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.

**FORMAT:**

The course is a mixture of lectures, in-class discussion and viewings. Readings will be placed online at least five days before the class for which they are required.
This course fulfills learning goals 1, 2, 3 & 'A' of Track 2 ("History and Philosophy of Science") of the CLAS Science & Society requirement.

**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.
- Blackboard will be used to submit written assignments.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

- Responses to in-class viewings [3 x 15% = 45%]
- Final comprehensive examination [55%]

**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.

**Responses:**

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 15% of your final grade.

Responses should be a minimum of 750 words in length. Please include the word count on your response. Short response will receive a zero grade.

**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. Neither the teaching assistant nor I will provide details of missed classes. Please remember that arriving late for class is disrespectful to myself and your fellow students.

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

**Plagiarism:** As a student, you are expected not to engage in any form of plagiarism, which according to the ASU Student Code of Conduct, "means representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own." 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. I use an internet-based service to detect plagiarism. As such, I have a high probability of detecting fraud, and regularly catch plagiarists using it. You will be required to submit printed and electronic copies of all papers. Upon detection of plagiarism, you will automatically be assigned a course grade of XE which "denotes failure through academic dishonesty and may not be appealed through the grade appeal process." Thus, as a minimum, you will fail this course and will not be able to repeat it. An ‘XE’ grade on your transcript will also preclude you from entry into any reputable graduate or professional school. 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.

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

**Schedule of Classes**

1. **16-Jan** The Nature of Science & Religion
2. **23-Jan** Fossils & Floods, Design & Darwin
3. **30-Jan** **Viewing:** What About God? (PBS, 2001, 120min)
4. **6-Feb** **Viewing:** A Walk Through Earth History (ICR, 1998, 90min)
5. **13-Feb** The Rise, and Fall, of Young Earth Creationism
6. **20-Feb** YEC Claim: The Earth is Young
7. **27-Feb** YEC Claim: Each after their own kind
8. **5-Mar** The Rise of Intelligent Design Creationism
9. **12-Mar** **Spring Break**
10. **19-Mar** ID Claim: Icons of Evolution
11. **26-Mar** ID Claim: The Cambrian Explosion
12. **2-Apr** ID Claim: CSI and IC
13. **9-Apr** **Viewing:** Judgment Day (PBS, 2007, 120 min)
14. **16-Apr** Problems for Science Education / **Viewing:** Flock of Dodos (no response)
15. **23-Apr** Final Examination

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1 Required readings will be made available online. The Online schedule of classes is definitive.