Anthropogeny utilized fossils, ancient DNA, and archaeological data to reconstruct past evolutionary history, compares genomes, development, life history, and behavior across humans and their closest relatives (and other species), explores the impact of genetic changes in model systems, and studies the role of environment, both biological and cultural.
CARTA is a transdisciplinary and scholarly effort that seeks to explore and explain the origins of the human phenomenon. Composed of UC San Diego and Salk Institute faculty, along with an international panel of prominent experts, our research efforts and discourse span an array of academic disciplines and forms our unique approach to the fundamental questions that comprise anthropogeny:

Where did we come from? How did we get here?

The fundamental questions of anthropogeny are addressed by investigating these broad topics:

- Primate genetics and evolution
- Paleoanthropology and hominid origins
- Mammalian and primate neurosciences
- Primate biology and medicine
- Language, communication, and cognition
- Nature-nurture interactions in explaining language and cognition
- Human and primate society and culture
- Comparative developmental biology of primates
- General theories for explaining humans

The practical applications and implications of anthropogeny are also of profound interest to CARTA. Understanding uniquely human diseases, the interplay between culture and biology, novel human brain features, the effect of modernity on well-being, and our ability for altruistic and cruel behavior in social interaction may only be possible in the light of anthropogeny.

WHAT IS CARTA?

WHAT DOES CARTA DO?

Public Symposia & Lectures
CARTA hosts free symposia and lectures to share and stimulate research on what makes us human, uniting experts with a curious, local and global audience. All symposia are video-recorded and live-streamed. Videos of past events are available online at CARTA, YouTube, iTunes, and UCTV.

Matrix of Comparative Anthropogeny (MOCA)
MOCA is an online collaborative database highlighting differences between humans and “great apes,” with an emphasis on distinctly human features. MOCA promotes new insights and transdisciplinary interactions to explain these differences and determine what is uniquely human.

Museum of Primatology (MOP)
CARTA is home to several unique skeletal and digital collections of humans, chimpanzees, and macaques, which contain the basic data for comparing humans and chimpanzees, our closest living relative.

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Anthropogeny Graduate Specialization
CARTA supports a unique anthropogeny graduate specialization available to PhD students in participating programs at UC San Diego. The program’s curriculum trains a new generation of transdisciplinary thinkers who can advance the study of anthropogeny while gaining valuable training in mediating between multiple knowledge bases.

Field Course in East Africa
The capstone to the anthropogeny specialization. Students observe ongoing field research, explore important archaeological sites, examine hominin fossils and artifacts, are introduced to ethnographic study of living hunter-gatherers, and encounter different non-human primates in the wild.