

“Darwin and Religion”
(CRN 11912)
(Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:00-3:15, Curry 334)

Instructor: Ken Caneva, 2113 MHRA; 334-5203 (voice mail available); klcaneva@uncg.edu
Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:00-12:00 or by appointment. I’m available many other times, and I encourage you to come see me if you’re having trouble, want to clarify things, or just want to talk.

The implications for religion—and in particular for Christianity—of Darwin’s theory of evolution have been the topic of heated debate since the publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. In this seminar we’ll look at some of the issues involved and analyze the arguments and the evidence advanced on all sides. What were Darwin’s religious views, and were they relevant to his scientific work? Is science—and with it the theory of evolution—necessarily materialistic and ungodly? What are the proper boundaries of “science” and “religion”? Are there things that belong--or don’t belong--*essentially* to what we want to call science or religion? What has been the nature of the religiously inspired opposition to evolution in this country? What are the theological and scientific ramifications of intelligent design creationism, a modern version of natural theology? These and similar topics will form the basis of provocative readings and spirited discussion. A principal goal of this course will *not* be to critique the theory of evolution *per se*. Rather, we will accept its general validity and go on from there to explore its religious and theological ramifications.

The heart of this course will consist in discussions prompted by the readings, hence it’s supremely important that you remain conscientious about doing the assigned readings. Since you’ll have your own copies, either as photocopies or books, you should underline and annotate as you read to help you note important points and things to ask about, and bring those copies to class. Get in the habit of asking a few kinds of questions of the readings: What *point* is the author trying to make? What is the *evidence*? How good is the *argument*? What are the author’s (usually unspoken) *assumptions*? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s case? One of the important transferable purposes of a course like this is to give you practice in reading critically, thinking clearly, speaking intelligently, and writing cogently (and in good English!). Last but not least, please ask questions about things you don’t understand! It has traditionally been reckoned that students should expect to spend around three hours outside of class for each hour of class time. Hence in this class if you’re *not* devoting around eight hours a week to reading and studying, you’re probably not going to do well.

Most of the course readings are accessible via Blackboard as eReserves (denoted **eR** in the syllabus). You should print out the readings for each class and bring them with you to class—presumably underlined and annotated!—in order to facilitate discussion. Other readings are from

two books I expect you to buy and bring to class when we're discussing readings from them. One is available at the University Bookstore and at Addams (on Tate Street): Richard H. Robbins and Mark Nathan Cohen, eds., *Darwin and the Bible: The Cultural Confrontation* (Boston [etc.]: Pearson Education, 2009), abbreviated **DB** in the syllabus. The other I expect you to obtain on your own: Robert T. Pennock, ed., *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics: Philosophical, Theological, and Scientific Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass. & London, England: The MIT Press, 2001; ISBN 0262661241), abbreviated **IDC** in the syllabus. It would have cost \$49.95 new through the bookstore, with no guarantee that they'd obtain used copies, but some are available for as little as \$8 via the website www.vialibri.net; new copies are also available via the website www.labyrinthbooks.com at \$19.98. Aside from the "Preface" assigned for January 26, which I've put on eReserves, you won't be needing this book until February 25, which gives you plenty of time to obtain a copy. The numbers in square brackets at the end of each set of reading assignments give the rough number of page-equivalents to be read (exclusive of notes and illustrations). The average comes to around 27 pages per assignment.

I expect regular class attendance, and I reserve the right to drop a student who has more than three absences. Students who miss the first two classes will be automatically dropped. I will expect you to attend two out-of-class evening events, a lecture on February 18 and a film on February 24. Please so mark your calendars! I will take attendance at these events; absence will be treated like absence from class.

Written work for the class will consist primarily of three five-page essays, the first two of which you will revise and resubmit. I'll go over in class what I'm looking for in a good essay, and will suggest possible topics. In general, an essay should engage a clearly defined issue and argue a well-grounded conclusion based on good evidence. *Unexcused late submissions are subject to a reduction of up to a full letter grade.* In addition, there will be frequent informal in-class and at-home writing exercises (from a paragraph to a page in length) which will ask you to respond to specific questions relating to the readings. These exercises will be marked on a check-plus, check, check-minus basis, and will be used in conjunction with attendance and class participation in adjusting your final grade up or down from the average of the three essays by up to a full letter grade. Contribution to class discussion will be rewarded! I will hand out a set of "Guidelines for Students' Essays and Papers," which I expect you to read carefully and follow conscientiously. To that end you will be asked to take an at-home quiz on the "Guidelines," which will be marked after the fashion of the informal writing exercises.

I expect students to have read and understood the section of the *Policies for Students* handbook (or the equivalent on-line version at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/>) relating to the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. Submission of written work implies your acceptance of its provisions. I take vigorous action against all cases of suspected cheating or plagiarism. I do not allow the use of laptops in class.

January 19: Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday: no class

January 21: Getting Started

January 26: General Introduction and Overview

Richard H. Robbins, “The History and Implications of a Cultural Confrontation,” **DB**, 1-19; Robert T. Pennock, “Preface,” **IDC**, ix-xiv (also **eR**); Laura Perras, “Turmoil,” **DB**, 176-184 [32]

January 28: The Pre-Darwinian Context: Natural Theology

John Hedley Brooke, “The Fortunes and Functions of Natural Theology,” **eR**; Jonathan Marks, “Intelligent Design and the Native’s Point of View (Assuming the Native Is an Educated Eighteenth-Century European),” **DB**, 87-98 [26]

February 2: Darwin’s Work

Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, **eR** (don’t get bogged down on pp. 459-466); Ernst Mayr, “Darwin’s Influence on Modern Thought,” **DB**, 130-136 [44]

February 4: Darwin’s Religious Beliefs

Charles Darwin, “Religious Belief,” **eR**; William E. Phipps, “Darwin’s Religious Odyssey,” **eR** [35]
further optional reading: Frank Burch Brown, “The Evolution of Darwin’s Theism,” **eR** [44]

February 9: Just before the Scopes Trial in America

William Jennings Bryan, “God and Evolution,” **eR**; Harry Emerson Fosdick, “A Reply to Mr. Bryan in the Name of Religion,” **eR** [12]; discussion of essays; essay “Guidelines” and at-home “Guidelines” quiz handed out
N.B.: February 9 is Darwin’s 200th birthday!

February 11: The Scopes Trial

Richard H. Robbins, “William Jennings Bryan and the Trial of John T. Scopes,” **DB**, 99-116 [16]; “Guidelines” quiz due

February 16: Creationism after the Scopes Trial

Edward J. Larson, “The Battle between Creation and Evolution in the Classroom: An Historical Perspective,” **DB**, 155-165; Ronald L. Numbers, “The Creationists,” **eR** [35]; “Guidelines” quiz gone over in class

February 18: Circumscribing Science: A Preliminary Go

Richard Lewontin, “Billions and Billions of Demons,” **eR**; Mark Nathan Cohen, “The Need for Science; the Need for Faith—Separately,” **DB**, 23-41 [27]

February 18: Lecture, “Evolution and Faith: What Is at Stake?” by John F. Haught (pronounced “hot”; professor of theology at Georgetown University and director of The Georgetown Center for the Study of Science and Religion), 7:00 p.m., Room 101, Sullivan Bldg. *I will*

take attendance at this lecture. We'll discuss Haught's lecture in conjunction with the reading for next class.

February 23: A New Take on the Design Argument

John F. Haught, "Darwin, Design, and Divine Providence," **eR** [16]; FIRST ESSAY DUE

N.B.: You may wish to view an NPR program ("Catholics Confront Faith and Evolution"), which includes an interview with Haught, at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5078357>. His book, *God after Darwin: A Theology of Evolution* (2000), is very good, though probably a little hard for most undergraduates; it's on one-week reserve in Jackson Library.

February 24 (Tuesday): Film, "Flock of Dodos: The Evolution-Intelligent Design Circus," by

Harvard-trained evolutionary biologist Randy Olson, 7:30 p.m., Room 101, Sullivan Bldg.; discussion to follow. I haven't seen this, but those who have say it's very good.

For a description, see <http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2006/02.09/13-dodo.html>. *I will take attendance at this lecture.*

February 25: Phillip Johnson's Case against Evolutionary Naturalism

Robert T. Pennock, introduction to the section "Johnson's Critique of Evolutionary Naturalism," **IDC**, 57-58; Phillip E. Johnson, "Evolution as Dogma: The Establishment of Naturalism," **IDC**, 59-76; Robert T. Pennock, "Naturalism, Evidence, and Creationism: The Case of Phillip Johnson," **IDC**, 77-97 [37]

N.B.: There are short bios of the contributors to this volume on pp. xvii-xx; you should look at them in conjunction with the readings.

March 2: Johnson Pro and Con, Continued

Phillip E. Johnson, "Response to Pennock," **IDC**, 99-101; Robert T. Pennock, "Reply: Johnson's *Reason in the Balance*," **IDC**, 103-107; Nancey Murphy, "Phillip Johnson on Trial: A Critique of His Critique of Darwin," **IDC**, 451-469 [25]; first essay returned

March 4: buffer class; no new reading

March 6 (Friday): revised first essay due in my office (or my Departmental mailbox in MHRA 2118A) by 4:00 p.m.; *you must also resubmit your original submission in order to receive a grade*

March 9 & 11: Spring Break

Since the reading from **IDC** for March 25–April 1 is rather heavy going, you would do well to get a jump on it over the break.

March 16: Stephen Jay Gould's Case for "Nonoverlapping Magisteria"

Stephen Jay Gould, "Creationism: A Distinctly American Violation of NOMA," **DB**, 42-52; Stephen Jay Gould, "Nonoverlapping Magisteria," **IDC**, 737-749 [22]; first revised essay

returned

further optional reading: Pope John Paul II, "Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences," **eR** [4]

March 17 (Tuesday): last day to drop a class without academic penalty

March 18: Against Gould's NOMA

Lee Strobel, "Where Science Meets Faith," **eR** [23]

March 23: Circumscribing Religion and Science: A Second Pass

William P. Alston, "Religion," **eR**; J. C. C. Smart, "Religion and Science," **eR** [12]

N.B.: The reading for next time is longer and more difficult than most, hence you may want to get a head start.

March 25: Alvin Plantinga: Evolution Incompatible with Religion

Robert T. Pennock, introduction to the section "A Theological Conflict? Evolution vs. the Bible," **IDC**, 111-112; Alvin Plantinga, "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible," **IDC**, 113-145; Howard J. Van Till, "When Faith and Reason Cooperate," **IDC**, 147-163 [47]

March 30: A Reply to Plantinga

Ernan McMullin, "Plantinga's Defense of Special Creation," **IDC**, 165-196 [26]

April 1: Plantinga's Last Word

Alvin Plantinga, "Evolution, Neutrality, and Antecedent Probability: A Reply to McMullin and Van Till," **IDC**, 197-236 [37]

April 6: Evolution and the Judeo-Christian God

Robert T. Pennock, introduction to the section, "Intelligent Design Creationism vs. Theistic Evolutionism," **IDC**, 431-433; Phillip E. Johnson, "Creator or Blind Watchmaker?" **IDC**, 435-449; David L. Hull, "The God of the Galápagos," **eR** [20]; **SECOND ESSAY DUE**

April 7 (Tuesday): Film, "Gattaca," 7:30 p.m., Room 201, Sullivan Bldg.; discussion to follow.

This 1997 film—part of the Ashby Dialogue series—is good, though not especially relevant to this course. For a plot summary, see

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119177/plotsummary>. *Attend or not as you wish.*

April 8: Reconciling Evolution with Christianity

Walter Hearn, "Creation Matters," **DB**, 53-66; Martin Hewlett & Ted Peters, "The Science of Evolution and the Theology of Creation," **DB**, 67-80 [27]

strongly recommended optional reading: Roy Clouser, "Is Theism Compatible with Evolution?" **IDC**, 513-536 [20]

April 13: Does Evolution Entail Atheism?

Michael Ruse, “Darwinism and Atheism: A Marriage Made in Heaven?” **eR**; Michael Ruse, “Darwinism and Christianity: Must They Remain at War or Is Peace Possible?” **eR** [32]; second essay returned

April 15: Possibilities and Limits of a Modus Vivendi between Evolution and Religion
Philip Kitcher, *Living with Darwin: Evolution, Design, and the Future of Faith*, **eR** (skim 117-144; read 144-166) [27+21]
strongly recommended further reading: Alister Hardy, “The Place of Natural Theology in the Evolutionary Scheme,” **eR** [26]

April 17 (Friday): revised second essay due in my office (or my Departmental mailbox in MHRA 2118A) by 4:00 p.m.; *you must also resubmit your original submission in order to receive a grade*; earlier submission is welcome!

April 20: buffer class; second revised essay returned; no new reading, but you may want to get a head start on the reading for next time

April 22: Are the Mind and Consciousness Compatible with Evolutionary Materialism?
Alister Hardy, “Biology and Telepathy,” **eR**; Lee Strobel, “The Evidence of Consciousness: The Enigma of the Mind,” **eR** [51]
possible further reading: Richard Milton, “The Gates of Unreason,” **eR**

April 27: What Relevance Does the Evidence for Reincarnation Have?
Eugene Brody, “Research in Reincarnation and Editorial Responsibility,” **eR**; Ian Stevenson, “Research into the Evidence of Man’s Survival after Death,” **eR**; Ian Stevenson, *Children Who Remember Previous Lives*, **eR** [40]
strongly recommended further reading: David Ray Griffin, “Evidence from Out-of-Body Experiences,” **eR** [39]

April 29: What about the Evidence for “Miraculous” Healing?
David Hume, “Of Miracles,” **eR**; Rex Gardiner, “Miracles of Healing in Anglo-Celtic Northumbria,” **eR** [26]

May 4: Final Reflections
Mark Nathan Cohen, “Conclusions,” **DB**, 185-204 [20]; course evaluation

May 6 (Wednesday): Reading Day

May 12 (Tuesday): third essay due in my office (or my Departmental mailbox in MHRA 2118A) by 10:00 a.m.