

Biological Evolution in the Public Sphere

Fall 2015 CS – 0102T

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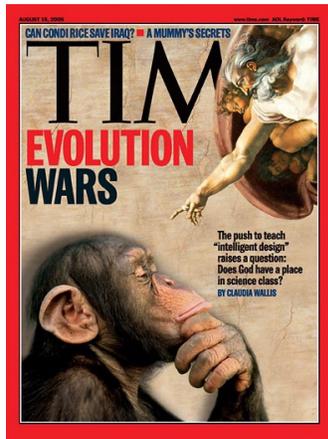
Office: ASH 218

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Class meeting time: Monday-Wednesday 10:30-11:50pm in ASH 221

Office hours: Wednesday 1:00-2:00pm and Thursday 2:30-3:30pm

Teaching Assistant: Mirza Kamil Baig - mba14@hampshire.edu



Course Description:

Biological evolution is often at the center of science and religion debates. While there is a broad consensus among biologists about the common descent of humans from prior species and the processes that drive biological evolution, public debates continue over the validity of evolution. According to the latest Gallup poll, 42% of Americans believe in a creationist view of human origins, and there are constant efforts by various school boards across the country to include some form of creationism in biology classes. Despite all the scientific evidence, why is biological evolution at the center of public debates today? In this course, we will look at sociological, psychological, and cultural factors that shape the public reception of evolution in the US and abroad. We will also look at the reliability of polling surveys and will conclude the course by analyzing the role of media in public evolution debate, from the Scopes Trial to the recent debate between Bill Nye and creationist, Ken Ham.

Readings:

Textbook: *American Genesis* by Jeffrey Moran

Additional readings will be available on the course moodle site.

Requirements

Readings & class participation: You are expected to have read the assigned reading for each class, and come prepared to participate in the class discussion. Please bring copies of the readings with you, or have them available on your laptop, as we will often be working with the readings in class. Class participation will influence your evaluation or grade.

Papers: In addition to your final paper, you will be required to write three short papers (3-4 pages). These papers will be due on Moodle no later than Friday September 25th, Friday October 23rd, and Friday November 20th, respectively.

Final paper and associated presentations: You are expected to do literature research and write a final paper on the topic of your choice, but approved by me. The length of the final paper is expected to be between 5-7 pages. Here are the relevant deadlines associated with your final paper:

Final paper proposal: Wednesday, November 4

Final paper proposal class presentation (3 minutes each): Monday November 9

Final paper presentation (7 minutes each): Monday December 7 and Wednesday 9

Final paper due: Monday, December 15

E-mail policy: 1) I am happy to answer your questions over e-mail. However, before pressing the send button, please think: Is the information you are seeking already available elsewhere (for example on the syllabus)? 2) Please do not expect immediate response (please allow 24 hours for response before sending a reminder) 3) If for some reason you have to send an assignment by e-mail, please cc a copy to yourself. I will not accept the excuse of forgetting to attach the assignment or some other e-mail malfunction. It is *your* responsibility to make sure we have received the full assignment. I will send you a confirmation e-mail.

In order to receive an evaluation you *must* complete all work on time, attend class regularly. In order to receive a designation of ‘satisfactory completion’ you must meet the above requirements and your work must show sufficient effort and proficiency with the general themes of the class. If you miss more than 3 classes, you will not receive an evaluation.

Class Policies:

- All assignments are due on the class Moodle website on the specified due date; **late work will not be accepted unless you have spoken with me prior to the due date, and I have agreed to an alternate due date.** If, due to serious illness, death in the family or other tragedy, you must miss a significant class meeting and/or assignment, please notify me as soon as you can.
- You are expected to attend class prepared to discuss the material assigned for that day and to arrive on time. If you miss a significant number of classes this will affect your final evaluation (however, please see next point).
- *Policies in Regards to Illness, Epidemic, or Pandemic:*
 - You are encouraged to hand in written work electronically. However, please note that it is your responsibility to insure that your work gets sent, received, and is in a form we can read. I suggest cc-ing the e-mail to **yourself** so that you can tell if the message got sent.
 - If you miss class due to illness, you will be given extra time to make up assignments – this time is to be negotiated directly with the professors, as people will be out for varying times and have different demands on them from other courses and work obligations. The

idea is to get caught up as quickly as possible, without accruing incompletes. We will negotiate a route to your finishing the course during the semester or with a very brief extension. Be prepared to use the week after classes end (exam week at the other colleges) for make-up work..

- Class should be a comfortable arena for sharing ideas, and every member of the class should feel respected and included in the discussion. Religion can be a sensitive topic, so it is particularly important to be mindful of this, and respectful of your classmate's ideas and contributions to class discussion. Be thoughtful and courteous in making your own comments, and be sure everyone has a chance to contribute.
- **Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated.** If a student is found guilty of plagiarism, he or she will not receive an evaluation for this class and the case will be brought before the Dean.

“The failure to acknowledge one's sources is more than a failure to be properly socialized into a community of scholars. Writers who fail to note sources are, at best, ignorant, and, at worst, dishonest. Unacknowledged borrowing from the work of others in any medium is a fundamental repudiation of the deepest values of the academic community.” – Statement on Ethics of Scholarship on The Hub (<http://www.hampshire.edu/casa/9063.htm>)

Accommodating Learning Differences: If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you have medical information to share with me that may impact your performance or participation in this course, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

If you have approved accommodations, please go to Accessibility Services in CASA/Lemelson Center to pick up Letters of Accommodation to facilitate a proactive discussion about reasonable accommodations for this course.

If you have not already done so, students with documented disabilities who need to utilize accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Accessibility Services to formally request accommodations as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Accessibility Services is located in the Center for Academic Success and Advising (CASA) and can be contacted via email: Accessibility@hampshire.edu, via phone: (413) 559-5498, or in person: Lemelson Building.

Science & Religion: Biological Evolution in the Public Sphere

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and/or on the course website

Tu 9/8: **Introduction: Biological Evolution in the *Public Sphere***

Reading:

None

W 9/9: Setting up definitions of Evolution, Creationism, and the Public Sphere

Reading:

None

Part 1: Evolution and Religion in the UK

M 9/14: Darwin and Religion

Reading Moore in *Science & Religion: A Historical Introduction*, p 208-218

Supplemental: Browne: *Charles Darwin - The Power of Place*, p 3-81; Moore in *Galileo goes to jail: And other myths about science and religion*, p 142-151

W 9/16: Discussion continued

Reading: Select letters from Darwin

M 9/21: Huxley-Wilberforce debate

Reading:; Livingstone in *Galileo goes to jail: And other myths about science and religion*, p 152-160

Supplemental: Browne: p 82-125

W 9/23 Advising Day

F 9/25 Paper 1 Due

M 9/28 Huxley-Wilberforce debate - discussion continued

Reading: Newspaper articles about the debate

Supplemental: Brooke, *The Wilberforce-Huxley Debate: Why did it Happen?*; Kaalund, *Revisiting the Huxley-Wilberforce debate through the periodical press*

Part 2: The Scopes Trial and the Making of the Anti-Evolution Movement in the US

W 9/30 Fundamentalism and Creationism

Reading: *Fundamentalism* from The Encyclopedia of Religion, Communication, and Media

Supplemental Reading: Lienesch: In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, the Scopes Trial and the Making of the Antievolution Movement, chapter 1.

- M 10/5: The drama of the trial
Reading: Larson in *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction*, p. 289-298;
 Supplemental: Lienesch: *In the Beginning: Fundamentalism, the Scopes Trial and the Making of the Antievolution Movement*, chapter 6.
- W 10/7 Discussion continued
- M 10/12 OCTOBER BREAK
- W 10/14 Gender and the antievolution movement
Reading: Moran, *Monkeys and Mothers: Gender and the Antievolution Impulse from American Genesis*
- M 10/19 Regionalism and the antievolution movement
Reading: Moran, *Regionalism and the Antievolution Impulse from American Genesis: The Evolution Controversies from Scopes to Creation Science* (2012)
- W 10/21 Discussion continued
- F 10/23 Paper 2 Due**
- M 10/26 Evening screening of *Inherit the Wind*
- W 10/28 Discussion
 Reading: TBA
- M 11/2 Race and the antievolution movement
 Reading: Moran, *Fighting for the Future of Race: Evolution for African American Pedagogues and Preachers* from *American Genesis* (2012)
- W 11/4 Discussion continued
- W 11/4 Final paper proposal due**
- M 11/9 Final Paper Proposal presentation**
- Part 3: Sociocultural Factors Shaping Views on Evolution**
- W 11/11 Is evolution an indicator of science literacy?
Reading:
 Kahan 2014: Climate Science and the Measurement Problem, *Advances Pol. Psych* (preliminary draft)
 Pew Report: Republicans' views on evolution, January 3, 2014
- M 11/16 Factors that shape public attitude towards evolution
Reading:
 Haider-Markel & Joslyn 2008: Pulpits versus Ivory Towers: Socializing Agents and Evolution Attitudes, *Social Science Quarterly*, 89(3), 665

W 11/18 Discussion continued

F 11/20 Paper 3 Due

M 11/23 Intelligent Design and the Dover Trial
Reading: *TBA*
Daily Show on *Evolution-Schmevolution*

W 11/25 THANKSGIVING

Part 4: Evolution in Public Education

M 11/30 Who decides if evolution should be taught or not?
Readings:
Berkman and Plutzer in *Evolution, Creationism, and the Battle to Control America's Classrooms*, chapters 1, 2

W 12/2 Discussion continued:
Readings:
Berkman and Plutzer in *Evolution, Creationism, and the Battle to Control America's Classrooms*, chapter 9

M 12/7 **Final paper presentations I**

W 12/9 **Final paper presentations II**

M 12/14 **Final paper due**