

PHILOSOPHY 3248: DARWIN

Fall 2009

Professor Philip Kitcher

Aims

The course will consider Darwin's many-sided achievement. We shall begin with the historical context in which Darwin developed the evolutionary views for which he is best known. His route to the *Origin of Species* will be reviewed, and we shall focus in detail on the structure of Darwin's proposals and his arguments for them. After considering the debates that followed the publication of the *Origin*, we shall look at some of Darwin's later work, particularly the *Descent of Man*, his impact on nineteenth century social thought, the difficulties encountered by his ideas between 1870 and 1930, and the emergence of the "Modern Synthesis". The last four weeks of the course will examine Darwin's influence on many facets of contemporary thought: on biology, on social sciences, on our understanding of religion and ethics, and on literature.

Requirements

There will be a mid-term exam (November 4), a final exam (at the time assigned by the registrar), and you will also write an essay (5-7 pp.) The essay is due on December 2 in class. Your grade will be determined as follows: Mid-term (20%), Essay (40%), Final (40%). Contributions to class discussion can only help your grade.

Required Text

If you do not already own the edition of the *Origin* published by Broadview Press (BP) (which contains useful extra readings), please buy it. This edition is required for Contemporary Civilization. Copies are available at Book Culture.

There is also a reader (DR), available from the Village Copier. Please buy a copy.

Other readings are available free on the Darwin Project site (PS). I encourage you to Bookmark this site and to explore it extensively.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

- 9/9 *Darwin's Life* No Reading
- 9/14 *Natural History Before Darwin* No Reading
- 9/16 *On the Beagle* Voyage of the Beagle Chs. X, XVII (PS)
- 9/21 *Towards the Origin* Selection from Malthus (BP), Notebook B (PS)
- 9/23 *Origin: Natural Selection* BP Chapters 1-4
- 9/28 *Origin: Proposals and Difficulties* BP Chapters 5-6
- 9/30 GUEST LECTURE: *Darwin's Finches and Darwin's Family*
- 10/5 *Origin: Tentative Explanations* BP Chapters 7-8
- 10/7 *Origin: The Fossil Record* BP Chapters 9-10
- 10/12 *Origin: Biogeography* BP Chapters 11-12
- 10/14 *Origin: Wrapping up the Case* BP Chapters 13-14
- 10/19 *Mobilizing the Troops* Selected letters [1/11/1844 to Hooker; 5/17/1855 to Fox; 7/20/1856 to Gray; 11/23/1856 to Hooker; 6/25/1858 to Lyell; 3/30/1859 to Lyell; 9/20/1859 to Lyell; 9/30/1859 to Lyell; 10/3/1859 from Lyell; 11/11/1859 to Henslow; 11/21/1859 from Hooker; 11/23/1859 from Huxley; 11/25/1859 to Huxley; 12/14/1859 to Hooker; 12/24/1859 from Sedgwick; 12/28/1859 to Huxley; 1/28/1860 to Gray; 5/18/1860 to Wallace; 5/22/1860 to Gray; 7/2/1860 to Hooker; 7/3/1860 to Huxley.] (PS; all selections can be found by opening the text of Volume II of *Life and Letters*.)
- 10/21 *Reception of the Origin I* Selections from Sedgwick, Owen, Hopkins (DR)
- 10/26 *Reception of the Origin II* Selections from Pictet, Hutton, Jenkin (DR)
- 10/28 *Descent of Man* Selections in BP
- 11/4 **MID-TERM EXAM**
- 11/9 *Social Darwinism* Selection from Spencer in BP
- 11/11 *Difficulties for Natural Selection* No Reading
- 11/16 *The Impact of Mendel* No Reading
- 11/18 *The Synthesis* Selection from Mayr in DR
- 11/23 *Adaptationism and Beyond* Selection from Gould and Lewontin (DR)
- 11/25 *Sociobiology* Selection from Wilson (DR)

11/30	<i>Explaining Cooperation</i>	Selections from Dawkins, Axelrod (DR)
12/2	<i>Evolutionary Psychology</i>	Selections from Buss, Cosmides/Tooby (DR)
12/7	<i>Darwin and Religion</i>	Selection from Dennett (DR)
12/9	<i>Darwin and Ethics</i>	Selections from Lewens, Kitcher (DR)
12/14	<i>Darwin and Literature</i>	No Reading

Office Hours

My office hours are Monday 4.15-6.00 and Tuesday 2.30-4.00. My office is 717 Philosophy Hall. I am also available by appointment at other times. Tel: 4-4884; e-mail psk16@columbia.edu.