

**PHIL 20638/ STV 20138****Philosophy and Biology****Fall 2015**

Instructor: Dr. Lane DesAutels

Office: Malloy B005

Office Hours: M/W: 11:00-12:00; Tues: 3:00-4:00

Email: [lane.desautels@gmail.com](mailto:lane.desautels@gmail.com)Course webpage: <http://sakai.nd.edu/>

M/W: 9:30–10:45

O'Shaughnessy Hall 117

**Course Description**

Should biology inform the way we think about life's deepest questions? Whether God exists? Whether the world is as good as it can possibly be? How we ought to act? Whether we have an essential human nature? In this course we will explore these questions, as well as many others, as we survey some of the main ways that philosophy and biology intersect.

**Learning Outcome Goals**

By completing this course, students should gain significantly greater abilities to: (1) carefully engage in close reading of demanding texts; (2) produce a precise and carefully structured piece of writing; (3) participate in reasoned discussion of difficult topics; (4) employ modern deductive logic in their philosophic work; and (5) develop and defend their own philosophical positions and to engage in sustained and critical reflection on their own values and beliefs.

**Course Requirements:**

- (1) One 2 page writing exercise (topic to be announced). Late papers are accepted but 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for every 24 hours that the paper is late.
- (2) One 5-8 page paper on an issue of the student's choice (a list of suggested paper topics to be provided). Students will submit both a rough draft and a final draft. Same late policy as above.
- (3) 7 quizzes based on assigned reading. These will typically be true/false, multiple-choice, or fill in the blank questions. Quizzes may not be made up. The student's two lowest quiz grades will be dropped in calculating his/her final grade.
- (4) A take-home midterm examination
- (5) An in-class cumulative final examination
- (6) Class attendance and meaningful class participation, based in part on assigned reading, is expected.

**Grading:** Final grade calculation: 10% for quizzes; 15% for writing exercise; 20% for midterm; 20% for final exam; 10% for class participation; 25% for final paper.

**Course Texts:** There are no required textbooks for this class. Assigned readings will either be available electronically through the ND library or they will be uploaded onto Sakai by at least one week prior to when they are assigned.

**Absences:** University policy excuses the absences of students for major illness (of one's self or one's dependent), religious observances, participation in University activities at the request of university authorities, off campus legal activities requiring the presence of the student, mandatory interviews (for seniors), and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control. The following is a quote from p. 4 of the Undergraduate Academic Code: "For absences planned in advance, the student must inform the instructor no less than one week prior to the planned absence; and for unplanned absences resulting from illness, the student must provide the instructor appropriate documentation, as described in section 3.1.3.5 no later than two business days after the period of absence concludes."

**Sakai space for the course:** The course will use the Sakai web space to post assigned readings and other course materials. Go to [sakai.nd.edu](http://sakai.nd.edu) [note: no www at beginning]. Sign on with your usual NetID and password. If you are not familiar with Sakai, there are various tutorials available at the insideND site.

**Classroom Etiquette:** Please arrive on time and leave only after the class is over. Please do not talk to your neighbor during class. Turn off and put away all cell phones and message devices. Laptops may NOT be used during lecture (unless proper Disability Services documentation is provided).

**Accommodations:** If a student has a documented disability and wishes to discuss academic accommodations with the instructor, please contact the instructor in writing (email is OK) as soon as possible. If a student is a member of a religious group that will require accommodations in the academic calendar, please send email to the instructor within the first three weeks of class to indicate what the conflict is and what accommodation is requested.

**Honesty:** Honesty on the part of students is presumed. The University has approved a **Undergraduate Academic Code of Honor** (<http://honorcode.nd.edu>), administered by the University Honesty Committee, which prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, facilitating academic dishonesty, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. Plagiarism policy: all quotations taken from other authors, including from the internet, must be indicated by quotation marks and referenced. Paraphrasing must be referenced as well.

Students may get authorized help with the grammar and structure of their writing at the **Writing Center** (go to [writingcenter.nd.edu](http://writingcenter.nd.edu) to make an appointment with a writing tutor).

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1 (8/26): **Introduction: Philosophy and Biology?**

Week 2 (8/31, 9/2): **Setting the Stage**

Darwin: Chapters 1-4. *On the Origin of Species*, (Facsimile of the First Ed), (1859)  
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (ebook available through library)

Week 3 (9/7, 9/9): **PART 1: Biology and Religion**

Paley: "The Argument from Design," (1802) in *Natural Theology or Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity*, (1<sup>st</sup> Edition), London: J. Faulder.

Ayala: "Biology and Religion: The Case for Evolution," in *Philosophy of Biology: A Companion for Educators*, (2013), Ed. Kostas Kampourakis, Springer.

### 2 page writing exercise assigned

Week 4 (9/14, 9/16): Biology and Religion Cont.

Sober: "Creationism," in *Philosophy of Biology* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, (2000), Westview.

**\*\*\*September 20<sup>th</sup>: 2 page writing exercise due to me by email by 11:59pm**

Week 5 (9/21, [9/23, **NO CLASS**]): Biology and Religion Cont.

Alexander: "Implications of Evolutionary Biology for Religious Belief," in *Philosophy of Biology: A Companion for Educators*, (2013), Ed. Kostas Kampourakis, Springer.

Week 6 (9/28, 9/30): **PART 2: Adaptationism**

Gould & Lewontin: "The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: A Critique of the Adaptationist Programme," in *Conceptual Issues in Evolutionary Biology*, (2006), Ed. Elliott Sober, Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, (ebook available through library)

Week 7 (10/5, 10/7): Adaptationism Cont.

Lloyd: "Pre-theoretical Assumptions in Evolutionary Explanations of Female Sexuality," in *Conceptual Issues in Evolutionary Biology*, (2006) Ed. Elliott Sober, Cambridge Mass, MIT Press, (ebook available through library)

Forber: "Debating the Power and Scope of Adaptation," in *Philosophy of Biology: A Companion for Educators*, (2013), Ed. Kostas Kampourakis, Springer.

### Take-home midterm assigned

Week 8 (10/12, 10/14) Adaptationism Case Study: Evolutionary Psychology

Tooby & Cosmides "Toward Mapping the Evolved Functional Organization of Mind and Brain," in *Conceptual Issues in Evolutionary Biology*, (2006), Ed. Elliott Sober, Cambridge Mass, MIT Press. (ebook available through library)

Buller: "Evolutionary Psychology: A Critique," in *Conceptual Issues in Evolutionary*

*Biology*, (2006) Ed. Elliott Sober, Cambridge Mass, MIT Press. (ebook available through library)

Week 9 Mid-Semester Break!!

**\*\*\*October 25<sup>th</sup>: Take-home midterm due to me by 11:59pm**

Week 10 (10/26, 10/28): **PART 3: Biology and Ethics**

Darwin: Chapter 4, *The Descent of Man*, (1871), London: John Murray (ebook available through library)

Hume: Book II, Part III, and Book III, Parts I and II, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, (1738) London. (ebook available through library)

Week 11 (11/2, 11/4) Biology and Ethics Continued

Lewens: "Ethics," in *Darwin*, (2007), Routledge.

Week 12 (11/9, 11/11) Biology and Ethics Continued

Street: "A Darwinian Dilemma for Realist Theories of Value," (2006), *Philosophical Studies* 127 (1): 109-166.

Fitzpatrick: "Debunking of Evolutionary Debunking of Ethical Realism," (2015). *Philosophical Studies*, 172 (4): 883-904.

**\*\*\*November 15<sup>th</sup>: First draft of 5-8 page paper due to me by email by 11:59pm**

Week 13 (11/16, 11/18): **PART 4: Human Nature**

Hull: "On Human Nature," (1980). *Environmental Ethics*, 2 (1):81-88.

Week 14 (11/23, 11/25) Human Nature Continued

Machery: "A Plea for Human Nature," (2008). *Philosophical Psychology*, 21 (3): 321 – 329.

Ramsey: "Human Nature in a Post Essentialist World," (2014). *Philosophy of Science*, 80 (5): 983-993.

Week 15 (11/30, 12/2) **PART 5: Student Choice** (examples of possible topics below)

- a. Function
- b. Species
- c. Gene
- d. Levels of selection
- e. GMOs
- f. Climate Change
- g. Race
- h. Gender
- i. Phylogenetic Inference
- j. Environmental Ethics

Week 16 (12/7, 12/9) Student Choice Cont.  
Tba

**\*\*\*December 10<sup>th</sup>: Final draft of 5-8 page paper due to me by email by 11:59pm**

**\*\*\*December 16<sup>th</sup>: 8:00-10:00am, Final examination in lecture classroom**  
**No change in time allowed**