

SUNY New Paltz Syllabus for PSY 498 (Spring 2017); (June 6 - June 23; hybrid class with requirement of fully attending the NEEPS 2017 conference in Binghamton)

Advanced Seminar in Evolutionary Psychology (AKA NEEPS University)

SUNY New Paltz

Professor: **Glenn Geher**

- Office: WH 362
- Office hours: posted at www.glenngeher.com
- Office phone number: 257-3091
- E-mail: geherg@newpaltz.edu

- Web address: <http://www.glenngeher.com>; www.newpaltz.edu/EvoS; www.evostudies.org
- Note: Students must pay the student registration fee for the conference (this fee will be known and posted before May 1; the fee is HALF the price of the student registration fee - \$41.50!; register at: <http://events.eventzilla.net/e/neepe-xi-the-second-decade-2138895272>)
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Required Reading Materials (order of reading demarcated in calendar section):

[Geher, G. \(2014\). Evolutionary Psychology 101. New York: Springer.](#)

[Geher, G. \(Ed., 2014\). The future of evolutionary studies in higher education. Special issue of EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium.](#)

[Carmen, R. A., Geher, G., Glass, D. J., Guitar, A. E., Grandis, T. L., Johnsen, L., Philip, M. M., Newmark, R. L., Trouton, G. T., & Tauber, B. R. \(2013\). Evolution integrated across all islands of the human behavioral archipelago: All psychology as Evolutionary Psychology. EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium, 5\(1\), 108-126.](#)

[Geher, G., Crosier, B., Dillon, H. M., & Chang, R. \(2011\). Evolutionary Psychology's Place in Evolutionary Studies: A Tale of Promise and Challenge. *Evolution: Education & Outreach*, 4, 11-16. Special issue on EvoS Consortium \(R. Chang, G. Geher, J. Waldo, & D. S. Wilson, Eds\).](#)

[Geher, G., Sokol-Chang, R., & Waldo, J. \(2014\). Evolutionary studies in higher education: Interdisciplinarity and student success. *EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium*, 6\(1\), 5-11.](#)

[Glass, D. J., Wilson, D.S., & Geher, G. \(2012\). Evolutionary training in relation to human affairs is sorely lacking in higher education. *EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium*, 4\(2\), 16-22.](#)

[Glass, D. J., Guitar, A. E., & Carmen, R. A. \(2014\). Evolutionary studies from the student perspective. *EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium*, 6\(1\), 12-17.](#)
[Platek, S., Geher, G., Heywood, L., Stapell, H., Porter, R., & Waters, T. \(2011\). Walking the walk to teach the talk: Implementing ancestral lifestyle changes as the newest tool in evolutionary studies. *Evolution: Education & Outreach*, 4, 41-51. Special issue on EvoS Consortium \(R. Chang, G. Geher, J. Waldo, & D. S. Wilson, Eds\).](#)

[Wilson, D. S., Geher, G., & Waldo, J. \(2009\). EvoS: Completing the evolutionary synthesis in higher education. *EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium*, 1, 3-10.](#)

Course Background and Student Learning Objectives:

Since NEEPS (the NorthEastern Evolutionary Psychology Society) started in 2007, on the campus at SUNY New Paltz, this intellectual society has served as a fertile environment for the sharing of ideas related to evolutionary psychology. Now in its 11th year, the society's annual conference regularly draws scholars and students from around the world, and includes world-class keynote speakers, such as Steven Pinker, Helen Fisher, David Buss, among many others. The society also is affiliated with the journal *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*, which is the only evolution-based journal published by the American Psychological Association.

The conference typically extends across four days, including pre-conference meetings of the Feminist Evolutionary Psychology Society and the Applied Evolutionary Psychology Society. This class requires that students become completely immersed in the NEEPS experience. This conference typically includes between 30-50 oral presentations along with about 30-50 poster presentations. Several opportunities to directly interact with scholars and students from across the globe are regularly provided at the conference in the form of breaks, receptions, outings, etc.

This class is designed to take advantage of the educational opportunities that surround NEEPS by providing a graduate-level intensive education in evolutionary psychology from some of the

top researchers in the field (along with a variety of bright up-and-comers). Students in this class will engage in advanced readings on the topic of evolutionary psychology, attend all elements of the conference in full, engage in BlackBoard discussions about the content in the weeks before and after the class, and write a paper that integrates content from multiple presentations from the conference.

The field of evolutionary psychology is broad, and content will include such topics as:

- The psychology of altruism
 - The psychology of aggression
 - The psychology of short-term mating
 - The psychology of long-term mating
 - Applications of evolutionary psychology to education
 - Applications of evolutionary psychology to health
 - The biological / cultural connection
 - And more!
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- Full program information from past NEEPS conferences can be found on the NEEPS website, www.neepsociety.org

Specific Student Learning Outcomes will include the following:

- Demonstrate a strong understanding of natural selection and other evolutionary forces
- Articulate the ways that evolutionary forces interface with behavior
- Demonstrate knowledge of key findings regarding the evolutionary psychology of mating
- Demonstrate knowledge of key findings regarding the applied evolutionary psychology
- Acquire skills needed to engage in high-level intellectual conversations with scholars and students from around the world
- Hone one's ability to write in a way that integrates ideas from a variety of studies.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Posting of Content-Oriented BlackBoard Comments Regarding Each Guest Speaker (UNGRADED – **25% of final grade**; 5 forums will be set up; postings in each will count for 5% of final grade).

These forums will be based on subsets of the required reading. For full credit, each student must post at least two content-oriented postings in each forum within the specified time period. The postings should relate to specific content from the specified readings - and students are encouraged to engage in dialog with other students as part of their postings. Your comments need to be content-oriented (e.g., I'm curious about the physiological mechanisms that underlie our tendency to derogate rivals in online contexts - this relates to Mandy Guitart's research described in that paper by Carmen et al. (2013)) ... If your comments are deemed as not content oriented you will not receive credit.

2. Attendance at full conference (35%). Given the nature of this class, attendance at the full event is critical. Attendance sheets will exist at each event within the conference. A deduction of 5% will be imposed for any student who misses any event. The specific schedule of events will be posted by May 1 at the latest. If you cannot attend the conference in full, you should not sign up for this class.

3 and 4. Integrative paper / research proposal (DRAFT, 10% (100 or 0); Paper, 30%; graded). The main assignment for this class will be to write a summary paper on a topic that you found of interest at the conference. You will need to determine the topic yourself - and find at least three presentations (oral and/or poster) that connect along the theme that you choose. For instance, you might find three presentations on the topic of “the dark triad of personality” and write a paper that connects the studies described in that presentation. Your paper will ultimately be a research proposal, describing a study that you would like to conduct on the heels of the NEEPS presentations that you describe. The paper should be between 10-15 pages (APA format) and should include the following sections:

- Title page
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Hypotheses
- Method
- Anticipated Results

You will write a draft and receive feedback - and then submit a final version of the paper.

• Final grade =

(BlackBoard Comments for Forum#1 * .05) +
(BlackBoard Comments for Forum#2 * .05) +
(BlackBoard Comments for Forum#3 * .05) +
(BlackBoard Comments for Forum#4 * .05) +
(BlackBoard Comments for Forum#5 * .05) +

(Attendance * .35) +
(Draft * .10)+

(Paper * .30).

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/Activity	Readings / Activities	Due
June 7 - 13	Getting caught up on Evolutionary Psychology	All the required reading from this syllabus (above)	BlackBoard discussion postings for all five discussion forums (all are due before midnight of 7-13)
June 14-18	NEEPS!	Attend full conference including FEPS and AEPS pre-meetings and receptions, banquet, etc.	
Jun 19-23	You choose the topic based on what research area inspired you during NEEPS!		DRAFT (due prior to midnight of June 23); feedback will be provided by about June 26.
June 30			FINAL PAPER (due prior to midnight of June 30)

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. This stuff gets ugly quickly.
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 FORMAL STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM IS FOUND [HERE](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/darwins-subterranean-world/201512/how-not-plagiarize):

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/darwins-subterranean-world/201512/how-not-plagiarize>

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:

The BlackBoard posts regarding readings will not be accepted late - nor will the main paper
All assignments that are not accepted will be assigned grades of 0.

5. **Attendance**. Attendance is required and a student will lose 5% off the final grade for any element of NEEPS that he or she does not attend. Elements will be defined at the start of the conference and signup sheets will be carefully administered throughout. No exceptions will be made.

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 paper for this class may NOT be based on a paper you have written for another class.**

10. **NO ELECTRONIC DEVICES** (e.g., cellphones, Blackberries, text-messaging devices, laptops, Sony Playstations, etc.) may be turned on **in class or during an examination unless a written agreement is made with the instructor ahead of time.** Possible penalties for breaching this policy during an exam include failing said examination and/or having an academic dishonesty complaint filed against the student in question. **And remember, texting is evil! ...** 😊

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.

Glenn's Writing Tips

No papers with an abundance of the following errors will receive a grade of an 'A.'

1. USUALLY *affect* is a verb and *effect* is a noun.

e.g., This variable *affects* several things.

e.g., That other variable produced a very large *effect*.

2. If the subject of your sentence is singular, the verb and subsequent pronouns referring to the subject must be also.

e.g., The participant then provided HIS OR HER (NOT "THEIR") background information.

e.g., The point of these studies WAS (NOT "WERE") blah, blah, blah ... (*point* is singular).

3. NEVER use the word "PROVE" in a psychology article. While psychologists do many things, proving is virtually never one of them.

INCORRECT: These results prove that Schmedley's hypothesis was correct.

BETTER: These results support Schmedley's hypothesis.

BETTER STILL: These results support the hypothesis that Schmedley should change his name ... just kidding.

4. BE SUCCINCT. Do not use a lot of words to make a point if you can make the same point with fewer words. If two papers make the same points, the one with fewer words is, by my definition, better.

BAD: Asch's research on conformity is very interesting because it includes interesting research and has important ideas that are very meaningful.

BETTER: Asch's research on conformity is interesting for several reasons.

5. AVOID 1st person and, *especially*, opinions (unless they are asked for).

BAD: I am writing a paper on conformity. In this paper, I will talk about how social psychologists have studied conformity and why I am so interested in this interesting topic.

BETTER: This paper will address conformity as it has been studied in social psychology.

6. DO NOT USE CONTRACTIONS:

BAD: Subjects were asked if they'd administer an electric shock.

BETTER: Subjects were asked if they would administer an electric shock.

7. *It's* means *it is* (but you should not be using contractions anyway).

Its is a possessive pronoun referring to a noun that possesses something.

e.g., The frog grabbed the fly with its tongue. (here *its* means *the frog's*)

8. Punctuation marks go INSIDE quotation marks (when at the end of the sentence).

BAD: Then the experimenter said, "Oh Boy".

BETTER: Then the experimenter said, "Oh Boy."

BETTER STILL: Then the experimenter said, "Golly!"

9. Always follow the word "this" with a specific noun. Otherwise, your writing will be unclear.

BAD: Changes will be made at all levels of management. The impact of this will be enormous.
BETTER: Changes will be made at all levels of management. The impact of this restructuring will be enormous.

10. i.e., means “in other words.” e.g., means “for example.”

e.g., These people are thought to be cerebral in nature (i.e., they tend to think a lot).

e.g., Their diet includes several kinds of flowers (e.g., roses).

11. Here are some helpful word substitutions for you:

Change

looked at	to	examined
got	to	obtained
did	to	conducted

12. Only use the word “correlation” if you are referring to a specific relationship between two different variables. Do not just throw this word around because it sounds good.

GOOD: A positive correlation was observed between number of hamburgers eaten and the size of one’s bellyache.

BAD: A correlation between these different ideas can be found. (This sentence simply does not mean anything).

13. AVOID turn-of-phrase plagiarism! Paraphrasing ideas of others is not the same as rewriting all of their sentences with substituted words or structural changes. For instance, suppose that you find an article that says the following: “The stimulus in this study was very large and the environment was highly controlled.” It would be totally plagiarizing if you changed this to either:

- “The stimulus in this research was enormous and the context was highly stabilized.” or
- “In this study, the environment was highly controlled and the stimulus in this study was very large.”

In paraphrasing, you need to look AWAY from what you have read when you write your summary - and describe the ideas as you would as if you were describing them to a lay person. That’s best writing - and will help you avoid getting called out on plagiarism.

14. Compound adjectives are clusters of words that, in combination, describe some noun. Unless the first word in the cluster is an adverb ending in “ly” (random rule), the words in the cluster need to be hyphenated to make it clear that they act as a unit. For instance:

Change: The student was well read.

to

The student was well-read. (here, *well* and *read* work together to make a single adjective)

Change: The tip of the tongue phenomenon is really cool.

to

The tip-of-the-tongue phenomenon is really cool (here *tip* and *of* and *the* and *tongue* work together to make a single adjective)