Incoming Biology students at longwood can take a class called Biology 251: Introduction to Ecology and Evolution and Biology. This class helps new students engage in simple research methods and procedures. It involves the integration of statistics and the use of software programs. This class, along with Biology 399: Evolution help me understand the evolutionary implications of humans.

In Biology 251, my class demonstrated a human demography lab at the local cemetery in Farmville, Virginia. In this class, I analyzed survivorship curves for males and females who died before 1925 and after 1950 buried in Westview Cemetery. From this data, survivorship curves were constructed in order to find patterns from males and females in this area. I found that females had a much lower mortality rate than males in both the Pre-1925 and Post-1950 groups. male mortality rates were higher due many different factors, such as susceptibility to fatal illnesses, environmental conditions, and varying genetics. From this study, I found that females survived longer than males in this area.

In Biology 399, I wrote a term paper on how the human brain has evolved over time. I used research from Biology 251 to help me do this project. I compared the populations and ages that dies in 1925 and after 1950 to help understand this concept. I was surprised because even though we are considered (by ourselves) to be the smartest species on our planet, we are still susceptible to mental illness as opposed to other animals that pertain smaller brains. I find this fascinating because without the use of technology (such as before 1925) we had a relatively low life span (30-40). Today, many of us can expect to live to at least 60-70. This is fascinating because we are defining our life span because of our evolution over time.

By taking these two courses, I have been able to think critically and apply the major principles of ecology and evolution into a variety of different projects. All of these subdisciplines are interconnected.