

Darwin

Phil 309B · Prof. J. Dunn

Spring 2011
Tu,Th 7:00 - 8:30
Asbury Hall 222
DePauw University

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Description

In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin presents a compelling argument for the theory of evolution by natural selection, a theory with tremendous explanatory power. This theory is critically important to understanding the biological sciences. But Darwin's ideas have been influential in other areas, including politics, ethics, computer science, psychology, and religion. In this course we will consider Darwin's arguments, his theory, and the impact of Darwinian ideas outside of biology. We will begin the course with a careful reading of *The Origin of Species*. After this we will read Daniel Dennett's *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, which considers the wider impact of Darwin's ideas. We will conclude by reading Stephen Jay Gould's *Rocks of Ages*, and will consider how Darwin's ideas relate to religion. This is an upper-level course. Accordingly, you are expected to do the reading carefully and come to class ready for high-level, in-depth discussion of the material.

Books

- ▶ *The Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin. (Abbreviated 'Origin')
- ▶ *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, Daniel Dennett, Simon & Schuster. (Abbreviated 'DDI')
- ▶ *Rocks of Ages*, Stephen Jay Gould, Ballantine Books. (Abbreviated 'RoA')

(The books above are available at the University Bookstore.)

Other materials will be made available to you online through Moodle.

Grading

Participation	5%
Reading Responses	15%
Group Presentation:	10%
Take-Home Exams (3):	45% (15% each)
Paper Assignment:	25%

Course Requirements

Participation

One of the best ways to learn philosophy is to engage in careful, informed discussion about the material being read. You are expected to contribute to such discussion each day in class. For such discussions to be profitable, however, they must be *informed*. This means that you are also expected to *carefully* do the reading, and come to class with questions and comments. I will assess this aspect of your participation based on your engagement during class, your engagement outside of class, and your attendance. Consistently attending class and participating once per week (by some means) will earn you a C for this aspect of the course.

Written Responses

At least once each week, you will need to write a response to at least one of the assigned readings and post it to our discussion board in Moodle. In each response you need to do two things:

1. Very briefly summarize the reading. That is, tell me what you take to be the two or three main points the author tries to make. A sentence or two will suffice.
2. Give your reaction—positive, negative, neutral, tangential, whatever—to the reading. Your reaction may be short or long, but should be detailed enough for me to understand why you react to the reading the way you do.

We will often have more than one reading per class meeting. In this case you can respond to all or some of the readings. Sometimes the same readings will be assigned over two class meetings. If you would like to respond to these readings, you need to do so before the *first* class meeting where we discuss the material. In rare cases, I may allow responses on the second day, but these cases will always be announced in class.

You are encouraged to submit more than the once-per-week minimum. Your response will be due by noon the day of the class meeting where that reading will be discussed. Late responses, no matter what the cause or how slightly they are late, receive no credit.

Responses will be scored on a simple scale: excellent (4), good (3), or deficient (1). An average of one good response per week will yield a grade of B- for this portion of the course grade. More and/or better responses will yield a higher grade. Qualities that make a reading response better include: clarity of writing; thoughtfulness (e.g., offering careful critical appraisal of the reading); responding to more than one reading at a time (when more than one is assigned); and relating the assigned material to other assignments, other class work, outside research, etc. Reading responses will be considered separately from your participation. Earning over 51 points will get you full credit for this part of the course, as long as you turn in at least one response per week. That many points can be earned by submitting one Good response per week plus an additional good response four times during the semester. Alternatively, submitting one excellent response per week would earn full credit.

Take-Home Exams

There are three take-home exams:

Exam 1: Due 3/3

Exam 2: Due 4/12

Exam 3: Due 5/19

Paper Assignment

Your final paper should be approximately 2,000 words and is due on 5/12. There are three main parts to this assignment.

1. Meet with me, select a topic and at least one outside source: Due 4/5
2. Compose a rough draft of your paper: Due 4/21
Note: if you do not submit a rough draft, your paper can earn no better than a B-, no matter how brilliant it is!
3. Respond to comments and compose final draft of your paper: Due 5/12

To give you an idea of what is expected, below are two examples of the kind of structure that would be appropriate for your paper. (For more detailed information about the paper, please see the document posted on the course website.)

Example 1:

1. Present a view discussed in class.
2. Present an objection to that view.
3. Consider possible replies to the objection.
4. Evaluate the replies and offer an assessment.

Example 2:

1. Present a key argument from a paper that you selected in the area of your topic.
2. Explain this argument, defining all technical terms, and providing the best possible reasons in favor of each premise of the argument.
3. Evaluate the argument, explaining how someone could criticize it.

* I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the Writing Center in the Academic Resource Center, located in 115 Asbury. After scheduling an appointment, you will have the chance to meet with a trained tutor who will read your work and offer feedback. This is a great way to improve your writing, however, slots can fill up quickly, so please plan ahead and take advantage of this great resource.

Group Presentation

You and your group members will prepare a 15-minute presentation on one of six topics relevant to Chapters 11 and 12 of Darwin's *Origin*. The presentations will occur on 2/24. Detailed information about the presentation is available on our course website in a document titled (unsurprisingly) "Group Presentation". A word of warning: 2/24 is not that far away—start thinking about your presentation *now!*

Other Requirements

You should take control of your experience in this course: what you get out of the course will largely be a function of what you put in to it. If you are falling behind or are confused about something, please make arrangements to meet with me. I'm on campus every day and very happy to discuss this interesting material with you!

Things You Can Expect From Me

I will give clear and prompt feedback on your work.

I will assist you in choosing a paper topic, finding outside sources, and editing your paper.

I will meet with your group to discuss the group presentation (if you would like).

I will be available for extra help as needed.

Special Considerations

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university-administered activities and reasonable modifications/accommodations to students with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended in 2008. Any student needing special accommodations due to a disability should contact the Coordinator of Student Disability Services, Pam Roberts, 302 Harrison Hall or call (765) 658-6267. It is the responsibility of each student to discuss implementation of approved modifications/accommodations with each faculty member and/or staff member within one week of the date of receiving a modification/accommodation approval memo or within the first two weeks of the academic semester.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is very important, and violations are serious offenses, which I take very seriously. There is a clear Academic Integrity Policy that can be found here:

<http://www.depauw.edu/univ/handbooks/dpuhandbooks.asp?ID=101parentid=100>

It is your responsibility to read the university policy. If you are unclear about what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, it is your responsibility to contact me with any questions so that you are clear about it. Ignorance is not an excuse. The *minimum* penalty for violations of Academic Integrity is a 0 on the relevant assignment and a further reduction in your overall grade.

Darwin - Phil 309B - Schedule

Date	Topic	Required Reading	Supplementary Reading	Assignments
1-Feb	Introduction	-	<i>SEP</i> , "Darwinism"	
3-Feb	Darwinism	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 1 * Lewis, <i>Miracles</i> (Ch. 3)	* Kitcher, "Evolution for Everyone"	
8-Feb	Variation	* <i>Origin</i> , Chs. 1 & 2 * <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 2.1 * Jenkin, excerpt from "Review of <i>The Origin of Species</i> "	* Jenkin, "Review of <i>The Origin of Species</i> " * Largent, "Darwin's Analogy between Artificial and Natural Selection in the Origin of Species"	
10-Feb	Natural Selection	* <i>Origin</i> , Chs. 3 & 4 * <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 2.2-2.4		
15-Feb				
17-Feb	Darwinian Difficulties	* <i>Origin</i> , Ch. 6 * Behe, "Evidence for Intelligent Design from Biochemistry"	* Paley, "Natural Theology" (Chs. 1 & 2)	
22-Feb				
24-Feb	Geographical Distribution	* <i>Origin</i> , Chs. 11 & 12		Presentations EXAM 1 Assigned
1-Mar	Summary of The Theory	* <i>Origin</i> , Ch. 13 (<i>Morphology</i>), Ch. 14 * Kitcher, "Believing Where We Cannot Prove"		
3-Mar	Skyhooks and Cranes	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 3		EXAM 1 Due
8-Mar	The Tree of Life	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 4 * <i>Origin</i> , Ch. 13 (<i>Classification</i>)		
10-Mar	Possibility and Actuality	* <i>DDI</i> , Chs. 5.1-5.2 & 6	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 5.3-5.4	
15-Mar	Darwin in the Beginning	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 7 * Hacking, "The Inverse Gambler's Fallacy"	McGrath, "The Inverse Gambler's Fallacy: a reply to Hacking"	
17-Mar	Engineering and Biology	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 8		
29-Mar	Adaptationism	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 9 * Skyrms, "Sex and Justice"		
31-Mar	NO CLASS	RESEARCH FOR PAPER		
5-Apr	Adaptationism	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 10 * Gould & Lewontin, "The Spandrels of San Marco..."		EXAM 2 Assigned Paper Topic Due
7-Apr	Memes	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 12 * Whitmeyer, "On the Relation Between Genes and Memes"		
12-Apr	Mind and Language	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 13	* Chomsky, "Of Minds and Language"	EXAM 2 Due
14-Apr	Meanings	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 14 * Searle, "Minds, Brains, and Programs"		
19-Apr	Meanings	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 14 * Fodor, "Against Darwinism"		
21-Apr	Machines: AI	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 15		Rough Draft Due
26-Apr	Morality	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 16		
28-Apr	Morality	* <i>DDI</i> , Ch. 17		
3-May	Naturalism	* Plantinga, "Naturalism Defeated?"		
5-May	NOMA	* <i>RoA</i> , Ch. 1 & 2		
10-May	Religion and Evolution	* <i>RoA</i> , Ch. 3		
12-May	Religion and Science	* <i>RoA</i> , Ch. 4 * Ruse, "Review of Gould's <i>RoA</i> "		EXAM 3 Assigned Final Paper Due