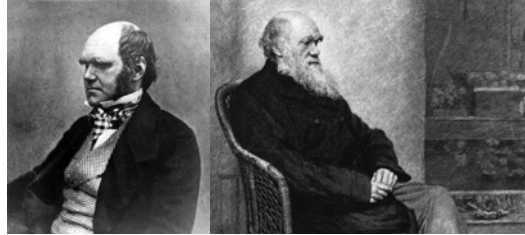


**WESTERN UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY  
Undergraduate Course Outline 2018-19**

**Philosophy Course Number: 2350F The Darwinian Revolution**



**Term: Fall**  
**Time: M 12:30-1:30, W12:30-2:30**  
**Classroom: NCB 295**

**Instructor: Eric Desjardins**  
**7168 WIRB, Office Hours: (TBA)**  
**E-mail: edesjar3@uwo.ca**



**C**harles Darwin is one of the most important figures in the modern world. His thinking about evolution has revolutionized not only biology but also psychology, sociology, and economics. The first half of this course retraces the steps leading from the first scientific theory of evolution elaborated during the early 1800s to Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, one of the most important books ever published. This survey will lead us into a reflective examination of Darwin's work and responses to it. Along the way, we will examine debates in biology, geology, and the philosophy of science that had a profound impact on Darwin's thinking. Some of the figures we will meet in this section include Lamarck, Georges Cuvier, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, Charles Lyell, Robert Chambers, John Herschel, William Whewell. The second half of the course focuses on the reception of Darwin's theory. We will retrace how early interpretations of his views on evolution triggered important developments in the theory of heredity and biometry that paradoxically resulted in a transient eclipse of Darwinism at the end of the 19th century. Finally, we will turn our attention to the rebirth of Darwinism through the Modern Synthesis, and look at the debates surrounding adaptationism and human evolution.

**TEXTS**

1. Darwin, C. (1859). *On the Origin of Species*, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (available at UWO Bookstore)
2. Extra material available online and on OWL
3. Ruse, M. (2009). *Charles Darwin*. (available at UWO Bookstore)

## **OBJECTIVES**

Students in this course will develop a good understanding of the conceptual history, structure and significance of the theory of evolution by natural selection. They will also acquire skills in analyzing and constructing complex arguments, both in discussion and in writing. By approaching the topic of evolution historically, this course aims to make evolutionary biology accessible to the non-specialist. Those who already have a good grasp of contemporary evolutionary theory will enrich their understanding of its complexities and significance, and of both historical and current disagreements about evolution among biologists as well as philosophers of biology. This course is also a great opportunity to develop advanced skills in identifying and formulating philosophical issues, and leading discussions in a structured and constructive fashion.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

The final grade will be based upon the following scheme:

Term Paper (~1800 words)	30%
Mid-term Paper (~1500 words)	25%
Leading Discussion	15%
Issue of the Week	10%
Attendance and Participation	20%

## **AUDIT**

Students wishing to audit the course should consult with the instructor prior to or during the first week of classes.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY POLICIES**

The **Department of Philosophy Policies** which govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses is available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website at <http://uwo.ca/philosophy/undergraduate/policies.html>.

It is your responsibility to understand the policies set out by the Senate and the Department of Philosophy, and thus ignorance of these policies cannot be used as grounds of appeal.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested.

The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

[http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### **ACADEMIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **PLAGIARISM CHECKING**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.