This course will focus on the biological/physical anthropology of the Pacific. In addition to examining the biological diversity of Pacific peoples, past and present, this course will examine theoretical issues such as evolution, ecology, and human adaptability. After reviewing the physical geography, prehistory, culture, and languages of the Pacific, the course will be divided into several broad topics that reflect some of the major themes in the physical/biological anthropology in the Pacific. The topics that will be explored in this course include: early paradigms, human ecology/adaptability, Polynesian phenotype, “cold adaptation hypothesis”, microevolutionary processes; the human biological evidence for the initial peopling of the Pacific, dental and skeletal morphology, genetic (classical and molecular) variation, Lapita skeletal record, ancient DNA studies, early inhabitants of Australia and Indonesia, health and disease, the consequences of European contact, and the impact of migration and modernization has had on Pacific Islanders. More specialized topics will include malaria, kuru in New Guinea, ALS-PD in the Mariana Is., and research in Hawaiian biological anthropology.

The grade for this course will be based on: two exams (mid-term and final); map quiz, one annotated bibliography; one written paper; one oral presentation.

There will be weekly assigned readings for this course.