



Evolutionary Psychology

Center for European Studies

Evolutionary Psychology

Full course description

In this course, we will explore the ultimate influences on human mind and behaviour, that is, we take an evolutionary psychological perspective to study (modern) cognition, emotion, motivation, and behaviour. We will revisit familiar disciplines— e.g., cognitive, clinical, and social psychology – and topics, however, the type of questions we ask to uncover psychological mechanisms and processes is different. Evolutionary psychologists focus on the ‘why’ question, and the adaptive functions of modern-day cognition, emotion, and behaviour. Topics will range from psychopathology to human mating and sexual conflict, and from parenting and kin selection to aggression. During the discussion of these topics, prominent assumptions – and misunderstandings – about evolutionary psychology will also be critically assessed.

Course objectives

After this course, students:

- understand how an ultimate explanation (‘why?’) of human psychology differs from and provides added value to proximate explanations (‘how?’)
 - be capable of identifying and explaining the adaptive functions and evolved mechanisms of modern human cognition, emotion, and behaviour
 - demonstrate an understanding of evolution by natural and sexual selection
 - critically assess the validity of evolutionary explanations for psychological systems
 - organize the theoretical knowledge obtained in the course and formulate research questions and hypotheses
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Prerequisites

Have a solid introduction to Psychology.

Recommended reading

Main text: Workman, L., & Reader, W. (2021). Evolutionary psychology: An introduction. Cambridge University Press

Additional literature: scientific articles (t.b.a.)

EVO2001

Period 6

26 Jun 2024 - 12 Jul 2024

ECTS credits:

6.0

Instruction language:

English

Coordinators:

[S. van der Laan](#)

Dr. Karlijn Massar

Teaching methods:

Assignment(s), Lecture(s), PBL, Working visit(s)

Assessment methods:

Participation, Written exam

Keywords:

Evolutionary Psychology; ultimate explanations; adaptive; cognition, emotion, behaviour; social, cognitive, clinical psychology; natural and sexual selection.