Intro to Physical Anthropology

Week 1
Course website

https://creason.co/

Very important for this class
- Syllabus
- Assignment instructions
- Sample essays, tests, and questions
- Study guides
Summary

1. Startup discussion

2. Survey of anthropology in general

3. Survey of physical anthropology in particular

4. Science, explanation, and anthropology
Do the topics covered make sense?

Task:
1. Re-group and everyone take turns explaining the following concepts discussed last time.

   - What are hominins?
   - What's a brief description of evolution?
   - What is culture and how does it relate to our behavior and biology?

2. Pick the concept everyone in the group had difficulty explaining
Introduction: What is anthropology?

**Anthropology**: seeks to explain variation in human adaptations

**Physical anthropology**: seeks to explain the relationship between human behavior and biology
Subfields of anthropology

*Cultural anthropology:* studies the patterns of behavior and belief observed in modern and historical cultures

- compiles *ethnographies* (detailed descriptive studies of human societies)

*Linguistic anthropology:* studies the relationship between speech and language and different aspects of culture

E.g., the role of symbols in society, identity, cultural behavior and ideologies, etc.

-language use is uniquely human
Subfields of anthropology

*Archaeology:* studies earlier cultures through the scientific recovery and interpretation of material remains left by past societies.

-looks at **artifacts** (objects or material made or modified for use by hominins)
Physical anthropology

- studies human behavior and biology within an **evolutionary framework**
- emphasizes the relationship between biology and culture.

- aims to explain **human variation**
Subfields of physical anthropology

*Paleoanthropology:* study of earlier hominids, their chronology, physical structure, archaeological remains, habitats, etc.

Molecular anthropology: studies evolutionary relationships between human and nonhuman primates

-uses cutting-edge technology, genetic technology
Subfields of physical anthropology

*Paleoanthropology:* study of earlier hominids, their chronology, physical structure, archaeological remains, habitats, etc.

**Osteology:** study of human skeletal material focusing on the interpretation of bone physiology, growth, and development
Subfields of physical anthropology

Paleopathology: studies the evidence of disease and injury in human skeletal remains

- looks at the prevalence of trauma, infectious diseases, nutritional deficiencies, etc

- any of these things that may leave evidence in bones and teeth

Bioarchaeology: study of human skeletal remains in their archaeological context
Physical Anthropology subfields

- Forensic anthropology: applying anthro to legal issues

(example of applied anthropology)
Physical Anthropology subfields

- **Applied anthropology**: practical application of anthropological and archaeological theories and techniques
Subfields of physical anthropology

**Primatology:** study of the biology and behavior of nonhuman primates
The anthropological perspective

"A broad perspective that helps us understand the diversity of the human experience within the context of biological and behavioral continuity with other species"
Scientific thinking

Science: a body of knowledge gained through observation and experimentation

Hypothesis

Testability/predictions

Theory

Scientific method