

[My EXPANDED plagiarism policy is here](#) - you are RESPONSIBLE for all of the nuances found in this document.

3. **Missing exams**. A Make-up exam may be given **if** there are extenuating circumstances AND it (the make-up exam) is officially **scheduled before** the scheduled examination. If such circumstances are shown to exist, you may be able to take a make-up exam. Special arrangements will be made as to the time and place of any make-up exams. If a student requests a make-up exam after the scheduled examination, and especially extenuating circumstances (e.g., a serious illness) are demonstrated to exist, scheduling of a make-up exam might be considered.

4. **Late Assignments**.

If you can get through your college career without ever handing in a late paper, you're on the fast-track to success and I want to strongly encourage you to get there. As such, note the following:

A. ABSOLUTELY NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE LAST DAY OF CLASS (NOT THE FINAL EXAM).

B. If you miss giving your oral presentation, you will receive a grade of 0 (unless, perhaps, evidence of some dramatic and conspicuous extenuating circumstances is provided).

C. All assignments that are not accepted will be assigned grades of 0.

5. **Attendance**. All students are strongly encouraged to attend all class meetings. You are a grownup. Interpret this as you will.

6. **SUNY New Paltz's ADA Policy Statement:**

Students with documented physical, learning, psychological and other disabilities are entitled to receive reasonable accommodations. If you need classroom or testing accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (Student Union Building, Room 205, 257-3020). The DRC will provide forms verifying the need for accommodation. As soon as the instructor receives the form, you will be provided with the appropriate accommodations. Students are encouraged to request accommodations as close to the beginning of the semester as possible.

7. **SUNY New Paltz's Academic Integrity Statement:**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work. Cheating, forgery, and plagiarism are serious offenses, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. For definitions of these offenses, as well as the process that a faculty member will follow

if a student is found to be engaging in any form of academic dishonesty, see the section on Academic Integrity in the Advising Handbook, available at www.newpaltz.edu/acadadv.

8. **Course conflicts**. If you have a regular scheduling conflict with this course (e.g., you will have to leave every class before the end of class because of work, you have another course scheduled that overlaps with this course, or you will be going to Rome for 2 weeks during the term) you should **not** take this course.

9. **Your work for this class may NOT be identical to work that you have submitted for another class.**

10. **NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES and TEXTING DURING CLASS IS POTENTIALLY A CAPITAL OFFENSE** ;-) ... (e.g., cellphones, Blackberries, text-messaging devices, Sony Playstations, etc.) may be turned on **during class**. Possible penalties include failing said examination and/or having an academic dishonesty complaint filed against the student in question. Extenuating circumstances will be considered. To discuss such a circumstance, please come to my office hours.

11. All students must complete the CITI training and must create a Qualtrics account. Details on doing so will be sent via email.

As a teacher I feel that my role is to help you learn, not to grade you, so please feel free to come see me or call me throughout the term if you have any concerns or questions. I mean it. Have a great semester.

[Writing tips are linked here.](#)

You are REQUIRED to check all of your written work against this document.