

Chapter 2 Evolutionary Theory

Teaching Tips

Discuss the concepts of natural selection and fitness. Explain how these concepts account for the transformation of species over long periods of time and also account for the variability within species that may support species survival within specific environments. Explain how these ideas inform a perspective on the relationship of one generation to the next as well as on the long-term evolution of *homo sapiens*. Present some of the scenarios that are thought to account for the emergence of *homo sapiens* and their distinctiveness from earlier hominids. Give examples of how the fossil record and DNA evidence are used to piece together a picture of the critical features of modern humans.

For Students in Human Development and/or Developmental Psychology: Emphasize the lifespan implications of the fitness sequence: find a mate, reproduce, rear the young to reproductive age; so they can find a mate, reproduce, and rear their young, etc. Each aspect of this sequence requires understanding of complex physical, cognitive, social, and emotional competences.

For Students in Health and Human Development: Emphasize the health implications of the fitness sequence: find a mate, reproduce, rear the young to reproductive age; so they can find a mate, reproduce, and rear their young, etc. For example, what conditions of health care, water and air quality, nutrition, child birth practices, sexual health practices, or home and neighborhood safety might impact the fitness of a group and its long-term reproductive success?

For Students in Social Work and/or Mental Health Counseling: Emphasize the environmental factors that might impact the fitness sequence: find a mate, reproduce, rear the young to reproductive age; so they can find a mate, reproduce, and rear their young, etc. How does society advantage or disadvantage certain groups at each of these steps in the process? How does the theory help to understand fertility and childbearing practices, childrearing strategies, or mate selection patterns among various cultural and economic groups?