

# Human Nature after Darwin

POSC 4848/THEO 4848, TF 2:30-3:45

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Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* started an ongoing revolution in the natural sciences, philosophy, theology, and political science. The course introduces students to Darwin's ideas and contemporary uses of them. Throughout the course, and particularly during student presentations, we consider how Darwin and post-Darwinian scholarship shed light on current debates about race, religion, gender, capitalism, the welfare state, food politics, embryo research, and many other topics.

## Required Books

Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (Barnes and Noble)

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, Concise Edition (Plume)

William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics* (Minnesota)

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter* (Duke)

Michael Ruse, *The Evolution-Creation Struggle* (Harvard)

Kenneth R. Miller, *Only a Theory* (Penguin)

## Class Requirements

1. Class Participation. Students are expected to come to class on time and prepared to discuss the readings.
2. Research paper and presentation. For the last class on each author, students will present 5-7 page research papers on what the author would say about a current political controversy.
3. The midterm, distributed a week beforehand, will have six questions. On the day of the exam, we will roll a die and select one question on *The Origin of Species* and one question on *The Descent of Man*. Students will have 1 hour to answer both questions. Students may study in groups but the exam is closed book.
4. The final has the same format as the midterm, only it will be on the theologians and political scientists we read in the second half of the class.

## Grade Distribution

Class participation	10
Research paper	20

Research presentation	10
Midterm	20
Final exam	40

### Class Schedule

1. August 28 - Introduction to the Course; Darwin's Theological Background (C)
  - Hedley-Brooke, "Darwin and Victorian Christianity" (\*On reserve)
2. September 3 - Darwin's Naturalistic Background (N)
  - Epicurus, "Letter to Herodotus" (\*On reserve)
  - Hume, "On Miracles" (\*On reserve)
3. September 6 - Darwin on Variation (C)
  - *Origin of Species*, Chapters 1-2
4. September 10 - Darwin on the Struggle for Existence (N)
  - *Origin of Species*, Chapters 3-4
5. September 13 - Darwin on the Organs (C)
  - *Origin of Species*, Chapters 5-6
6. September 17 - Darwin on Instincts and Hybrids (N)
  - *Origin of Species*, Chapters 7-8
7. September 20 - Darwin on the Geological Record (C)
  - *Origin of Species*, 9-12
8. September 24 - Student Presentations
9. September 27 - Darwin on Human Evolution (N on 1-3, C on 8-9)
  - *Descent of Man*, Chapters 1-3, 8-9
10. October 1 - Darwin on Morality (C)
  - *Descent of Man*, Chapter 4, 5
11. October 4 - Darwin on Civilization and Race (N)
  - *Descent of Man*, Chapters 6, 7
12. October 8 - Student Presentations
13. October 11 - Midterm
14. October 15 - Creation/Evolution: Contemporary

- *Only a Theory*, Chapters 1, 2, 3
15. October 18 - Two Prominent Scientists Reconcile God and Evolution
    - *Only a Theory*, Chapters 4, 5
    - Collins, *The Language of God*, Chapter 6 (\*On reserve)
  16. October 22 - Creation/Evolution: History
    - *The Evolution-Creation Struggle*, Chapters 7-8
  17. October 25 - Student Presentations
  18. October 29 - Connolly on the Body/Brain/Culture Network
    - *Neuropolitics*, Chapter 1
  19. November 1 - Connolly on Techniques of Thought and Micropolitics
    - *Neuropolitics*, Chapter 4
  20. November 5 - Connolly on Deep Pluralism
    - *Neuropolitics*, Chapter 5
  21. November 8 - Student Presentations
  22. November 12 - Bennett on the Force of Things
    - *Vibrant Matter*, Chapters 1-2
  23. November 15 - Bennett on Edible Matter
    - *Vibrant Matter*, Chapters 3-4
  24. November 19 - Student Presentations
  25. November 22 - Post-Darwinian Catholic Theology
    - Haught, *God After Darwin*, Chapters 2 and 5 (\*On reserve)
  26. November 26 - Space for God
    - Statements from the Vatican's Pontifical Academy of Science (\*On reserve)
    - Ruse, *Science and Spirituality*, Chapter 8 and Conclusion (\*On reserve)
  27. December 3 - Student Presentations
  28. December 6 - TBD
  29. December 11-18 Final Exam