The Department of Anthropology through the Gavan Lecture Series Presents:

Virpi Lummaa
Academy Professor; Human Life History Group
University of Turku, Finland

Will present her talk:
Natural Selection – NOW!

How the Industrial Revolution and the accompanying nutritional, epidemiological and demographic changes have profoundly changed human ecology and biology, leading to major shifts for example in our disease patterns, lifespan, family size or age at puberty. These recent social and cultural adaptations have cast doubt on the continued relevance of Darwinian selection in humans – we now have modern medical care and effective contraceptive methods so does that mean evolution by natural selection has stopped? I will discuss how mismatches between past adaptations and the current environment mean that gene variants linked to higher fitness in the past may now predispose us to non-communicable diseases, such as Alzheimer disease, cancer and coronary artery disease. Moreover, in both traditional and industrialized societies, differences among individuals still lead to selection favoring certain heritable traits because although survival to old age can be high, not everyone has the same family size and many forego reproduction altogether. In line with this, increasing evidence suggests that the transition to modernity has also altered the direction and intensity of natural selection acting on many traits, with important implications for public and global health.

WHEN: October 15, 2018
WHERE: 101 Swallow Hall
LECTURE TIME: 5:30 PM
RECEPTION: 5:00 PM in 111 Swallow