



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Arts and Sciences

Department of Anthropology
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August 23, 2023

Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, and
Council on Academic Affairs (CAA):

The Department of Anthropology wishes to change the name of its **Physical Anthropology minor**-- as well as the name of the **subdiscipline of Physical Anthropology** within our majors--to **Biological Anthropology**.

In 2021, the American Association of Physical Anthropologists--the world's leading organization for biological anthropologists--officially changed its name to the American Association of Biological Anthropologists. It did so because "physical anthropology" harkens back to the earliest days of our field (early 1900s), when practitioners focused their work on human physical remains and did so within the context of racial typologies. The field has changed dramatically since that time -- it has renounced racial typologies and expanded in scope.

Today, the field focuses on human evolutionary biology, encompassing the study of modern human biological variation, primatology, paleoanthropology, and bioarchaeology. The name change to "biological anthropology," therefore, not only dissociates the discipline from its typological roots but also more accurately reflects what the field is about.

Book titles, departments, and courses across the country have now dropped the old term "physical anthropology" and replaced it with "biological anthropology." Our department recently changed the name of our "Introduction to Physical Anthropology" course to "Introduction to Biological Anthropology," and now, we wish to change the name of our minor as well as the name of the subdiscipline within our majors.

Thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Debbie Guatelli-Steinberg, Ph.D.
Professor and Undergraduate Studies Chair

and

W. Scott McGraw, Ph.D.
Professor and Chair

From: [Vankeerbergen, Bernadette](#)
To: [McGraw, Scott](#)
Subject: RE: Concurrence related to name change within anthropology
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 3:26:00 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)

OK, we'll assume concurrence for this.
Bernadette



Bernadette Vankeerbergen, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean, Curriculum

College of Arts and Sciences

114F University Hall, 230 North Oval Mall

Columbus, OH 43210

Phone: 614-688-5679

<http://asccas.osu.edu>

From: McGraw, Scott <mcgraw.43@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 3:25 PM
To: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Subject: RE: Concurrence related to name change within anthropology

Hi Bernadette,

No I did not.

Best,
Scott



W. Scott McGraw

Professor and Chair

Department of Anthropology

4042 Smith Laboratory, 174 W. 18th Avenue

Columbus, OH 43210-1106

(614) 688-3794

Mcgraw.43@osu.edu

From: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Sent: Monday, March 20, 2023 3:24 PM
To: McGraw, Scott <mcgraw.43@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Concurrence related to name change within anthropology

Hi Scott,

Did you ever hear back from them about this?

Best,
Bernadette



Bernadette Vankeerbergen, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean, Curriculum

College of Arts and Sciences

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From: McGraw, Scott <mcgraw.43@osu.edu>

Sent: Friday, February 10, 2023 10:42 AM

To: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Concurrence related to name change within anthropology

Done.



W. Scott McGraw

Professor and Chair

Department of Anthropology

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Mcgraw.43@osu.edu

From: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>

Sent: Friday, February 10, 2023 10:28 AM

To: McGraw, Scott <mcgraw.43@osu.edu>

Subject: RE: Concurrence related to name change within anthropology

Thanks, Scott.

You might like to remind them that they have 2 weeks (i.e., until 2/24/23) and if you have not heard from them by then, concurrence will be assumed. Adding that reminds everyone of the OAA concurrence rules. (Every now and then I come across units who somehow find themselves endlessly

waiting for responses. This should not happen.)

Best,
Bernadette



Bernadette Vankeerbergen, Ph.D.

Assistant Dean, Curriculum

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From: McGraw, Scott <mcgraw.43@osu.edu>
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 5:43 PM
To: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette <vankeerbergen.1@osu.edu>
Subject: FW: Concurrence related to name change within anthropology

FYI



W. Scott McGraw

Professor and Chair

Department of Anthropology

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Mcgraw.43@osu.edu

From: McGraw, Scott
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 5:43 PM
To: Fisk, Harold <fisk.13@osu.edu>
Subject: Concurrence related to name change within anthropology

Hi Harold,

As you may know, in recent years one subfield of anthropology has undergone a name change. What used to be called “physical anthropology” is now referred to as biological anthropology. Many have been using “biological anthropology” for years; however, two years ago we formally changed the name of our major society (from American Association of Physical Anthropology to American Association of Biological Anthropology), the journal (from *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* to *American Journal of Biological Anthropology*), textbooks (see below), courses across the country, etc.

This development (100 years overdue) reflects a change from the old days, when practitioners studied (only) the “physical” evidence for human variation and evolution (largely skulls), to a more comprehensive term embracing all components of how people now study human variation and evolution: primatology, functional morphology, genetics, paleoanthropology, forensics, bioarchaeology, health, etc. Thus, biological anthropology.

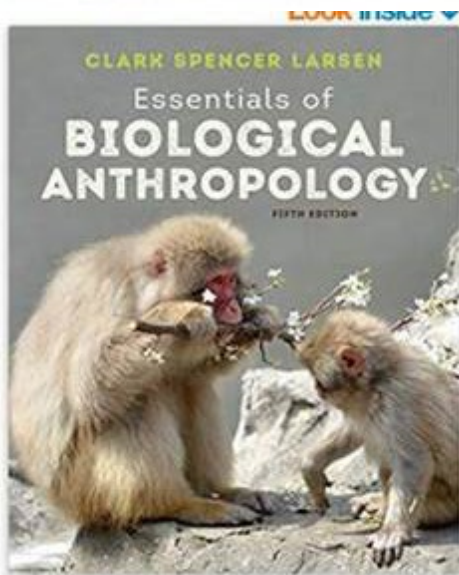
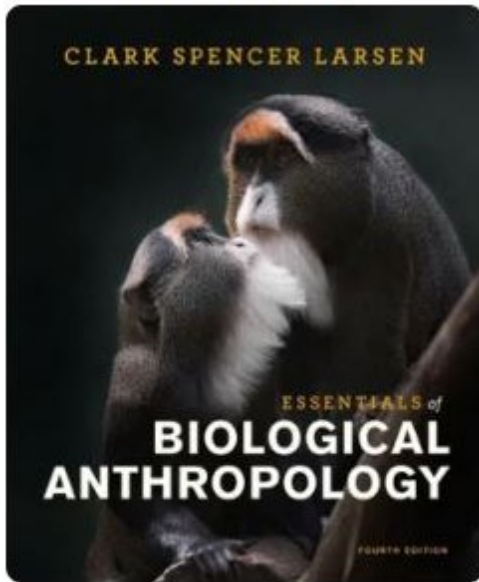
Here are a couple of announcements:

<https://culturologies.wordpress.com/2018/07/16/american-association-of-physical-anthropologists-name-change/>

Name Change[\[edit\]](#)

In 2018, at the 87th meeting of the AAPA in Austin, Texas, the Executive Committee stated its intention to hold a survey of AAPA members to assess their opinions on whether the AAPA should change its name, and what potential names could replace it. There were several motivations for the survey, including the fact that most academic departments, courses, and textbooks today use the term biological anthropology rather than physical anthropology, which evokes antiquated focuses of the discipline, such as racial typology. Moreover, most members of the AAPA self-identify as biological anthropologists, rather than physical anthropologists. The survey was administered online to AAPA members, and a majority voted in favor of changing the name, with the most popular name choice being American Association of Biological Anthropologists.^[3] A formal vote among Regular members will take place at the 2019 meeting, with a final vote at the 2020 meeting.

Two editions of Clark Larsen’s (chair of our department for 16 years) textbook



In keeping with changes to our discipline, we have put in a request to change the name of our introductory course (ANTHROP 2200) from *Intro to Physical Anthropology* to *Intro to Biological Anthropology*. This change will also be made to portions of our majors and minors: we will now correctly refer to the three subdisciplines of Anthropology as (1) Archaeology, (2) Cultural Anthropology and (3) Biological Anthropology.

Bernadette Vankeerbergen (ASC Curriculum Office) suggested I contact you for concurrence which I hope you can provide. To summarize: nothing is changing on our end except the proper way we now refer to ourselves!

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Many thanks.
Scott



W. Scott McGraw

Professor and Chair

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