# Advanced Topics in Group Processes and Intergroup Relations: A Bio-Social Perspective;

# **SP844**

Module syllabus 2008



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#### 1. Introduction

*I am cast upon a horrible, desolate island... I am divided from mankind, a solitary; one banished from human society.* 

Daniel Defoe in "Adventures of Robinson Crusoe" (1719)

These were the desperate words of Robinson Crusoe when he realised that he was alone on a desert island, far away from the social groups he once belonged to and now was excluded from.

> The individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something in nature that precedes the individual. Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast or a god.

> > Aristotle, 384-322 B.C.

Philosophers going as far back as Aristotle already suggested that humans are inherently social creatures. If they can't take part in groups – for example, because they are too aggressive -- or they do not want to belong to groups – for example, because they are too independent -- they are simply not human.

Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection (1859/71) provided the scientific basis for the study of humans as a group living species, a member of the family of primates. According to evolutionary theory, human sociality is the product of a long evolutionary process that selected for individuals that were best equipped to reap the benefits of group life while avoiding its costs. Living in groups enables us humans to profit from social cooperation -- for example in providing and sharing food -- but group life also comes with important costs, such as conflict and aggression over scarce resources. The social mind and behaviour of modern humans (Homo Sapiens) have been shaped by million of years of group living and they reflect the way our ancestors have dealt with the diverse challenges of social life. **2. Outline of module**  In this MSc module "Advanced Topics in Group Processes and Intergroup Relations: A BioSocial Perspective" **SP844** (which complements the 3<sup>rd</sup> year course SP603), we will explore human group life from its evolutionary origins to modern day group life. Adopting an evolutionary perspective, we explore the ways in which (1) group life has shaped modern human social behaviour and psychology and (2) modern human social psychology shapes group life, with clear implications for modern human organizations. In this module we try to understand how different aspects of our group behaviour and psychology have been shaped in human evolutionary history, because these traits somehow enhanced the survival and reproductive chances of our ancestors.

An evolutionary perspective on group processes is inherently multidisciplinary. We therefore use key readings from a diversity of literatures, including social psychology, evolutionary biology, primatology, anthropology and economics. This will help us understand why we behave the way we behave in groups, small and large.

The primary focus of this module is on *small* group behaviour, because these are the units in which we find interact most frequently, both now and in the past. But we will also pay some attention to human social life in larger groups, such as crowds, nations, businesses and other organizations, which are uniquely human social inventions.

Here are just a few examples of the many questions that we are going to address in this module:

- Why do humans live in groups?
- What are the origins of human altruism and morality?
- Why are people so concerned about their reputation?
- Why do some groups perform better than others?
- Why do humans go to war?
- Why does status and leadership emerge so quickly in groups?
- What are the group functions of laughter, language, music, and religion?
- How can we more effectively think about social groups by adopting an evolutionary perspective?

We will answer these and other important questions by using theories, models, concepts, and research on groups from the fields of *social psychology, evolutionary psychology, anthropology, evolutionary biology, zoology, economics and neurosciences*. To

enhance the learning experience, we will conduct several practical demonstrations of group processes, for example, through class-room experiments, Web-based exercises, TV-clips and news story analyses, and through reliance on personal experiences with groups.

#### 3. The module class

The module class consists of approximately 10 MSc students and one tutor (myself). This class epitomises what we are interested in studying, **a group in action**. It is important to recognise this, and to actively think about the functioning of the group and your role within that group. As the meetings go on you will get to know the group better and the group will get to know you better. *Please participate actively in group interactions, because it will benefit your learning experience*.

#### 4. Aims, objectives and learning outcomes of module

The learning outcomes of this module are:

- Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the core domains in the study of group processes
- Recognising the diversity of perspectives underpinning the study of groups
- Being able to integrate the social psychological and evolutionary perspectives on group processes
- Critically evaluating theoretical and empirical literature on groups
- Making reasoned arguments based on appropriately selected source materials
- Applying group theory and research to real-life groups
- Communicating effectively by written, verbal, and visual means
- Managing work with due attention to time and resource management
- Contributing confidently and appropriately to a group discussion

These outcomes relate to the following programme learning outcomes:

- Knowledge and understanding of social psychology, interpersonal and group behaviour
- Evaluating and selecting appropriate frameworks and methodologies for exploring issues in psychology
- Demonstrate writing and reading skills to present and interpret material with evidence of the use of relevant literature
- Develop knowledge and understanding of conflict and cooperation in groups
- Show the ability to critically evaluate the quality of theory and method in published research
- Demonstrate the ability to express opinions, argue rationally and engage in critical thinking both orally and in the written form

#### 5. Module programme

The module runs in the second semester (Lent), and consists of **10** meetings which take place on **Fridays from 12.00 until 14.00 in KS15 (Keynes College), followed by a small group seminar from 14.00-15.00.** The first part is a two-hour class meeting (held together with the 3<sup>rd</sup> year option course SP603). The second activity is a one-hour seminar in which we delve deeper into the issues from the first part. **Think of a question from the first part that we can address in the second part!** The meetings contain a number of different activities, including lectures and student presentations, discussion and debates, reviews and demonstrations. The first meeting is scheduled for **Friday 18 January** (see Programme).

#### 6. Contents of meeting

Each meeting contains a range of activities. It usually starts with a presentation by a group of students, followed by me introducing the topic for that particular meeting. Meetings further consist of debates and discussions and empirical demonstrations. Each meeting ends with a brief summary and an brief introduction of the topic for the following week.

#### 7. Readings

Readings come from social and evolutionary psychology as well as other behavioural science disciplines.

There will be one core text for this course, which you are required to purchase (at Amazon for just £6.50):

# • Ridley, M. (1997). The origins of virtue. Penguin Classics

Ridley's is a popular science book which lucidly describes the evolutionary origins of human sociality by relying on evidence from many different disciplines.

There are various popular science books about human evolution and social behaviour that you may want to read alongside the core course readings, e.g. :

- Cronin, H. (1991). The ant and the peacock. Cambridge University Press.
- De Waal, F. (2005). Our inner ape: The best and worst of human nature. Granta.
- Dunbar, R. (2004). Grooming, gossip, and the evolution of language. London: Faber & Faber
- Miller, G. (2000). The mating mind. Faber & Faber.
- Miller, A. & Kanazawa, S. (2007). Why beautiful people have more daughters. Perigee.
- Wilson, D. S. (2007). Evolution for everyone.

These books explore how evolutionary scientists think about the way human social behaviour has come about and why we behave the way we do in groups.

It is also handy to have a book on the social psychology of groups available for this course as reference material, for example:

- Brown, R. (1995). Group processes. Blackwell
- Forsyth, D. (1999). Group dynamics. Wadsworth
- Stangor, C. (2005). Social groups in action. Psychology Press
- Any introduction text in social psychology

Per meeting there will be a list of key articles and chapters to read. These reading materials are available either under the electronic journals in the library or my personal website (under "Teaching"), or as hard copies in the short loan of the library. Please let me know if you cannot find a recommended reading (mvv@kent.ac.uk)

Do not rely on these readings only, of course! You are encouraged to search for supporting materials on the internet, in the library, in newspapers and on television (for this module watching TV is an essential element of the learning experience!).

There are some important books on evolutionary psychology, which you also might want to have a look at as a general introduction into evolutionary psychology. The library should have several copies of each. Here is a list:

- Barrett, L., Dunbar, R., & Lycett, J. (2002). Human evolutionary psychology. London: Palgrave.
- Buss, D. M. (2004). Evolutionary psychology. New York: Allyn and Bacon
- Darwin, C. (1871). Descent of man. New York: Appleton.
- Frank, R. (1988). Passions within reason. New York: W. W. Norton
- Pinker, S. (2002). The blank slate. London: Penguin
- Schaller, M, Simpson, J., & Kenrick, D. (2006). Evolution and Social Psychology. Psychology Press.
- For other relevant evolutionary resources, please have a look at:
  - The webpage of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society at <a href="http://www.hbes.com/">http://www.hbes.com/</a>
  - And many other websites devoted to evolutionary psychology

#### 8. Preparations

As a general rule, for each meeting you should read *at least two key readings* from the list for that meeting and *one chapter* from the Ridley book. In addition to the readings, there are other specific tasks that you may be asked to do in preparation.

#### 9. Ground Rules

Here are some ground rules for participation in this module:

- 1. Attend all the meetings (unless there is a special circumstance, as identified to in the student handbook);
- 2. Make sure to arrive in time for each meeting (9 o' clock sharp);
- 3. Participate actively in group discussions; the seminar group is a group in action and your inputs are greatly appreciated;
- 4. Be open an honest in the discussions;
- 5. Don't criticise each other, but give constructive feedback on each other's work and input.

#### 10. The Essay

The primary aim of the essay is to demonstrate your ability to analyze a particular group process that we have considered in this course from an integrated social/evolutionary psychological perspective. You may draw upon your own experiences in social groups to serve as illustrations for your analysis, for example, you can use a group that you yourself are a member of. This group could be your netball team, the group of students you share a house with, a group of friends you regularly see, colleagues at your part-time job, your family. Any small group that you know well will do, provided that it consists of more than two members and people interact with each other on a regular basis.

**P.S.** If you cannot think of a relevant example in your social group, you may also apply the group process to a particular group in action that you have read about (your favourite book), heard about (your favourite radio play), seen on television (e.g., Big Brother), or live in action (your favourite football team).

#### **Essay topics**

Choose one of the nine essay topics that are listed in the module outline OR choose another topic of your interest. Please discuss the topic with me first.

#### **Essay length**

The essay should not exceed **5000** words (excluding references and appendices) and must be produced on a word processor. The text should be double lined and prepared in accordance with APA-style (APA, fourth or fifth edition).

#### Deadline

The deadline for submitting the essay is **Monday 7 April at noon**. The essay will be formally assessed, and you will receive written feedback **within three weeks** of submission.

#### 11. Presentation

You are expected to give one informal presentation of about **10 minutes** on a selected topic. The presentation is not formally assessed, but you will get useful informal feedback from both the tutor and fellow students which may be useful for writing your essay. You may prepare your presentation on Powerpoint or use OHP's (please check the equipment carefully before your presentation!)

#### 12. Assessment

The module is formally assessed via a 5,000 word essay.

The deadline for essay submission is Monday 7 April at noon.

#### 13. Programme

# Session 1: Why do humans live in groups? Date: Friday 18 January, 12-15

#### Lecture

The first meeting will be devoted to a general introduction into evolutionary psychology and its application to the study of groups. We will address why ancestral humans "chose" to live in groups and what the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of group living were for our ancestors. We will also examine the functions and types of groups in modern life. Thereby we use insights from social and evolutionary psychology. Finally, we discuss the programmatic aspects of the module in this first meeting.

For this first meeting, please read a general introduction into evolutionary psychology:

- Cosmides, L., & Tooby, J. (no date). *Evolutionary psychology: A primer*. Available on line: <u>http://www.psych.ucsb.edu/research/cep/primer.html</u>
- or
- Buss, D. (1995). Evolutionary psychology: A new paradigm for psychological science. *Psychological Inquiry*, *6*, 1-30.

#### Seminar

In this seminar we talk about the problems of applying evolutionary thinking to human group behaviour. To prepare, read Schmitt & Pilcher's article and find a critique of evolutionary psychology on the web, and bring it along to the meeting. What is your own position about the promise of evolutionary psychology to the study of groups, in particular?

#### **Core readings**

- Ridley, Chapter 1
- Baumeister, R., & Leary. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117,

497-529.

- Dunbar, R. M. (2003). The social brain: Mind, language, and society in evolutionary perspective. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *32*, 163-181.
- Schmitt, D. P., & Pilcher, J. J. (2004). Evaluating evidence of psychological adaptation: How do we know one when we see one? *Psychological Science*, *15*, 643-649.

Essay/Presentation topic Is evolutionary psychology sound science?

Session 2: The puzzle of human altruism Date: Friday 25 January, 12-15

#### Lecture

One of the greatest puzzles in the behavioural sciences is the origins of human altruism: why do people sacrifice themselves for other individuals or groups? This does not make sense from an evolutionary perspective, or does it? In this meeting, we address the evolutionary origins of the unique human altruistic tendency and discuss the social psychological factors promoting altruism towards strangers.

#### Seminar

In the 2nd seminar we will study the problem of **nepotism and corruption** from an evolutionary perspective. Why do people benefit their relatives and why should society be concerned about it? To prepare for the meeting, please gather some information about nepotism from the web, newspaper, or a research article and bring it along to the meeting.

#### **Core Readings**

- Ridley, Chapter 3
- Burnstein, E., Crandall, C., & Kitayama, S. (1994). Some neo-Darwinian decision rules for altruism: Weighting cues for inclusive fitness as a function of the biological importance of the decision. *Journal of Personality and Social*

Psychology, 67, 773-789.

- Fehr, E., & Fischbacher, U. (2003). The nature of human altruism. *Nature*, 425, 785-791
- McAndrew, F. (2002). New evolutionary perspectives on altruism: Multi-level selection and costly-signalling theories. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *11*, 79-82.
- Van Vugt, M., & Van Lange, P. (2006). Psychological adaptations for prosocial behaviour: The altruism puzzle. In M. Schaller, J. Simpson, & D. Kenrick, *Evolution and Social Psychology* (pp. 237-261). Psychology Press.

#### Essay/Presentation topic

Give an evolutionary account of nepotism and corruption in society. What can be done about it?

# Session 3: The importance of reputations Date: Friday 1 February 12-15

#### Lecture

In this meeting we address the importance of reputations for establishing cooperative groups. Why are we so concerned about what others think of us? Why do we think we are more moral and less selfish than others? What is the function of gossip? Do people use altruism as a signal to attract sexual mates? In this meeting we analyze people's concern about their reputations by looking at the evolutionary and psychological literatures.

#### Seminar

In this seminar we talk about how and why reputation systems work in practice. Please bring an example of a reputation system to the meeting that you have found on the internet in the newspaper etc., which we will then discuss.

#### **Core Readings**

- Ridley, Chapter 4
- Griskevicius, V., Tybur, J. M., Sundie, J. M., Cialdini, R. B., Miller, G. Fl, &

Kenrick, D. T. (2007). Blatant benevolence and conspicuous consumption: When romantic motives elicit strategic costly signals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93, 85-102.

- Nowak, M., & Sigmund, K. (2005). Evolution of indirect reciprocity. *Nature*, 437, 1291-1298.
- Van Vugt, M., Roberts, G., & Hardy, C. (2007). Competitive altruism: A theory of reputation based cooperation in groups. In R. Dunbar & L. Barrett, *Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

or

Hardy, C., & Van Vugt, M. (2006). Nice guys finish first: The competitive altruism hypothesis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32, 1402-1413.

#### Presentation topic

Discuss the role of competitive altruism in charity and philanthropy. How can this be promoted in society based on evolutionary reasoning?

#### Session 4: Getting along and getting ahead in groups Date: Friday 8 February, 12-15

#### Lecture

The focus in this meeting is on the emergence of status and power differences in groups. Who gets status and power in a group and on what basis? Why are people so obsessed with status in our society and what advantages does high status give? Why are we so receptive of the influence of high status individuals?

#### Seminar

In this seminar we discuss the role of self-esteem from an evolutionary perspective. If self-esteem is so positive, why are there people with low self-esteem? Prepare for this meeting by reading a paper on evolutionary explanations for self-esteem and bring it to the meeting.

#### **Core readings**

- Ridley, Chapter 5
- Anderson, C., John, O., Keltner, D., & Kring, A. (2001). Social status in naturalistic face-to-face groups: Effects of personality and physical attractiveness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *81*, 116-132.
- Buss, D. (1999). Evolutionary psychology. Allyn & Bacon. (Chapter 12: Status, prestige and social dominance).
- Henrich, J., & Gil-White, F. J. (2001). The evolution of prestige: freely conferred deference as a mechanism for enhancing the benefits of cultural transmission. *Evolution and Human Behaviour*, 22, 165-196.
- Josephs, R. A. Sellers, J. G. Newman, M. L. & Mehta, P. H. (2006) The Mismatch Effect: When Testosterone and Status Are at Odds. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 999-1013.

#### Essay/Presentation topic

What is the evolutionary basis of individual and collective forms of self-esteem?

#### Session 5: Follow the leader...but at what cost?

Date: Friday 15 February, 12-15

#### Lecture

The focus in this meeting is on the emergence of leadership in groups. What is the function of leadership and followership from an evolutionary perspective? To what extent does leadership differ from personal dominance, or, does it? Are some people more likely to be leaders than others? In this meeting we also examine the unique role of followers.

#### Seminar

We are going to talk about leadership failure in this seminar. Could leadership failure be due to a mismatch between leadership in ancestral and modern environments? What is the evidence for this mismatch hypothesis?

#### **Core readings**

- Boehm, C. (1993). Egalitarian behaviour and reverse dominance hierarchy. *Current Anthropology*, *34*, 227-240 (also read the commentaries).
- Cohen, F., Solomon, S., Maxfield, M., Pyszcynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2004). Fatal attraction: The effects of mortality salience on evaluations of charismatic, task-orientated, and relationship-oriented leaders. *Psychological Science*, 15, 846-851.
- Judge, Bono, J., Ilies, R., & Gerhardt, M. (2002). Personality and leadership: A quantitative and qualitative review. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *87*, 765-780.
- Van Vugt, M., Hogan, R., & Kaiser, R. (in press). Leadership, followership, and evolution: Some lessons from the past. *American Psychologist*.

Essay/presentation topics

- 1. Give an evolutionary account of democracy
- or
- 2. Discuss the mismatch hypothesis of leadership

#### **Reading Week**

# Session 6: Staying alive by staying together: The nature of group cohesion Date: Friday 29 February, 12-15

#### Lecture

What is the social glue that holds groups together? The focus of this meeting is on group cohesion and group loyalty and their possible evolved functions. Why is cohesion important and what are the functions and advantages of being in a cohesive group? We look at why some groups are more cohesive than others, and which proximate social psychological processes underlie the strength of social cohesion (e.g., social identity, social norms).

#### Seminar

In this seminar we examine the possible evolutionary antecedents of social identity. Why are human capable to identify with and form deep emotional attachments to ingroups, consisting often of large groups of unrelated individuals. How has this capacity been shaped in humans (and not in other species) and what are its functions? Is social identity still useful in modern society?

## **Core readings**

- Ridley, Chapter 7
- Brewer, M., & Caporael, L. (2006). An evolutionary perspective on social identity: Revisiting groups. In M. Schaller, Simpson, & Kenrick, Evolution and social psychology. New York: Psychology Press.
- Couzin, I. D., Krause, J. et al. (2002). Collective memory and spatial sorting in animal groups. *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, 218, 1-11.
- Dion, K. L. (2000). Group cohesion: From field of forces to multidimensional construct. *Group Dynamics*, *4*, 7-26.
- Van Vugt, M., & Hart, C. (2004). Social identity as social glue: The origins of group loyalty. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *86*, 585-598.

#### Essay/Presentation topic

Give an evolutionary account of the functions of social identity.

# Session 7: Aggression within groups Date: Friday 7 March, 12-15

#### Lecture

This session concentrates on conflict and aggression between individuals. Why do people use aggression to get what they want, and, how can violence in groups be curtailed? What forms of aggression can we distinguish and are there any gender differences in the use of aggressive tactics. When do groups use aggression to punish deviant members. We investigate the causes of aggression and violence in groups. These questions will be addressed by examining both the evolutionary and psychological literatures on aggression.

#### Seminar

In this seminar, we will address the problem of **homicide** from an evolutionary perspective. Why do people kill each other? To prepare for the meeting, please collect some important statistical information about homicide data that you may find on the web. Please also read some of Buss' and Daly & Wilson's work on homicide (see e.g., the HBES website)

## **Core readings**

- Archer, J. (2004). Sex differences in aggression in real-world settings: A metaanalytic review. *Review of General Psychology*, *8*, 291-322.
- Buss, D. (1999). Evolutionary psychology. Allyn & Bacon (*Chapter 10: Aggression and warfare*)
- Daly, M., & Wilson, M. (1996). Violence against stepchildren. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *5*, 77-81.
- Eisenberger, N.I., Lieberman, M.D., & Williams, K.D. (2003). Does rejection hurt: An fMRI study of social exclusion. *Science*, 302, 290-292.

#### Essay/Presentation topic

1. Why are step-children more likely to be killed? Explain infanticide from an evolutionary perspective.

or

2. Why do men rape? Give an evolutionary account of rape.

# Session 8: Intergroup relations

Date: Friday 14 March, 12-15

## Lecture

This session examines the nature of intergroup conflict and peace. We will discuss under what conditions groups are likely to compete and cooperate with each other? Is intergroup conflict and discrimination an inevitable aspect of human nature? How can intergroup problems in society be resolved based on an evolutionary analysis?

# Seminar

Why do we go to war? In this seminar we discuss possible evolutionary explanations for human warfare. Please read Van Vugt et al's (2007) article on the male warrior hypothesis and bring some information about the psychology of warfare that you found in the news, on the web, along to this meeting.

# Core readings

- Ridley, Chapters 8/9
- Atran, S. (2003). Genesis of suicide terrorism. *Science*, 299, 1534-1539.
- Chagnon, N. A. (1988). Life histories, blood revenge, and warfare in a tribal population. *Science*, 239, 985-992.
- Fiske, S. T. (2002). What we know now about bias and intergroup conflict, the problem of the century. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *11*, 123-128.
- Van Vugt, M., De Cremer, D., & Janssen, D. (2007). Gender differences in cooperation and competition: The male warrior hypothesis. *Psychological Science*, *18*, 19-23.
- Wilson, M. L., Wrangham, R. (2003). Intergroup relations in chimpanzees. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *32*, 363-392.

# Presentation

Give an evolutionary account of peace-making/keeping between groups.

Session 9: Group decision-making and performance: Why some groups work (but others don't) Date: Friday 28 March, 12-15

#### Lecture

In this session, we will address the importance of trust and social norms for group performance and decision-making. We ask ourselves how groups solve tasks and why some groups seem to perform better than others, looking specifically at the role of social norms and trust. We also examine the causes and consequences of poor decision making procedures within groups.

#### Seminar

In this seminar we try to find an evolutionary explanation for politics. Some theorists call us humans "political animals" but what does this statement actually mean. In this seminar we are going to find out why we are so political and how we have moved from simple to complex political systems to organize human society. Please bring along any information you can find about the evolution of political institutions.

#### **Core readings**

- Ridley, Chapter 13 (se also De Waal's book "Inner Ape")
- Brosnan, S., & De Waal, F. (2003) Monkeys reject unequal pay. *Nature*, 425, 297-299.
- Conradt, L., & Roper, T. J. (2003). Group decision-making in animals. Nature,
- 421, 155-158.
- Kameda, T., Takezawa, M., & Hastie, R. (2003). The logic of social sharing: An evolutionary game analysis of adaptive norm development. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 7, 2-19.
- Van Vugt, M., Hogan, R., & Kaiser, R. (in press). Leadership, followership, and evolution: Some lessons from the past. *American Psychologist*.
- Wilson, D., Timmel, J., & Miller, R. (2004). When the going gets tough, think as a group. *Human Nature*, *15*, 1-15

#### Essay/Presentation topic

Given an evolutionary explanation for (1) trust, (2) fairness or (3) social norms.

# Session 10: From Small to Large Groups: Evolution, Culture and the Social Brain Date: Friday 4 April, 12-15

#### Lecture

In this final meeting, we move away from the evolutionary analysis of small group processes to explain interactions in large social groups such as nations, communities, and religions. Large-scale social cooperation is a unique feature of human society. But, how is this possible, how did humans make the leap from small groups to large societies? Here we will pay particular attention to the evolved functions of social identity, culture, laughter, language, music, and religion.

#### Seminar

Why do many, if not all, human societies have religion? In this final seminar, we look at the role of religion from an evolutionary perspective and draw some conclusions about the functions of religion and religious thought. Please bring to the meeting any information you can find about religion and evolution.

#### **Core readings**

- Ridley's Chapters 11 and 12
- Dunbar, R. M. (2003). The social brain: Mind, language, and society in evolutionary perspective. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *32*, 163-181.
- Gervais, M., & Wilson, D. S. (2005). The evolution and functions of laughter and humour: A synthetic approach. *Quarterly Review of Biology*, *80*, 395-430.
- Van Vugt, M. (2001). Community identification moderating the impact of financial incentives in a natural social dilemma: A water shortage. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27, 1440-1449.
- Wilson, D. S., Van Vugt, M., & O'Gorman, R. (2008). Multilevel selection theory and major evolutionary transitions: Implications for Psychological Science. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*.

Essay/Presentation topic

Give an evolutionary account of (1) religion, (2) environmental conservation, (3) laughter, (4) music or (5) dance. Pick one phenomenon to concentrate you essay/presentation on.