

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Human Altruism - 51883

Last update 20-10-2022

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Psychology

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Salomon Israel

Coordinator Email: salomon.israel@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: based on appointment

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Salomon Israel

Course/Module description:

Large scale cooperation with others that are genetically unrelated appears to be a uniquely human phenomenon. Human altruism – the concern for the welfare of others – is commonly observed in everyday social exchanges and yet remains one of the great enigmas of evolutionary biology. This course will review the wide-ranging approaches used to understand human altruism including evolutionary perspectives, game theoretic models, biological underpinnings, psychological processes, and experimental paradigms.

Course/Module aims:

Familiarize students to different approaches for studying human altruism.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Describe the evolutionary paradox of altruism and enumerate theories explaining the existence of human altruism.

Delineate experimental paradigms used to model altruistic behavior in the laboratory

Identify multiple mechanisms contributing to altruistic behavior

Differentiate between ultimate and proximate causes of altruism.

Attendance requirements(%):

Students are expected to attend lectures
10% of the final grade is based on attendance

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The majority of the course will be based on frontal lectures.

The last few weeks of class will be devoted to student based presentations. The final grade will be based on a final paper (40%), presentation (30%), attendance (10%) and class assignments (20%)

Course/Module Content:

The evolutionary paradox of altruism

Evolutionary theories of altruism: Kin selection, reciprocal altruism

Modeling altruism with game theory

Modeling altruism in the laboratory

Biological systems and altruism: oxytocin and vasopressin systems

Psychological perspectives: personality, theory of mind, empathy, warm glow

Required Reading:

The reading list will be updated before the beginning of the semester.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 30 %

Participation in Tutorials 10 %

Project work 40 %

Assignments 20 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: