Important Notes re COVID-19:

1. In the event you or someone you have recently been in close contact with have ANY symptoms that could possibly be due to COVID-19 (e.g. cough, fever/chills, excessive fatigue, shortness of breath, muscle aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, or diarrhea)

    • Do NOT come in person to class. Participate via Zoom if you are able. The class is designed to accommodate your online participation, so do not hesitate to do so for the health of your classmates and your instructor. You will not be penalized for attending online.

    • If you are not able to participate via Zoom, you will not be required to provide formal documentation from a health provider and will not be penalized for your absence. However, you must stay in communication with me. You are on your honor for reporting reasons for your absence truthfully. Falsely reporting a reason for an absence is an honor code violation.

    • Register your symptoms, via the university’s daily health screening email, and also via the COVIDWISE app: https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covidwise/. Be sure to then contact the Student Health Center.

2. Properly wear a mask at all times on your way to class and in the classroom

3. Stick to your assigned seating - name tents will indicate where you sit on our first day
**Course Description:**
In this course, we will study how biological and cultural evolution broadly shaped human societies. Through theory and case studies drawn from primatology, cultural anthropology, psychology, and other disciplines, students will investigate why leadership and political organization vary across human and non-human societies. Some of the specific questions we consider include: Why do animals adopt leader and follower roles at all? What is the political organization of other social animals, particularly other great apes? How does reproductive biology influence political organization? Are there any human societies that lack leadership? Are there societies in which, on average, women wield more power than men? Why are some human societies more hierarchical than others? The goal of the course is not only to expose students to the diversity of political organization in humans and other animals but also to stimulate them to think critically about the ultimate causes of human social behavior in general.

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**Course Format:**
The readings for this course consist of a mix of research articles and more popular journal articles or opinion pieces. All of the readings will be available through BlackBoard. In addition, two books are assigned for this course:


**BEFORE the beginning of each class, you must also complete a quiz (on Blackboard)** on the readings assigned for that class day. During lectures, I strongly encourage you to comment, ask a question, or provoke discussion at any time. After each class, the lecture slides will be available on Blackboard as a powerpoint file. All class sessions will be accessible via Zoom (see link above) in event you can’t attend class in person (due to illness, quarantine, or other reasons) or we must shift entirely to an online format.

To facilitate occasional small-group activities, **please bring a fully charged laptop to every class.**

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**How you will be graded:**

1. **Discussion (15% of grade)**

   Your discussion grade will depend on you (a) attending classes whether in-person or whether you participate online. **Do not attend in-person if you are ill or suspect exposure to COVID-19.** If you are ill and feel unable to participate online, you will not be penalized for missing class, so long as you communicate the reason for your absence with me. Your
discussion grade will also depend on you (b) occasionally asking questions during class and (c) actively participating in group discussions or debates.

2. Quizzes (15% of grade)

By 2:30pm of each class day, you will take a short quiz (on Blackboard) on the readings assigned for that class day. Quizzes are open-book and can be completed with the assistance of other students. Quizzes become available online at the end of the previous class. The quizzes will consist of multiple choice or short answer questions. At the end of the semester, you may drop your 4 lowest quiz grades. Missed quizzes (for any reason) count towards the 3 you may drop.

3. Midterm Exam (25% of grade)

The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions having you compare and contrast positions taken by authors we’ve read and material presented in lecture. The midterm exam will be taken in the classroom on your computers (on Blackboard) at the scheduled time (see Class Schedule).

4. Final Paper (20% of grade)

Throughout the second half of the course, you will research the political organization of a particular human society, in collaboration with a partner. In the final paper, you will defend a thesis that explains why the society is organized the way it is, in particular why the society’s leadership is structured the way it is. The thesis should be built upon theory we’ve discussed in class, and defended with your research on the characteristics of your society. These characteristics may include the society’s food production system, size and density of its settlements, marriage and inheritance systems, technology, religion, extent of warfare, and/or trade. You may focus on one of these characteristics, or assess the relative effects of several of them.

The paper should be at least 7 pages of text (1-inch margins, double spaced, 12-point font), structured into three sections: (1) Introduction, in which you present your thesis; (2) body sections organized under specific headings, in which you defend your thesis with literature from class and from your own research (minimum 2 sources that aren’t from the reading list); (3) Conclusion, in which you restate your thesis and situate it within the broader context of the course. In addition, include an alphabetized list of References, in which you provide the bibliographic information for the articles you cite. Wikipedia and non-scholarly websites are not valid bibliographic sources for papers written in this class, though they can be helpful in directing you towards the primary research that you can cite. To access journal articles or other resources online, you can make use of UR’s library subscriptions. If you are off campus, you can do this by logging into the university’s VPN: (https://spidertechnet.richmond.edu/TDClient/1955/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=93543).
It is important that your paper not read like an encyclopedia entry. I will grade the paper according to the following criteria: (1) clear and interesting thesis; (2) sustained and well-organized defense of the thesis; (3) unambiguous writing; (4) incorporation of class readings and own research; (5) accurate use and proper citing of sources. In-text citations and the reference list should be in APA format: [https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide](https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide).

You are required to submit a tentative thesis statement on Blackboard by the class session on April 12th.

5. Final Exam (25% of grade)

The final exam will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions having you compare and contrast positions taken by authors we’ve read and material presented in lecture. The final exam is cumulative, but will emphasize material from after the midterm exam. The final exam will be taken in the classroom on your computers (on Blackboard) at the scheduled time (see Class Schedule).

Notes:

1. To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities. [registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html](registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html)

2. Students should notify me within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance. [registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html](registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html)

3. Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact me as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams. [disability.richmond.edu](disability.richmond.edu)

4. If the final paper is turned in late, it will be docked 10 percentage points for each day late. I will waive the late penalty only under exceptional circumstances, e.g. a major illness, or a family emergency. The same requirements apply for rescheduling the exams.

5. Students should be aware of University policies on plagiarism. Plagiarism in any form can result in failing the class or even expulsion. See the following link for advice on avoiding plagiarism. [http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/english/plagiarism.html](http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/english/plagiarism.html)

6. When writing your final paper and when studying for and taking quizzes/exam, be aware of the provisions of the Honor System: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.” [studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html](studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html)
Campus Resources:

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

**Academic Skills Center** ([asc.richmond.edu](http://asc.richmond.edu)): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement. Tutors will be available virtually. The on-call peer-tutors available for these appointments are listed in the Box file: [On-Call Online Tutors](https://richmond.box.com/s/dpe37chr2zodr3o1amtj8omjk72v2ktb). Email Roger Mancastroppa ([rmancast@richmond.edu](mailto:rmancast@richmond.edu)) and Hope Walton ([hwalton@richmond.edu](mailto:hwalton@richmond.edu)) for appointments in academic and life skills to request a Zoom conference.

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians**: ([library.richmond.edu/help/ask/](http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/) or 289-8876): Research librarians help students with all steps of their research, from identifying or narrowing a topic, to locating, accessing, evaluating, and citing information resources. Librarians support students in their classes across the curriculum and provide library instruction, tutorials, research guides, and individual help. All research support will be provided online or by appointment and students can contact a librarian for help via email ([library@richmond.edu](mailto:library@richmond.edu)), text (804-277-9ASK), chat, or Zoom (by appointment).

**Career Services**: ([careerservices.richmond.edu](http://careerservices.richmond.edu) or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** ([caps.richmond.edu](http://caps.richmond.edu) or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include brief consultations, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, skills-building classes, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

**Disability Services** ([disability.richmond.edu](http://disability.richmond.edu)) The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable students to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let your professors know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

**Speech Center** ([speech.richmond.edu](http://speech.richmond.edu) or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and
group presentations. Remote practice sessions can be arranged; we look forward to meeting your public speaking needs.

**Writing Center** ([writing.richmond.edu](http://writing.richmond.edu) or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

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**Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

**Jan 20**

**Introductions**

**Jan 25**

**Do Humans Have a ‘Nature’?**

- Boyer, Introduction

**Jan 27**

**Group Conflict**

- Boyer, Chapter 1, pp. 33-51.
- In-Class Debate: the Trump presidency was a move towards fascism

**Feb 1**

**Group Conflict (continued)**

- Boyer, Chapter 1, pp. 52-65.

**Feb 3**

**Gender and Family**

- Boyer, Chapter 4, pp. 125-149.

**Feb 8**

**Gender and Competition**


Feb 10  
**Patriarchy**

• Boyer, Chapter 4, pp. 150-162.
• In-Class Debate: to solve our problems, we need matriarchy

Feb 15  
**In-Class Game**

Feb 17  
**Cooperation**

• Boyer, Chapter 5, pp. 163-189

Feb 22  
**Leadership**


Feb 24  
**Cooperation revisited: guest lecture by Dr. Coren Apicella**


Mar 1  
**Multi-Level Human Societies**


Mar 3  
**Multi-Level Human Societies (continued)**


Mar 8  
**Egalitarian Societies**


Mar 10  
**Tribal Societies**

Mar 15  **MIDTERM EXAM**

Mar 17  **In-Class Film: Ongka’s Big Moka**

Mar 22  **Explaining Transitions to More Centralized Leadership**


Mar 24  **Inequality Doesn’t Require Agriculture**


Mar 29  **Cultural Group Selection**

• Turchin, Chapters 1 and 4.

Mar 31  **Cultural Evolution of States**

• Turchin, Chapter 6.

Apr 5  **Cultural Evolution of States (continued)**

• Turchin, Chapters 7 and 8.

Apr 7  **NO CLASS**


Apr 12  **Religion**

• Turchin, Chapter 9.
• Tentative final paper thesis due (on Blackboard)

Apr 14  **Origins of Democracy**

Apr 19  Politics and Protest
• Boyer, Chapter 6.

Apr 21  Democracy’s Future
• In-Class Debate: democracy is an endangered species

Apr 26  Review for FINAL EXAM

Apr 26  FINAL PAPER due (by 5pm, on Blackboard)

Apr 29  FINAL EXAM (9-12pm, on Blackboard)