



Religion & Evolution - Rel 3938

Purpose, Design, God, and Self in an Evolving Planet

—Spring 2016—

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OVERVIEW

Since Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (1859), the theory of evolution has transformed nearly every intellectual discipline in fundamental ways, religion included. This course is a philosophical and historiographical examination of the religious and scientific issues involved in thinking critically about religion and evolution. While many religious thinkers immediately accepted the theory, many did not. There are, however, the questions as to how, why, in what ways, and which aspects of evolution by natural selection was or was not accepted. This course will explore the larger history of science and religion and theoretical modes for understanding it, with a special focus on the late 19th to our present time, looking at a wide range of global religious reactions to evolutionary theory. This course will challenge us to look at evolutionary theory from a wide range of metaphysical, cosmological, and philosophical perspective, those more familiar and those less familiar. We shall see that evolutionary theory provided a rich set of scientific and philosophical concepts by which religious thinkers reconstructed their own traditions. We will also explore how evolutionary theory is used to look forward in time, to make suggestions about what the human race could be, particularly in the media.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the constructed nature of the terms "science," "religion," "evolution," and the constructed nature of the relationships between "science" and "religion."
2. To understand the social, religious, political, psychological, and philosophical reasons that specific thinkers constructed and related evolutionary theory with specific metaphysical positions in specific texts and contexts.
3. To grasp the scientific, philosophical, theological, and historiographical issues involved in studying religion and evolution.
4. To develop one's own understanding of evolutionary theory and the larger meaning of it for disciplines like religion, philosophy, psychology, and so forth.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and Participation (10%):** The participation grade will be determined on the basis of attendance, preparedness, and active participation in the discussions throughout the semester.
2. **Reading Response Papers (20%):** Students should complete two written assignments of 3-4 pages (or 750-1,000 words) during the semester on the readings and lectures. The response papers should accomplish: (1) an analytic

discussion of a reading and lecture from a topic prior to the due date of the paper, and (2) a short evaluation of your perspective on the reading and lecture content.

3. **Midterm Exam (20%):** The midterm exam will be designed to evaluate your understanding of the themes covered in the weekly lectures and discussions. The midterm exam will be held in class during our regular time and consist of a combination of short answers and essays.
4. **Final Exam (20%):** Same structure as the midterm, but a bit longer.
5. **Final Paper (30%):** This paper should be 10-12 pages, involve a close reading of the class material and a thesis statement. We will discuss your paper topic throughout the semester.

Required Text and Helpful Websites

- *Religion and Evolution*, Jonathan Edelmann. Reader available at Target Copy, 1414 W. University Ave.

Grading Breakdown: Grades will be computed based on the percentages given above according to the following grading scale: A 100-93; A- 92-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-63; D- 62-60; E: 59 or below. For more info about UF's grade system: www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html

Academic Honesty: Guidelines for academic honesty at the University of Florida can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/honor-code>. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the guidelines detailed at the above sites and adhere to them. Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students>.

Absences, Make-Up Assignment, and Etiquette: In order to maximize learning experiences, students are expected to attend every single class. Students can request an extension on an assignment only in extraordinary circumstances. If the instructor does not grant an extension, late assignments will be marked down 1/3 grade for each day late. Students are expected to arrive on time and prepared to discuss the readings for the week. Before entering the classroom, students should turn off their cell phones. Students who engage in disruptive behavior during class (including, receiving or making calls, sending text messages, whispering, talking in class etc.) could be asked to leave and marked absent for the day.

Netiquette and In-class Tech-use: Communication Courtesy: As a general rule, computers are not allowed in class. If you have a special need, please see me for permission. All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. See Netiquette Document at teach.ufl.edu

Academic Honesty, Students with Disabilities, and Getting Help: Guidelines for academic honesty at the University of Florida can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/honor-code>. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the guidelines detailed at the above sites and adhere to them. Any student with a disability must register with the office of the Dean of Students: accessibility.ufl.edu/. I am happy to help in any way that I can. For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning, please contact the UF Help Desk at: learning-support@ufl.edu, (352) 392-HELP, <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>. Any student with a disability must register with the office of the Dean of Students: accessibility.ufl.edu/.

Tentative Schedule

—READING SOME FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS: WEEKS 1-3—

1. Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species*, Ch 14 (Conclusion), 1859; and *The Descent of Man and Section in Relation to Sex*, sexual section, 1871
2. Alfred Russell Wallace, *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, On the Law which has regulated the Introduction of New Species, 1855
3. Ernst Mayr, *Evolution and the Diversity of Life*, Evolution, 1976
4. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, Explaining the very improbable and Accumulating small change
 - No classes on Jan 18, 2018
 - Natural History Museum Visit on 22 Jan 2016

—SCIENCE AND RELIGION: THE INDEPENDENCE AND COMPLEXITY THEORIES: WEEKS 4-5—

5. David Wilson, The Historiography of Science and Religion, *Science and Religion*, ed. by G Fergren
6. Steven Jay Gould, *Rock of Ages: Science and religion in the fullness of life*, The Problem Resolved in Principle
7. John Hedley Brooke, *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science* (edited by P. Clayton and Z. Simpson), Contributions from the History of Science and Religion

—PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN EVOLUTION: WEEKS 6-8—

8. John Brooke, *Science and Religion*, Evolutionary Theory and Religious Belief
9. Elliot Sober, *Philosophy of Biology*, Creationism and Teleology
10. Daniel Dennett, An Idea is Born, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea*, Simon & Schuster, 1995.
 - Midterm on 24 Feb 2016, in-class
 - Reading Response Paper #1 due on 26 Feb 2016
 - Movie: "Ex Machina"
 - Spring Break for Week 9

—MIDDLE EASTERN PERSPECTIVES—

-Jewish: Week 10-

11. Marc Swetlitz, American Jewish Responses to Darwin and Evolutionary Theory, 1860-1890. *Disseminating Darwinism: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender*, eds. Ronald L. Numbers and John Stenhouse (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 209-45.
12. Shai Cherry, Three 20th Century Jewish Responses to Evolutionary Theory. *Aleph: Historical Studies in Science & Judaism*. No. 3 (2003), pp. 247-290

-Christian: Week 11-

13. Arthur Peacocke, Biology and a Theology of Evolution, *Zygon*, Volume 34, Issue 4, pages 695-712, 1999.
14. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, Forward and Postscript.

-Islamic: Week 12-

- There are no readings, but we will cover a series of lectures given at “Darwin and Evolution in the Muslim World Conference” <<https://www.hampshire.edu/ssims/darwin-and-evolution-in-the-muslim-world-conference>> in Hampshire College, MA, held October 2-3, 2009, especially,
 1. Thomas Glick (Boston University)
 2. Salman Hameed (Hampshire College)
 3. Ronald Numbers (University of Wisconsin-Madison)
 4. Public Panel Discussion: Evolution and Islam

—INDIC PERSPECTIVES—

-Hindu: Weeks 14-15-

15. Dermot Killingley (1995). “Hinduism, Darwinism and Evolution in Late Nineteenth-Century India.”. Found in *Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species: New Interdisciplinary Essays*. Edited by David Amigoni and Jeff Wallace. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.
16. Dermot Killingley. Yoga-Sūtra IV.2-3 and Vivedānanta's Interpretation of Evolution. *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 18:151. pp.179, 1990.
17. Matthijs Cornelissen. The Evolution of Consciousness in Śrī Aurobindo's Cosmopsychology. Wautischer, Helmut. 2008. *Ontology of consciousness: percipient action*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
18. C. Mackenzie Brown. The Integrative Evolutionism of Śrī Aurobindo Ghose. *Hindu Perspectives on Evolution*. Routledge Press. 2012
 - Reading Response Paper #2 due on 8 April 2016

-Buddhist, Review: Week 16-

19. Donald Lopez, Two Tibetans, *Buddhism & Science*, The Chicago University Press, 2008.
20. Justin R. Ritzinger, Dependent Co-evolution: Kropotkin's Theory of Mutual Aid and Its Appropriation by Chinese Buddhists, *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* (2013, 26: 89-112) New Taipei: Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies.
 - Final Paper due 20 April 2016
 - Final Exam on Friday, April 29, 7:30–9:30 a.m.