

SYLLABUS

Evolutionary Psychology

University year 2025-2026

1. Information regarding the programme

1.1. Higher education institution	Babeş-Bolyai University
1.2. Faculty	Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
1.3. Department	Department of Psychology
1.4. Field of study	Psychology
1.5. Study cycle	Bachelor
1.6. Study programme/Qualification	Psychology - Cognitive Sciences/Bachelor's in Psychology
1.7. Form of education	Full-time

2. Information regarding the discipline

2.1. Name of the discipline	Evolutionary Psychology				Discipline code	PLE1314	
2.2. Course coordinator	Roxana Oltean (Cardos), Assistant Prof., PhD.						
2.3. Seminar coordinator	Ion Milea, Associated Assistant Prof. Ph.D.						
2.4. Year of study	II	2.5. Semester	3	2.6. Type of evaluation	E	2.7. Discipline regime	DS

3. Total estimated time (hours/semester of didactic activities)

3.1. Hours per week	4	of which: 3.2 course	2	3.3 seminar/laboratory	2
3.4. Total hours in the curriculum	56	of which: 3.5 course	28	3.6 seminar/laboratory	28
Time allotment for individual study (ID) and self-study activities (SA)					hours
Learning using manual, course support, bibliography, course notes (SA)					25
Additional documentation (in libraries, on electronic platforms, field documentation)					15
Preparation for seminars/labs, homework, papers, portfolios and essays					25
Tutorship					1
Evaluations					2
Other activities:					2
3.7. Total individual study hours					70
3.8. Total hours per semester					125
3.9. Number of ECTS credits					5

4. Prerequisites (if necessary)

4.1. curriculum	
4.2. competencies	

5. Conditions (if necessary)

5.1. for the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to psychology • Quantitative research methods and statistics • Introduction to cognitive psychology
5.2. for the seminar /lab activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom with at least 50 seats, laptop, projector, media materials, sound station

6.1. Specific competencies acquired ¹

Professional/essential competencies	<p>Knowledge and understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding evolutionary psychology theories that explain the 'adaptation' of human characteristics. <p>Explanation and interpretation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and analyzing evolutionary phenomena. Explaining one's own and the others' behavior while embedded within an evolutionary context. <p>Instrumental - applicative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training the academic skills necessary for identifying and formulating research questions.
Transversal competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical analysis of literature. Use of relevant sources of information in the field. Meta learning abilities. Written and oral communication skills.

6.2. Learning outcomes

Knowledge	<p>The student knows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the fundamental principles and theories of evolutionary psychology, including natural and sexual selection, adaptation, and inclusive fitness; the biological bases of behavior and how evolutionary mechanisms have shaped human cognition, emotion, and social interaction; key empirical findings and research methods used to investigate evolutionary hypotheses about human behavior; the ethical considerations and limitations in applying evolutionary explanations to complex human phenomena.
Skills	<p>The student is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> critically analyze and interpret human behavior from an evolutionary perspective; apply evolutionary principles to explain emotional, behavioral and cognitive processes; design and evaluate basic research studies testing evolutionary hypotheses in cognitive and behavioral sciences; integrate knowledge from biology, psychology, and anthropology to construct coherent explanations of psychological mechanisms; communicate scientific ideas clearly in written and oral form, using appropriate academic terminology.
Responsibility and autonomy:	<p>The student has the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work independently to obtain and synthesize scientific information on topics in evolutionary psychology; demonstrate intellectual autonomy in forming and defending theoretical perspectives; engage responsibly and ethically with controversial or sensitive topics related to human evolution and behavior; collaborate with peers in interdisciplinary contexts to address complex psychological questions; pursue lifelong learning and apply evolutionary reasoning critically to new research.

7. Objectives of the discipline (outcome of the acquired competencies)

¹ One can choose either competences or learning outcomes, or both. If only one option is chosen, the row related to the other option will be deleted, and the kept one will be numbered 6.

7.1 General objective of the discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquiring solid knowledge regarding the theoretical foundations of evolutionary psychology and the explanation of human behaviors, emotions and cognitions through this perspective.
7.2 Specific objective of the discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge regarding basic concepts of evolutionary psychology. Knowledge of the fundamental theoretical paradigms of evolutionary psychology. Practical familiarization with research in evolutionary psychology. Knowledge regarding the main criticisms of evolutionary psychology.

8. Content

8.1 Course	Teaching methods	Remarks
1. Introduction to the evolutionary paradigm	Interactive lecture, guided discovery	4 hours
2. Paradigms of evolutionary psychology	Interactive lecture, guided discovery	2 hours
3. Evolutionary models of health and stress	Interactive lecture, guided discovery	6 hours
4. Evolutionary models of psychopathology	Interactive lecture, guided discovery	6 hours
5. Applications of evolutionary psychology in psychotherapy	Interactive lecture, guided discovery	4 hours
6. Research paradigms in evolutionary psychology	Interactive lecture, guided discovery	2 hours
7. Criticisms of evolutionary approaches	Interactive lecture, guided discovery	4 hours
<p>Bibliography</p> <p>a. Mandatory: Buss, D.M. (2019) Part 1, Chapter 1 The Scientific Movements Leading to Evolutionary Psychology (pp. 20-81). Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind (6th ed.). New York: Routledge Roberts, S. C. (Ed.). (2012). Section1: Business. Applied evolutionary psychology (pp. 5-51).Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Hampton, S. J. (2009). Cooperation and interdependence In Essential evolutionary psychology (pp. 81-95), London, UK: SAGE Publications .</p> <p>b. Optional: Buss, D.M. (2004). Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind. Boston: Pearson Education. Buss, D.M., Hawley, P. (2011). The Evolution of Personality and Individual Differences. Oxford University Press. Ray, D. (2013). Evolutionary Psychology: Neuroscience Perspectives Concerning Human Behavior and Experience. London: Sage Publications Zuk, M. (2013) Paleofantasy: What Evolution Really Tells Us about Sex, Diet, and How We Live New York: W. W. Norton & Company</p> <p>! course notes, slides * as well as other bibliographic sources mentioned during the course activities</p>		
8.2 Seminar / laboratory	Teaching methods	Remarks
1. Introductory seminar	conceptual clarification, guided discovery, group activities	2 hours
2. Evolutionary approaches to sexual behavior	conceptual clarification, guided discovery, group activities	8 hours
3. Evolutionary approaches to individual behavior: parental investment; psychopathology.	conceptual clarification, guided discovery, group activities	8 hours

4. Evolutionary approaches to social behavior: competition and aggression; religion; humor; use of technology	conceptual clarification, guided discovery, group activities	8 hours
5. Recapitulation and practical demonstrations	conceptual clarification, guided discovery, group activities	2 hours
Bibliography		

9. Corroborating the content of the discipline with the expectations of the epistemic community, professional associations and representative employers within the field of the program

Mandatory references*:

- Bulbulia, J. A. (2007). The Evolution of Religion. In R.I.M Dunbar & L. Barret, Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology (pp. 621-635). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Kock, N. (2012). Media Naturalness Theory: human evolution and behavior towards electronic communication technologies. In S. C. Roberts, Applied Evolutionary Psychology (pp. 381-398). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Buss, D. (2019). Women's Long-Term Mating Strategies. In D. Buss, Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind (pp. 211-270) (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Buss, D. (2019). Men's Long-Term Mating Strategies. In D. Buss, Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind (pp. 271 - 328) (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge
- Anderson, K. G., Kaplan, H., & Lancaster, J. B. (2006). Demographic correlates of paternity confidence and pregnancy outcomes among Albuquerque men. American Journal of Physical Anthropology: The Official Publication of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, 131(4), 560-571.
- Anderson, K. G. (2018). High prevalence of voluntary sterilization among American women explained by trade-offs resulting from male parental commitment. Journal of biosocial science, 50(4), 505-526.
- Apicella, C. L., & Marlowe, F. W. (2004). Perceived mate fidelity and paternal resemblance predict men's investment in children. Evolution and Human behavior, 25(6), 371-378.
- Alvergne, A., Faurie, C., & Raymond, M. (2010). Are parents' perceptions of offspring facial resemblance consistent with actual resemblance? Effects on parental investment. Evolution and Human Behavior, 31(1), 7-15.
- Atkinson, Q. D., & Bourrat, P. (2011). Beliefs about God, the afterlife and morality support the role of supernatural policing in human cooperation. Evolution and Human Behavior, 32(1), 41-49.
- Blease, C. R. (2015). Too many 'friends,'too few 'likes'? Evolutionary psychology and 'Facebook depression'. Review of General Psychology, 19(1), 1-13. ! seminar notes, slides
- Ivanov, L., Eisend, M., & Bayon, T. (2019). Gendering conversational humor in advertising: an evolutionary explanation of the effects of spontaneous versus canned humor. International Journal of Advertising, 38(7), 979- 999.
- Jamison, C. S., Cornell, L. L., Jamison, P. L., & Nakazato, H. (2002). Are all grandmothers equal? A review and a preliminary test of the "grandmother hypothesis" in Tokugawa Japan. American Journal of Physical Anthropology: The Official Publication of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, 119(1), 67- 76.
- Kock, N. (2008). Incorporating Simulated Animal Attacks in Human Technology Interaction Interfaces: The Predictive Power of Biosemiotics and Evolutionary Psychology. International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction (IJTHI), 4(4), 68-87.a
- Mehta, S., Abed, R., Figueredo, A. J., Aldridge, S., Balson, H., Meyer, C., & Palmer, R. (2011). Eating disorders and intrasexual competition: Testing an evolutionary hypothesis among young women. European Psychiatry, 26(S2), 709-709.
- Playà, E., Vinicius, L., & Vasey, P. L. (2017). Need for alloparental care and attitudes toward homosexuals in 58 countries: Implications for the kin selection hypothesis. Evolutionary Psychological Science, 3(4), 345-352.
- Polák, J., Rádlová, S., Janovcová, M., Flegr, J., Landová, E., & Frynta, D. (2020). Scary and nasty beasts: Self-reported fear and disgust of common phobic animals. British Journal of Psychology, 111(2), 297-321.
- Power, E. A. (2017). Discerning devotion: Testing the signaling theory of religion. Evolution and Human Behavior, 38(1), 82-91.
- Volk, A. A., Dane, A. V., Marini, Z. A., & Vaillancourt, T. (2015). Adolescent Bullying, Dating, and Mating: Testing an Evolutionary Hypothesis. Evolutionary Psychology, 1, 1-11.
- Wu, C. H., & Chen, T. C. (2012). Understanding e-learning system usage behavior: An evolutionary psychology perspective. Procedia-social and behavioral sciences, 64, 362-371.
- Wyckoff, J. P., Buss, D. M., & Markman, A. B. (2019). Sex differences in victimization and consequences of cyber aggression: an evolutionary perspective. Evolutionary behavioral sciences, 13(3), 254-264.
- Zietsch, B. P., Morley, K. I., Shekar, S. N., Verweij, K. J., Keller, M. C., Macgregor, S., ... & Martin, N. G. (2008). Genetic factors predisposing to homosexuality may increase mating success in heterosexuals. Evolution and Human Behavior, 29(6), 424-433.

* as well as other bibliographic sources mentioned during the course activities

Optional references:

Miller, G. F. (2000). *The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature*. New York: Anchor Books.
 Trivers, R. (2002). *Natural Selection and Social Theory: Selected Papers of Robert Trivers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 Zuk, M. (2002). *Sexual Selections: What We Can and Can't Learn about Sex from Animals*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
 R.I.M Dunbar & Louise Barret (2007) – *Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press
 S. Craig Roberts (2012) – *Applied Evolutionary Psychology*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
 David Buss (2019) – *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind (6th ed.)*. New York, NY: Routledge.

10. Evaluation

Activity type	10.1 Evaluation criteria	10.2 Evaluation methods	10.3 Percentage of final grade
10.4 Course	The correctness and completeness of knowledge; The assimilation of the specialized language; logical coherence	Exam	70%
10.5 Seminar/laboratory	The capacity to apply the concepts and theoretical models of evolutionary psychology	Group project (realisation and presentation of a semester paper)	30%
10.6 Minimum standard of performance			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capacity to apply the concepts and theoretical models of evolutionary psychology in conceptualising real-life situations and designing interventions. • The level and accuracy of knowledge on the topics in the curriculum. • Acquiring the specialized language. • The ability to formulate research ideas. • Logical coherence and capacity to formulate arguments to support a certain idea. <p>The structure of the evaluation will be maintained for multiple rounds of assessment.</p> <p>Simultaneous conditions for promotion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A cumulative score of at least 4.5 points on all components of the discipline (exam, projects) is required. Realization and presentation of the semester project are not a mandatory requirement for participation in any examination session. • Attendance at the exam is compulsory. • In the second examination session, one can (a) keep the marks obtained for the semester project or (b) solve an additional examination item to obtain 30% of the final mark corresponding to the semester project. 			

11. Labels ODD (Sustainable Development Goals)²

	General label for Sustainable Development								
									

² Keep only the labels that, according to the [Procedure for applying ODD labels in the academic process](#), suit the discipline and delete the others, including the general one for *Sustainable Development* – if not applicable. If no label describes the discipline, delete them all and write „Not applicable.“.

Date:
01.10.2025

Signature of course coordinator
Oltean Roxana

Signature of seminar coordinator
Ion Milea

Date of approval:
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Signature of the head of department