

## HISC 107 C: The Darwinian Revolution

Fall 2016

### SYLLABUS

Professor: Elena Aronova ([earonova@history.ucsb.edu](mailto:earonova@history.ucsb.edu))  
Class Location: ARTS 1353  
Class Times: T Th 14:00 – 15:15  
Office Location: HSSB 4215  
Office Hours: Th 15:30 – 17:30, or by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Charles Darwin's 1859 treatise, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, proved to be one of the most influential books in the history of science. As anthropologist and social critic Ashley Montague stated, "next to the Bible, no work has been quite as influential, in virtually every aspect of human thought, as *The Origin of Species*" (*The Origin of Species*, 1958, Mentor edition, quote on the back cover). Indeed, Darwin's *Origin*, along with Darwin's subsequent writings, provided a coherent frame of reference for almost all fundamental aspects of human life: human origins and humanity's place in nature, the growth of knowledge, human emotions and temptations, sin and pain, evil and suffering. No one after 1859 could ignore Darwin's work and few areas of thought and culture remained immune to their influences. Darwin's theory was attacked, defended, debated, modified, ridiculed, interpreted and used not only by scientists, but also by philosophers, novelists, priests, feminists, and politicians of diverse social and political standing. In this class, we will examine Darwin's works both as scientific knowledge and as a current in the political thought, philosophy, social policy, and intellectual history, asking how has "Darwinian Revolution" affected various domains of scientific knowledge, but also the way we think about who we are and who we might be? This course will concentrate on themes prominent between 1859 and the 1970s, but also highlight some of the more recent controversies.

### COURSE READINGS:

Please purchase the following book:

*Charles Darwin's Evolutionary Writings*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by James Secord (Oxford World's Classics edition, 2008 or 2010).

Any other readings will be available on Gauchospace, either in PDF versions, or as links to online texts.

This is an upper division history class – expect to read ca. 60 -70 pages per week.

You will also work with some rare and antiquarian books and manuscripts made accessible for this class by UCSB's Special Collections Research Library (located on the 3rd floor of UCSB Library Building). These materials will be available for reading in the Special Collections' reading room only.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

The course requirements for this class are as follows:

- (1) The reading for each week should be done by the time of the first lecture in this week.
- (2) Participation = 15 % of your final grade. Class attendance and participation are mandatory. I cannot make you come to class but anything you miss by not attending class has no make-up option and therefore will likely result in the diminution of your grade. Attendance will be taken periodically.
- (3) Two take-home essays – There will be two short paper assignments, assessing selected primary sources in relation to specific questions or topics discussed in the class. The second paper will count more than the first. Essay # 1 = **20% of your final grade**; essay # 2 = **30% of your final grade**.
- (4) Ten-page take-home final paper -- the final assignment will be graded on the basis of how well you integrate the readings from class, in order to compose an historical argument with a clear thesis and reliant on primary-source evidence that covers the entire course. **35% of your grade**.

### READING SCHEDULE

#### **PART I**

#### **DARWIN AND DARWINISM IN THE VICTORIAN ERA**

- September 22 (Th): **1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the class. Introduction to the course**

## WEEK 1: Setting the Stage for Evolutionism: Biology and Society Before Darwin

### Readings:

James Secord, “A Great Sensation,” in *Victorian Sensation* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 10-40.

James Secord, “Introduction,” in *Charles Darwin’s Evolutionary Writings*, pp. vii-xxxvii.

### Recommended:

James Secord, “The Paradoxes of Gentility,” in *Victorian Sensation* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. 403-419.

## WEEK 2: Darwin’s Theory of Evolution: Natural and Sexual Selection

- **October 6 (Th): Class meets at the Special Collections Research Library** (details will be given in class on Tuesday this week).

### Readings:

Charles Darwin, *The Journal of Researches*, in *Charles Darwin’s Evolutionary Writings*, suggested pages: 15-66

Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, in *Charles Darwin’s Evolutionary Writings*, suggested pages: 107-126.

Browse the repository of the primary sources at [Darwin Correspondence Project](#) website

## WEEK 3: Response to Darwin in Victorian England and America

- **October 11 (T): Assessing Primary Source: Paper Prompt** available

### Readings:

Reviews and Responses to the *Origin of Species*, in *Charles Darwin's Evolutionary Writings*, pp. 212-230.

Charles Kingsley, *The Water-Babies: A Fairy Tale for a Land-Baby* (1890)

John Beatty and Piers J. Hale, "Water-Babies: An Evolutionary Parable," *Endeavour*, vol. 32, no. 4 (2008): 141-146.

+ Explore the selected materials at the Special Collections Research Library

#### WEEK 4: Race, Gender, and Evolution

- **October 20 (Th): Guest lecture by David Sepkoski @ 4 pm, 4020 HSSB.** Attendance of the guest talk is not required but strongly recommended, extra credit.

#### Readings:

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, in *Charles Darwin's Evolutionary Writings*, suggested pages: 233-247; 273-300; 318-333

+ Your chosen primary source from the Special Collections

#### WEEK 5: Darwinizing Politics: Right, Left or Neither? Social Darwinism in Different National Contexts

- **Oct 25 (T): 1<sup>st</sup> Paper due in-class**

#### Readings:

Naomi Beck, "The Origin and Political Thought: From Liberalism to Marxism," in Richards R. J. & Ruse M. (eds.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Origin of Species*. Cambridge University Press, 2008: p. 295-313

+ Your chosen primary source from the Special Collections

## PART II

### THE DARWINIAN REVOLUTION CONTINUED INTO THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

#### WEEK 6: **Helping Hands for Evolution: Genetics and Eugenics**

- **Nov 3 (Th):** No lecture: the professor is out of town attending a conference. Use this time for the independent study or participate in a peer review session (details in class)

#### Readings:

Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Harvard University Press, 1989), Chapter I “The Origins of Racial Hygiene,” pp. 10-45.

Mark B. Adams, Garland Allen, and Sheila Faith Weiss, “Human Heredity and Politics: A Comparative Institutional Study of the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor (United States), the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics (Germany), and the Maxim Gorky Medical Genetics Institute (USSR),” *Osiris* 20 (2005), pp. 232-262.

+ **Your chosen primary source** from the Special Collections

#### WEEK 7: **The Modern Synthesis: In Search of Unity**

- **Nov 10 (Th): 2<sup>nd</sup> Paper due in-class**

#### Readings:

William B. Provine, “Progress in Evolution and Meaning of Life,” in *Julian Huxley: Biologist and Statesman of Science*, ed. by C. Kenneth Waters and Albert Van Helden (Rice University Press, 1992), pp. 165-180.

John Beatty, “Dobzhansky and the Biology of Democracy: The Moral and Political Significance of Genetic Variation,” in *The Evolution of Theodosius Dobzhansky: Essays on His Life and Thought in Russia and America*, ed. by Mark B. Adams (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 195-216.

Julian Huxley, *Evolution: the Modern Synthesis* (1942), Chapter X “Evolutionary Progress,” pp. 556-578.

Massimo Pigluicci and Gerd Muller, “Foreword,” in Julian Huxley, *Evolution: The Modern Synthesis. The definitive edition* (MIT Press, 2010), pp. 1-8

## **WEEK 8: In the Wake of the Modern Synthesis: Evolution From Molecules to Men**

### Readings:

Smocovitis, Vassiliki Betty. “The 1959 Darwin Centennial Celebration in America,” *Osiris* 14 (1999): 274-323.

Michael Dietrich, “Paradox and Persuasion: Negotiating the Place of Molecular Evolution within Evolutionary Biology,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 31, no. 1 (1998): 85-111

Elena Aronova, “Karl Popper and Lamarckism,” *Biological Theory* 2/1 (2007): 37-51

## **WEEK 9: The Cultural Politics of Evolution in the 1960s and 1970s**

### Readings:

E.O. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1975), pp. 3-31.

Neil Jumonville, “The Cultural Politics of the Sociobiology Debate,” *Journal of the History of Biology* 35/3 (2002): 569-593

Erika Lorraine Milam, “A Field Study of Con Games,” *Isis* 105, no. 3 (2014): 596-605

## **WEEK 10: What If? Imagining a World Without Darwin**

### Readings:

Peter J. Bowler, “What Darwin Disturbed: The Biology That Might Have Been,” *Isis* 99 (2008): 560-67.