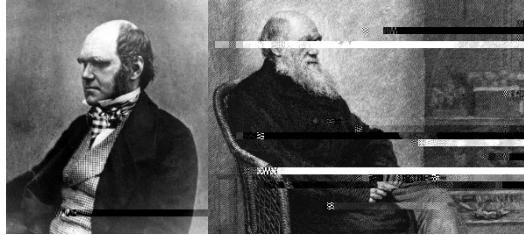


**WESTERN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
Undergraduate Course Outline 2022-2023**

Philosophy Course Number: 2350G The Darwinian Revolution



Term: Fall
Time: Tu 12:30-2:30, Th 12:30-1:30
Classroom: FNB 1270

Instructor: Eric Desjardins
7158 WIRB
E-mail: edesjar3@uwo.ca



Charles 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 part of this course retraces the steps leading from the first scientific theory of evolution elaborated during the early 1800s to Charles Darwin's *On the 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. The second part of the course introduces key elements of Neo-Darwinism and looks at issues surrounding adaptationism and human evolution. This will be the occasion to explore some debates that evolutionary thinking raised about the development of knowledge, and morality. Finally, the course closes by asking whether there was, indeed, a Darwinian Revolution.

TEXTS

1. Darwin, C. (1859). *On the Origin of Species*, 1st Edition (available at UWO Bookstore)
2. Extra material available online and on OWL
3. Ruse, M. (2009). *The Darwinian Revolution*.

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	35%
Mid-term Paper	25%
Leading Discussion	15%
Weekly assignments	10%
Participation	10%

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 that govern the conduct, standards, and expectations for student participation in Philosophy courses are available in the Undergraduate section of the Department of Philosophy website <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,

receive a similar exempt