



MODULE DESCRIPTION

Module title	Code
Tribal Minds, Global Systems: the Origins and Limits of Human Evolution	

Teacher(s)	Unit
Co-ordinating: Prof. Victor de Munck Other(s):	Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies

Cycle of studies	Level of module	Type of module
1st cycle		Elective

Mode of implementation	Period of instruction	Language(s) of instruction
Lectures	1 semester	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: none	Additional requirements (if any): none

Module volume in credits	Total student workload	Contact hours	Independent study hours
5	133	32	101

Aim of module: competences developed by the study programme
<p>Biological, cultural and technological forces of change proceed at different rates, scales, and with different aims. In this course we will focus on the dynamics of their interactions and the residual effects or consequences of those actions on the lives of individuals, local communities and cultures and the relations between societies in the global system. The main question that guides the learning outcomes for this class are to be able to intelligently and with prehistorical historical and contemporary evidence show how the relationship between the three vectors of change—biological evolution, technological evolution, and increasing scale of human societies for foragers to multinational, global social system has changed and what these changes imply for the present and future trajectories of humankind.</p> <p>In the first third of the course we will focus on small scale societies—from our inception as Great Apes to Homo erectus to Cro-Magnon, Neanderthals and modern Homo Sapiens The focus will be the development of cooperative social bands, kinship organization, language, material innovations, and the development of a modular mind and the cultural and social systems related to foraging societies.</p> <p>The second third part of the course focuses on the emergence and development of the pastoral societies, chiefdoms and the emergence of the state largely in terms of ever greater capacities to harness energy and establish tribal territories with diverse social, economic and political systems.</p>

The third and final part focuses on the start of the industrial age to the present and the development from relatively independent chiefdoms and emerging states, to large nation states and global systems of material and symbolic trade

The course will mainly be based on ethnographical accounts of cultures at different levels of scale and will seek to follow trajectories of change and continuities over time and place. We will be particularly focussed on the feedback loops between our inherent bio-cognitive make-up, the socio-cultural systems we produce and our technology advances.

We will use three books for this class: a classic *From Forest to Hierarchy* by Boehm; *Wired for Culture* by Pagel, and *Ultra-Society* by Peter Turchin. Students will acquire both humanistic and scientific understanding of four very different societies in terms of scale and be impressed, I think by our findings. This class is an avatar or more modern and integrative update of the original course called Transcultural Ethnographies. That course used four distinct ethnographies to create a tapestry of different cultural practices and patterns. In this course the focus is more on the integration of the different prehistorical and historical forces as they led to different forms of social organization, cultural systems despite as they integrated with our basic biological heritage as Homo sapiens.

Learning outcomes of the module	Study methods	Assessment methods
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gain a more complex understanding of the concept of culture and how cultures are affected by social scale. 2. Develop a broad overview of different non-Western and Western cultures around the world and how they can be compared and contrasted culturally. 3. Discuss the effect of technological on our social and cultural systems. 4. Understand a cultural material approach to cultural processes. 5. Analyze the nature of social control and the law in egalitarian and stratified societies. 6. Compare gender roles in various societies as they change depending on technology and socio-cultural organization of society 7. Understand how the three modes of change—biological, technological and socio-cultural interact with each other 	<p>Readings from three books and a few articles; class discussions, two group projects that will be completed in a one hour in class period. Not all the assigned articles will be required reading for each day. Some will be only scan-read and I will lecture on them.</p>	<p>30% group project 20% quizzes on readings 50% Final test</p>

Topics	Contact hours							Independent study time and assignments	
	Lectures	Consultations	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Partic	Total contact hours	Independent work	Assignments
1. INTRODUCTION TO COURSE	2						2		
2 The Emergence of Culture	2						2	6	Read: Boyd: "culture the engine of the human society" De Munck "the Emergence of Culture"
3. Chimpanzees and culture	2						2	6	Pagel The Occupation of the world Boehm Chapter 1 "the question of egalitarian society."
4. Emergence of Hierarchy	2						2	6	Boehm : Chapter 2: Hierarchy and Equality Chapter 2
5. Aggression and Conflict	2						2	6	Read: Boehm, Chapters 3 and a piece by Briggs on Inuit
6. Actuarial thinking and how to put down "Free Riders"—the Forerunners to Dictators	2						2	6	Boehm chapters 4 and 5.

7. Wired For Culture	2						2	6	Page1 Chapter 2: Ultra-society and the Cultural survival vehicle; Chapter 3= religion and other cultural enhancers
8. Cooperation and our Human Nature	2						2	6	Page1 chapters 5 & 6 Reciprocity and the shadow of our future. Greenbeards
9. Hostile Forces	2						2	6	Page1 Chapter 7: conflict
10. The Theatre of the Mind	2						2	6	Chapter 6 & 7 Language=“the voice of our genes?” and Deception consciousness and Truth.
11. Ultrasociety: How 10,000 Years of War Made Humans the Greatest Cooperators on Earth	2							6	Pter Turchin: Ultra Society chapters 1 and 2 on Destructive Creation
12. God Made Men but Sam Colt made them Equal	2						2	6	Turchin:Chapter 5: Technology of War in human history
13. War	2							6	Turching: chapter 6 and 7 The Human ways of war

14. God-Kings and Oligarchy	2						2	6	Turchin chapter 8: The Iron Law of Oligarchy
15. The Pivot of History	2						2	6	Turchin chapter 9. the spiritual awakening during Axial Age
16. Indifference to difference & Review	2						2	6	Review for Test
Preparations for group projects and final exam								11	
Total	32						32	10	1

Assessment strategy	Weight, %	Assessment time	Assessment criteria
Quizzes	30	During semester	True/False; One word; Multiple choice quizzes will be given randomly on one of the readings during 8 class periods; only the top 6 will count towards your grade; each will be worth 5 points. They will be simple questions the test whether or not you read the material.
Group projects	30	During semester	Students will have to prepare two group projects. During weeks 4 – 5, first group project on egalitarian and hierarchical societies; during weeks 9 – 10 second group project on evolutionary dispositions and their place in the modern world. Each group project is worth 50 points.
Final Exam	40	At the end of the semester	A final exam of multiple choice, true false, fill-in-the-blank questions and two essay question will be given to test students overall learning of the class material.

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or a web link
Compulsory reading list				
1. Christopher Boehm	2001	Hierarchy in the Forest: the Evolution of Egalitarian Behaviour		Harvard University Press
2. Mark Pagel	2012	Wired For Culture: Origins of the human Social Mind.		W.W Norton & Company
3. Peter Turchin	2017	Ultra-Society		Beresta Books LLC
Additional reading list				

Cronk, L	1999	That Complex Whole: Culture and Evolution in Human Behaviour		Boulder, CO:Westview Press
Welch, Robert & Endicott, Kirk	2016	Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Anthropology		New York: McGraw Hill
Allen W., Johnson And Timothy Earle “the Evolution of Human Societies: from Foraging Groups to Agrarian State.” Stanford University Press 2000.	2002			Stanford University Press.