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13 November 2011

DAY Prehistoric Cultures Week 11
Premodern and Modern Humans
Neandertals and “The Hobbit”

This week we visit *The Last Man Standing* and *Aliens from Earth* visit us.

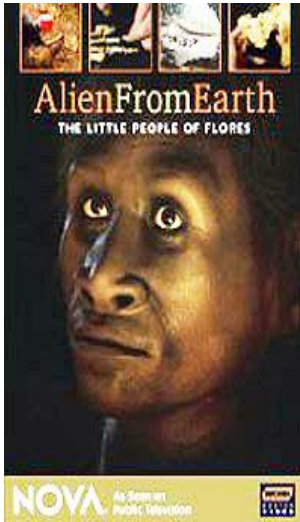
But before we do that we'll review the second midterm. . . .



“In ‘**Last Human Standing**,’ the final program of the NOVA three-part series *Becoming Human*, examines the fate of the Neanderthals, our European cousins who died out as modern humans spread from Africa into Europe during the Ice Age. Did modern humans interbreed with Neanderthals or exterminate them? The program explores crucial evidence from the recent decoding of the Neanderthal genome.”

”How did modern humans take over the world? New evidence suggests that they left Africa and colonized the rest of the globe far earlier, and for different reasons, than previously thought. As for *Homo sapiens*, we have planet Earth to ourselves today, but that's a very recent and unusual situation. For millions of years, many kinds of hominids co-existed. At one time *Homo sapiens* shared the planet with Neanderthals, *Homo erectus*, and the mysterious ‘Hobbits’—three-foot-high humans who thrived on the Indonesian island of Flores until as recently as 12,000 years ago.”

"'Last Human Standing' examines why 'we' survived while those other ancestral cousins died out. And it explores the provocative question: In what ways are we still evolving today?"
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/evolution/becoming-human-part-3.html>>.



“An ancient legend on the Indonesian island of Flores tells of an elflike creature similar to the fictional hobbit of novels and film. But a controversial 2003 archeological find not only suggests that there could be some truth behind the legend but promises to rewrite a key chapter in the human evolutionary story. This program investigates the discovery, analysis, and startling implications of **the hobbit of Flores.**”

“Known for its strange fauna, Flores may now have offered the world the strangest yet. The hobbit was an adult female no larger than a three-year-old child, with a skull less than one-third the size of a modern human's. The discovery created a media sensation. But only now, five years later, are researchers beginning to make sense of this archeological oddity, dubbed *Homo floresiensis*. Definitive proof of its place in the human lineage awaits future finds, especially DNA evidence, but the implications of the work so far are intriguing and quite possibly revolutionary.”

“Dated at 18,000 years old, the hobbit's skull was found deep in the sediment of a cave as big as a concert hall. In earlier deposits stretching back as far as 95,000 years ago, the researchers later found bones from a number of other hobbits, as well as stone tools, charcoal, and the butchered remains of pygmy elephants, implying that these tiny cave dwellers had hunted and used fire.”

“Many experts believe such sophisticated behavior is hard to reconcile with the size of the hobbit's brain, which is smaller than a chimpanzee's. Even more astonishing, the hobbit's anatomy resembles that of some of our earliest extinct ancestors in Africa three million or more years ago, yet it lived relatively recently and may even have survived into historical times.”

“But is the hobbit an anomaly, a modern human whose small stature and unusual features are the result of disease? Or could its size result from the "island effect" that often causes large creatures to evolve to be small and vice versa—witness Flores's extinct pygmy elephant and still surviving giant lizard, the Komodo dragon?”

“Or is the hobbit the sole testament to a previously unrecognized branch of the human family tree? If so, how did it end up in Indonesia with virtually no evidence of comparable early hominids anywhere between there and Africa, the root of the family tree?”
<<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/evolution/alien-earth.htm>>

In the **moodle** *Forum* this week we have a second look at the last man standing and the aliens from earth . . .

- [Forum: What happened to the Neandertals? \(Due by Friday, 25 November 2011\)](#)
- [Forum Discussion: The "Hobbit": New Species or Disfigured Prehistoric Human? \(Due by Friday, 25 November 2011\)](#)

Your **moodle** Topics and Reading Assignments Listings for Week 11 will look something like the information at the end of this memo.

As usual, if you have any questions, please let me know: <mailto:troufs@d.umn.edu>. Or, better yet, post them on you **moodle** Discussion and Project forum boards.

Share your ideas. Discuss them on-line with the others in class . . .

DAY

DAY [General Student Discussion Area](#)

DAY [Live chat for Project Collaboration](#)

Best Regards,

Tim Roufs

Your **moodle** Presentations and Readings Listings for Week 11 will look something like this:

[Anth 1602 Prehistoric Cultures](#)

Week 11 — "Premodern Humans" & Modern Humans

Neandertals and "The Hobbit"



DAY Week 11 Memo
CE Week 11 Memo



DAY 21 Tuesday, 15 November 2011 nlt 12:45
CE Week 11 Monday, 21 November 2011 nlt 6:30

video:
Becoming Human: Unearthing Our Earliest Ancestors, Part 3, "Last Human Standing"
NOVA
(180/3 min., 2010, UM DULUTH Library Multimedia GN282 .B436 2010 DVD)
[film HomePage](#)
[course viewing guide](#)

BECOMING HUMAN
PART 3: LAST HUMAN STANDING

[Watch Becoming Human Part 3](#)

DAY 22 Thursday, 17 November 2011 nlt 12:49
CE Week 11 Monday, 21 November 2011 nlt 7:30

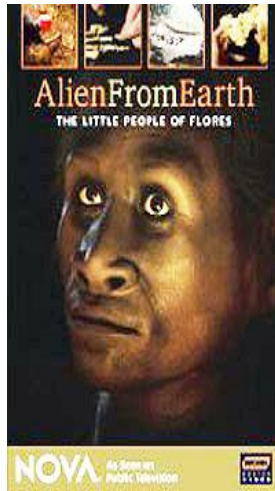
video:

[***Alien from Earth***](#)

(56 min., 2009, CC, UM DULUTH Library Multimedia GN855.16 A55 2009 DVD)

[The "Hobbit" Web Page](#)
(*Homo floresiensis*)

[NOVA *Alien from Earth* Home Page](#)
[course viewing guide](#)

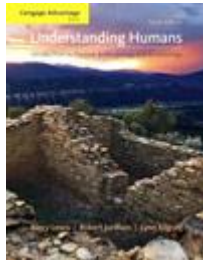


[Watch a Preview](#)

[Watch online](#)

For Week 11 Activities see [noodle](#)

REM assignment:
α Ch. 12, pp. 283-310



For Week 11 Activities see [noodle](#)
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