

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
Department of Philosophy
Undergraduate Course Outline 2024-25

PHILOSOP 2350F
The Darwinian Revolution

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Information including instructor contact details and course location can be found on the course Owl BrightSpace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Charles Darwin is one of the most important figures in the modern world. His thinking about evolution has often been described as revolutionary, not only for 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 *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 course explores not only what shaped Darwin's thinking but also how his novel evolutionary thinking raised new avenues for understanding human's place in this world. Indeed, we will see that Darwin's views had numerous and sometimes perplexing consequences for our own origin and the development of human knowledge, and morality. Finally, the course closes by asking whether there was, indeed, a Darwinian Revolution.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students in this course will develop a good understanding of the conceptual history, structure, and significance of the theory of evolution by natural selection as formulated by Charles Darwin. They will also acquire skills in analyzing and constructing complex arguments, both in discussion and in writing. By approaching the topic of evolution historically and philosophically, this course aims to make evolutionary biology accessible to the non-specialist. Those who already have a good grasp of contemporary evolutionary theory will still

On the Origin of Species
2. Ruse, M. (2008). *Charles Darwin*. Bla

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Final Exam

30%

- a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
- b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
- c. Supporting documentation as relevant

site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the