

How People Choose a Partner: The Evolutionary Psychology of Mating Strategies, VKN-096:61

Mihály Berkics, Ph.D., lecturer¹ & Zsófia Csajbók, M.A., junior researcher²

1: Department of Social Psychology, Institute of Psychology, ELTE

2: Faculty of Science, Charles University, Prague

E-mails:

berkics.mihaly@ppk.elte.hu, csajbok.zsofia@gmail.com

Office hours and place:

Tuesdays, 1200-1330, Izu 205 (Mihály Berkics, 2019 Fall semester)

The schedule and place of the course:

The first class is on Friday, 13th September, 1315-1445 in room P1.

Further classes are on six Fridays, two classes each day in room 315 – see the detailed schedule.

The goal of the course

This course will introduce basic principles and terms and will cover most relevant topics of the evolutionary psychology of mating strategies and preferences. Students shall learn about the basic principles of evolutionary theory and its applications to mating-related psychological phenomena, and develop an understanding of what an evolutionary approach can bring to our knowledge of human behavior and mental processes in this domain. The semester will start with a short, basic overview of evolutionary psychology and the parental investment theory by Trivers (1972), on which many evolutionary accounts of mating strategies and sex differences in mating are built. Mating strategies and behavior of animals, especially primates will also be briefly reviewed to give a comparative perspective. Then the focus will be shifted to human mental and behavioral processes and within-sex differences, which, besides the often-studied between-sex differences, are an emerging and ever more important field in the study of human mating. Students will also get an introduction to the most relevant and up-to-date methods of this domain, including the possible gamification of research.

Conditions of the course completion

Seminar/practical grade based on participation at classes, doing homeworks, preparing for and doing presentations, doing group work in classes (e.g. discussions).

Bibliography, additional materials

Compulsory readings:

- *Selected chapters from Buss, D. M. (2015, ed.) The Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology. Wiley*
- *Selected papers from journals like Evolution and Human Behavior and Evolutionary Psychology*
- *Further readings will be specified during the course: students will get it as an assignment to search up-to-date and relevant literature to their chosen topics.*

Recommended readings:

- Buss, D. M., Meston, C. (2010) *Why Women Have Sex. Understanding Sexual Motivation from Adventure to Revenge (and Everything in Between)*. Random House.
- Diamond, J. (1991) *The Third Chimpanzee. The Evolution and Future of the Human Animal*. Hutchinson Radius.
- Diamond, J. (1997) *Why is Sex Fun? The Evolution of Human Sexuality*. Basic Books.

Access to further material on Canvas.

Detailed syllabus**1. 13.09.2019 – 2x45 mins, MB + ZC – Introduction and foundations: the evolutionary approach**

- Tooby, J. & Cosmides, L. (1997). *Evolutionary Psychology: A Primer*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cep.ucsb.edu/primer.html>

2-3. 04.10.2019 – 2x90 mins, MB – Signals and handicaps: how humans (and animals) let others know they are worth choosing; Competition and jealousy: between- and within-sex differences

- Zahavi, A. (1975). Mate selection—a selection for a handicap. *Journal of theoretical Biology*, 53(1), 205-214.
- Buss, D. M., Larsen, R. J., Westen, D., & Semmelroth, J. (1992). Sex differences in jealousy: Evolution, physiology, and psychology. *Psychological science*, 3(4), 251-256.

4-5. 11.10.2019 – 2x90 mins, ZC – Parental investment theory and mating strategies in the animal world; Within-sex differences in mating strategies, and the variety in relationship types

- Buss, D. M., & Schmitt, D. P. (1993). Sexual strategies theory: an evolutionary perspective on human mating. *Psychological review*, 100(2), 204.
- Trivers, R. L. (1974). Parent-offspring conflict. *Integrative and Comparative Biology*, 14(1), 249-264.

6-7. 25.10.2019 – 2x90 mins, ZC – What do people consider when they choose a partner? Factors of mate preferences

- Fletcher, G. J. O., Simpson, J. A., Thomas, G., & Giles, L. (1999). Ideals in intimate relationships. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 76(1), 72.
- Csajbók, Z., & Berkics, M. (2017). Factor, factor, on the whole, who's the best fitting of all?: Factors of mate preferences in a large sample. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 114, 92-102.

8-9. 22.11.2019 – 2x90 mins, MB – The role of physical attractiveness and its components (e.g. WHR, facial masculinity); The role of status and other factors

- Fink, B., & Penton-Voak, I. (2002). Evolutionary psychology of facial attractiveness. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11(5), 154-158.
- Singh, D. (1993). Adaptive significance of female physical attractiveness: role of waist-to-hip ratio. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 65(2), 293.
- Buss, D. M. (1989). Sex differences in human mate preferences: Evolutionary hypotheses tested in 37 cultures. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, 12(1), 1-14.

10-11. 06.12.2019 – 2x90 mins, MB – How people avoid undesirable candidates: dealbreakers in mate preferences; The mismatch problem: are our evolved preferences still adaptive in the modern world?

COURSE DESCRIPTION

- Jonason, P. K., Garcia, J. R., Webster, G. D., Li, N. P., & Fisher, H. E. (2015). Relationship dealbreakers: Traits people avoid in potential mates. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *41*(12), 1697-1711.
- Li, N. P., van Vugt, M., & Colarelli, S. M. (2018). The evolutionary mismatch hypothesis: Implications for psychological science. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *27*(1), 38-44.

12-13. 13.12.2019 – 2x90 mins, ZC –Additive vs threshold models of mating preferences and other mate choice models (e.g. Euclidean model, Manhattan-distance model, homogamy)

- Luo, S. (2017). Assortative mating and couple similarity: Patterns, mechanisms, and consequences. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *11*, e12337.
- Conroy-Beam, D., & Buss, D. M. (2016). How are mate preferences linked with actual mate selection? Tests of mate preference integration algorithms using computer simulations and actual mating couples. *PloS one*, *11*(6), e0156078.