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# Craniometric differences in mountain gorilla populations: New skeletal material from Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, Uganda

**Dr Jason S. Massey, Monash University**



## About the seminar

Gorilla biology provides an important framework for reconstructing variation in the primate lineage and understanding the ecological factors shaping this variation. Large amounts of variation are present at all levels of gorilla taxonomy including the population-level. The two extant populations of mountain gorillas in the Virunga Massif and Bwindi Impenetrable Park live in discontinuous habitats. The distinctiveness of these two ecological zones is driven by differences in elevation. Differences in behaviour have been attributed to adaptations to these environments. Comparisons of morphology, however, have been hampered by the low sample sizes of the Bwindi population. In 2017, the Mountain Gorilla Skeletal Project began work to increase this skeletal collection and have since more than doubled the number of curated specimens available. A surprising amount of variation has been witnessed in the sample. In this talk I will present new results from the cranium highlighting and contextualizing the pattern and degree of variation between these two mountain gorilla populations.

## About the speaker

Jason Massey completed his PhD at the University of Minnesota in 2018. Following a Postdoc at the University of Minnesota Medical School, he joined the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology at Monash University as a Lecturer. Jason's research investigates the interplay between ontogeny and evolution, where changes in a population's ontogeny can lead to divergent adult shapes. Jason's fieldwork focuses on the skeletal remains of gorillas and chimpanzees in Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania. Recently, Jason is applying concepts and techniques developed for modern skeletal material to fossils from Drimolen, South Africa.

**Thursday 25 February 4 - 5pm AEDT**

## Location

Online, free to all

## Registration required:

[shorturl.at/bcsP8](https://shorturl.at/bcsP8)

## Contact

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**This talk is presented as part of the 2021 Biological Anthropology Research Seminar series.**