

**BIO 344 / HPS 311**

## **ORIGINS, EVOLUTION AND CREATION.**

Spring 2009

LL 2, W 3:15 – 5:55 pm

**Dr. John M. Lynch**

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Office Hours: W, 2:00 – 3:00 (LSC 262),  
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In the past decade, the exclusive teaching of evolution in public school science classes has increasingly come under attack by advocates of “intelligent design” (ID) – the claim that the diversity and complexity of life can only be explained by recourse to an intelligent designing entity. Supporters of this view claim that they are being lead by scientific evidence to the existence of the Judeo-Christian God and that the scientific establishment has actively prevented this inference to the best explanation. They also believe that acceptance of intelligent design would not only lead to a reinvigoration of scientific inquiry but also to a renewal of traditional cultural values which are seen to be on the decline due to the acceptance of Darwinism in America. On the other hand, critics of ID believe that the movement is driven by explicitly religious motives and is merely attempting to re-invigorate “scientific creationism” – itself an earlier attempt to espouse creation in line with a literal reading of *Genesis*. These critics hold that ID does not function in a scientific manner and thus should be excluded from science classes.

This course aims to introduce you to this controversy. After differentiating between scientific and religious modes of thought and expression, we briefly examine the interaction between Christianity and natural science in the years surrounding the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. This is followed by an examination of the history and claims of Young-Earth Creationism (a.k.a. “scientific creationism”). The second half of the course is devoted to critically examining the claims of ID and placing them within scientific, historical, philosophical, sociological and legal context.

This course fulfills learning goals 1, 2, 3 & 'A' of Track 2 (“History and Philosophy of Science”) of the CLAS Science & Society requirement.

**FORMAT:**

The course is a mixture of lectures and viewings. All required readings will be made available online and should be completed before the class in question.

**ELECTRONIC RESOURCES:**

- The class page at <http://www.public.asu.edu/~jmlynch/origins> will be used to provide online readings and copies of slides shown in class.
- The discussion forum is at <http://darwin.bc.asu.edu/forum>
- Blackboard (<http://my.asu.edu>) will be used to submit written assignments.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Critical responses to in-class viewings: 3 x 10% - 30%
- Final written assignment: 5%
- Comprehensive final examination: 40%
- Participation in online discussion: 25%

No extra credit assignments or alternative dates/times for the final examination will be made available, so don't ask! Assignments not submitted electronically by the due time/date will receive a zero for the assignment - no exceptions will be made. Plan accordingly.

**Written Assignments:**

On three occasions you are expected to provide a short response to in-class viewings. These are due electronically (via Blackboard) on dates given on the class webpage. Each response is worth 10% of your final grade.

Responses should be between 750 and 1000 words in length. Please include the word count on your response. Short responses will receive an automatic zero grade. Please note that your assignment will not be returned to you with comments. Instead, your grade will be posted on the Blackboard site once all assignments are graded. If you desire further feedback, please schedule an appointment with the teaching assistant within two weeks of receiving your grade.

Details of the final written assignment will be given after one week before the due date (April 29<sup>th</sup>).

### Discussion/Participation:

While much of the class will be spent in traditional lectures, there will be numerous opportunities for us to discuss and/or clarify issues. You are encouraged to actively participate in our learning community by asking questions and raising issues during class-time.

A quarter (25%) of your final grade will be given for weekly participation in online discussion. Please go to <http://darwin.bc.asu.edu/forum> and register to begin discussion. Register as "FIRST\_LAST" where FIRST and LAST correspond to your name (e.g. JOHN\_LYNCH). Failure to do so will result in you not receiving credit for discussion. Further guidelines for discussion will be given online during the first week of classes.

### Final Examination:

The comprehensive final examination will be held during the regularly scheduled class meeting on April 29<sup>th</sup>. The final examination will begin at 3:15 sharp. You will not be given a copy of the examination after that time, so arrive on time. The examination will end at 4:45pm. Final grades will be posted on Blackboard sometime the following week.

### Honors Contract:

Students seeking Honors credit for this course will have to meet with Tobie and I to discuss readings related to course content. The majority of these readings will be additional to those for the course. To receive honors credit you will need to attend and contribute to discussion at all meetings. Contribution will include active participation, listening to other students, and engagement with their comments and ideas. Attendance alone will not get you honors credit.

Due to the difficulty in scheduling meeting times, we can offer only one time: Mondays @ 12:35 - 1:30 at a location to be announced. We will need a minimum of five students to make this worthwhile. Students who can make the time slot should email me before January 26th.

### **MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES:**

Attendance: While attendance will not be monitored, failure to show up for class will greatly impact your ability to successfully complete the final examination as you will not succeed in the examination solely from looking at the online slides. Note that, neither Tobie nor I will provide details of missed classes. Please remember that arriving late for class is disrespectful to myself and your fellow students and frequent late arrival will result in an instructor-initiated withdrawal.

Cell Phones: I switch my phone off when I come to class; you should do so as well.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: In the “Student Academic Integrity Policy” manual, ASU defines plagiarism as “using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately.” Academic dishonesty, including inappropriate collaboration, will not be tolerated. There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty. See <http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity> for ASU’s policies and procedures regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else’s work and lying about it afterward. Note, that for an act to count as plagiarism, the representation does not have to be intentional. With the advent of the Internet, it has become easier for students to plagiarize. However, somewhat ironically, it has become easier for instructors to detect this form of dishonesty. The bottom-line is, DON'T PLAGIARIZE!

Grading: I do not grade on a curve nor do I engage in any grade inflation. Final numeric grades will be converted to plus/minus grades.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:**

The schedule of classes and readings is available online at the class webpage and can change on a weekly basis. It is your responsibility to be aware of changes.

**FINAL NOTE:**

This syllabus is a contract between you and I - by attending this class you declare that you have read and understood all the above.