
BIOL 535

Darwinism and Cultural Evolution

Winter Term (2013-14)

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Application of Darwinian evolutionary theory to the interpretation of human nature, social life, and culture — and how these advances impact on our understanding of civilization and the challenges it faces for the 21st century.

PREREQUISITE BIOL350.

SCHEDULE

Seminar: Tuesday 8:30-10:00, Friday 10:00-11:30. BIOSC 2109

Instructor	L. Aarssen
Instructor Contact	aarssenl@queensu.ca Phone: 613-533-6133
Office Hours	TBA
TA:	N/A
TA Contact Information	N/A
Office Hours	N/A

Learning Objectives

The goals of Biology 535 are to provide students with the background knowledge and interpretive skills needed to examine, at an advanced level, the subject matter developed in BIOL350 — Evolution and Human Affairs. Specifically, through seminars, essays, and group discussions, students explore ideas, research objectives, and recent discoveries in the application of Darwinian evolutionary theory to the interpretation of human nature, social life, and culture — and how these advances impact on our understanding of civilization and the challenges it faces for the 21st century.

Because this is not a traditional lecture-based course, students should expect to do a lot of reading. Learning in this course will result primarily from group discussions and from individual efforts to find, understand, and communicate information independently. Students are expected to attend all classes and show evidence of their efforts to study the material by participating in discussion.

Learning Hours

<i>Teaching method</i>		<i>Average hours per week</i>	<i>Number of weeks</i>	<i>Total hours</i>
┌ ├ └	Lecture	1.5	12	18
	Seminar	1.5	12	18
	Laboratory			

	Tutorial			
	Practicum			
	Group learning			
	Individual instruction			
Other	Online activity			
	Off-campus activity			
	Private study			84
Total hours on task				120

Course Outline

- I. **Introduction** – Weeks 1-2 Overview of objectives and general discussion based on assigned reading.
- II. **Culture, genes, and human nature** – Weeks 3-6 Student seminars.
- III. **Synthesis and integration** – Week 6 Review and update.
- IV. **Evolution, human nature and civilization** – Weeks 8-12 Student seminars.
- V. **Wrap-up: facing the challenges of the 21st century** – Week 13 Synopsis and general discussion.

Textbooks/Readings

There is no required textbook. Several recent books are suggested as ‘further reading’ sources for optional purchase (or online reading). Other reference and required reading material will be provided in connection with lectures and will be available from online sources.

Grading Scheme

Component	Weight (%)	Date
Attendance, participation, peer grading	30%	
Seminar – Section II	15%	
Seminar – Section IV	15%	
Term Paper – first draft	30%	
Term Paper – second draft	10%	

Grading Method

- All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale.

Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Academic Integrity and Queen's Code of Conduct

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments and conduct conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 - <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations>, on the Arts and Science website (see <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity>), and at Biology's website (<http://www.queensu.ca/biology/undergrad/integrity.html>) and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulations on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

Accommodation Policy, Exam Conflicts, and Other Conflicts

Students who feel they need accommodations for disabilities or extenuating circumstances, or have a conflict between exams or other commitments should consult the Biology Department's website for details about how to proceed (<http://www.queensu.ca/biology/undergrad/integrity.html>). In general, the earlier a course coordinator is apprised of an extenuating circumstance, the more likely an accommodation can be made. Students are encouraged to be proactive in anticipating difficulties, when it is possible to do so.

Students may apply to write a make-up or deferred exam if they have an exam conflict as defined in the Academic Regulations of the Faculty (See Arts and Science Calendar Regulation 8 - <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations>). In this case, the student should report to the Exams Office first to verify that there is a genuine exam conflict. Biology professors will not consider your situation to be a conflict unless it meets the criteria set out by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Students may request a make-up or deferred exam if they have an exam conflict with off-campus travel associated with a field course (e.g BIOL-307/3.0 or 407/3.0) that is held during the fall or winter terms.

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Accommodation of Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the DSO website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/hcds/ds/>