

Preface

Do your students struggle with complex concepts like genetics and evolution? Do they have difficulty seeing the relevance of biological anthropology to their lives? If so, I have written this text for you.

How this book will help you . . .

I am a firm believer in the incredible importance of anthropology in our everyday lives. Yet, in speaking with colleagues around the country and reading McGraw-Hill's research, I've learned that instructors' greatest frustrations in teaching introductory biological anthropology are helping students understand certain key concepts (i.e., genetics, evolution) and—perhaps even more importantly—making them see the relevance of this course material to their lives.

. . . by helping your students

Biological anthropology classes are packed with information that is directly relevant to all of us and should be both interesting and exciting. Biological anthropologists are making exciting discoveries that change the way we view ourselves today, our understanding of our past, and our future as a species. Yet students often walk away from their textbooks with no understanding of how the information they have just read applies to their lives. That's why, in this book, I've introduced the theme of "Connections."

. . . connect the concepts to their lives

This text directly speaks to students and relates the concepts of biological anthropology to their lives. It does so in several ways:

Connections boxes

Several times in each Chapter, I include a "Connections" feature that directly shows students the relevance of the particular topic being discussed to them and their everyday lives. For example, in Chapter 5, we explore whether male aggression is an evolutionary trait; in Chapter 7, why bipedality made childbirth more difficult; and in Chapter 9, why humans feel a special connection to dogs.

Chapter-opening stories

In addition, each chapter begins with an example, taken from the headlines, of an important question biological anthropologists have asked or answered: How do steroids affect athletes (Chapter 2)? What do discoveries about primate culture tell us about what makes humans unique (Chapter 8)? What is race and what is it not? (Chapter 10)?

Connecting students to related information

Callouts in the margin show students other places in the text a topic is covered, allowing the student either to review material that they have already studied or read more about a topic that interests them.

Understanding key concepts

By focusing on the key concepts and presenting them in a straightforward manner, this text encourages students to think about, assess, and use the information presented, not just memorize it and recite it back on a test. Several aspects of this text are designed to help students deal with challenging concepts:

- **The Introduction**, set up as a series of FAQs (“How old is the planet?” “Have humans changed over time?” “Where does modern science come from?”) presents background information students need but do not always have access to.
- **Chapter 2: Basics of Human Biology** contains a review of human anatomy and biology, a chapter unique among introductory texts but extremely important to students’ understanding of human evolution and variation.
- **Key terms**, defined in the margin where they are introduced, help students with new vocabulary and provide an easy review for exams.

The importance of critical thinking and the scientific process

To understand science, students must understand how scientists develop new knowledge, how new knowledge is determined to be valid, and what remains to be discovered. They need to understand how biological anthropologists “do” science. This is a key concern of this book.

- **Scientific Discovery.** The Introduction and early chapters focus on the process of discovery—not just what we know, but how we know it. I explore how scientific discovery builds on earlier knowledge. So, for example, I don’t just tell the student about Darwin’s theory of natural selection; I explain how Darwin built on earlier knowledge to form a unified and cohesive explanation for how life evolved.
- In addition, at the end of each chapter, students find a unique critical-thinking feature, **What We Know/Questions That Remain**. This feature summarizes key knowledge presented in the chapter and highlights the most important questions that remain to be answered. It will help students see that science is an ongoing process and that our current state of knowledge is subject to change. Most importantly, it demonstrates the exciting nature of ongoing research in biological anthropology.
- **Critical Thinking Questions** at the end of each chapter ask the student to analyze and synthesize material rather than just memorize it.
- **Focus on humanity’s place in the natural world.** As a biological anthropologist and primatologist, I focus on humans as a part of the primate order. My goal is to give students a wide perspective on what it means to be human and to help them think critically about important issues that face all of humanity. Chapter 5 discusses human behavioral ecology in the context of primate behavior. Chapters 7 through 9 present an overview of human evolution in the context of the evolution of the entire primate order. Chapter 11 explains that humans are still evolving and speculates on what this means for global ecology.

How is this book organized?

This book is organized into an Introduction and 11 chapters.

- The Introduction, as described above, presents crucial background information set up as an engaging series of FAQs.
- Chapters 1 through 4 introduce students to the field of anthropology, the science of biological anthropology, Darwinian evolution, human biology, and contemporary evolutionary theory via the extended evolutionary synthesis.
- Chapter 5 is a uniquely fascinating introduction to primate behavioral ecology, written from the point of view of a working primatologist.
- Chapters 6 through 9 survey human evolution from the earliest mammals through *Homo sapiens*.
- Chapter 10 surveys human variation and tackles the complex yet critically important topics of race and racism.
- Chapter 11 puts it all together by speculating on how humans are continuing to evolve.

Biological anthropology is a dynamic, fast-changing field, and its discoveries about genetics, human evolution, and human variation are vitally relevant to students' lives. I hope that students reading this book will come to understand the relevance of these concepts and become as excited to learn about biological anthropology as I am to teach it.

Supplements

The 3rd edition of Biological Anthropology: Concepts and Connections, is now available online with Connect, McGraw-Hill Education's integrated assignment and assessment platform. Connect also offers SmartBook for the new edition, which is the first adaptive reading experience proven to improve grades and help students study more effectively. All of the title's website and ancillary content is also available through Connect, including:

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