

BIOL 350

Evolution and Human Affairs

Fall Term (2015-16)

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

An exploration of how evolutionary thinking can affect our understanding of our lives, our species, and our ability to share the planet with other species.

PREREQUISITE Level 3 or above.

SCHEDULE

Refer to SOLUS for details.

Instructor	Dr. L. Aarssen
Instructor Contact	aarssenl@queensu.ca Phone: 613-533-6133
Office Hours	TBA
TA:	See Moodle Website
TA Contact Information	See Moodle Website
Office Hours	TBA

Learning Objectives

The goals of Biology 350 are to provide students with the background knowledge and interpretive skills needed to examine the evolutionary roots of human nature, culture, social life, and civilization, the evolutionary roots of the challenges that currently face our species, and hence the evolutionary roots of our future.

Learning Hours

<i>Teaching method</i>		<i>Average hours per week</i>	<i>Number of weeks</i>	<i>Total hours</i>
In-class hours	Lecture	3	12	36
	Seminar			
	Laboratory			
	Tutorial			
	Practicum			
	Group learning			
	Individual instruction			
Other	Online activity	2	12	24
	Off-campus activity			
	Private study	5	12	60
Total hours on task				120

Course Outline

The 'project' of civilization is failing. If we want to know where we are headed, we need to understand how the past brought us to where we are now. In BIOL350, we explore how biological and cultural evolution interact in affecting how we think and behave, and hence how this interaction affects our understanding of a wide range of human affairs, including why we have arrived at our present predicament – the 'human condition'. An appreciation of this historical human journey is essential for guiding a new and improved Project of Civilization to replace the old one. Students in BIOL350 have an opportunity to be among the architects of this new project.

The course is divided into four chapters:

- (i) *Where are we?* — Survey/inventory of the present state of our civilization;
- (ii) *How did we get here?* — Examination of how our evolutionary history brought us to this point;
- (iii) *What are we?* — Exploration of how an understanding of this journey helps to account for a wide range of human affairs and cultural norms;
- (iv) *Where are we headed?* predictions and speculations about how the genetic legacies inherited from our ancestors, and how our continuing evolution as a species—guided by both natural and cultural selection—is likely to affect our human natures, our cultures, our social evolution, and our civilization in future generations.

Darwinian evolution by natural selection is a major underlying theme, but students do not require a background in biology; the level of knowledge needed concerning biological evolution is presented during the course. Students from Biology and other programs are all encouraged to take the course.

Students have opportunity to be engaged in forum discussion and debate on-line using Moodle. Students also have opportunity through a poster presentation to explore in depth, a course topic of particular interest to them. Recent films are recommended (with public showings provided) that address course topics in support of the lecture material, and that provide inspiration for discussion, debate, and poster presentations.

Textbooks/Readings

There is no required textbook. Several recent books — e.g. Stamos (2008) *Evolution and the Big Questions* — 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
Participation in online discussion	10	
Participation in in-class surveys	10	
Bi-weekly online quizzes	15	
Poster assignment	15	
Final Exam	50	

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.

Your course average will then be converted to a final 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/hcads/ds/>