

Darwin and Darwinisms

HISC 173/273

UCSD Winter 2014

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Charles Darwin has done more than any other naturalist to shape our larger scientific view of the biological and human worlds. His name has become synonymous with the most basic mechanisms of evolution, and his works are still consulted by biologists and philosophers of biology for fresh scientific insights. Outside the scientific community, he is widely considered either dangerous or liberating, blamed for the ultimate disenchantment of the world or credited with the final freeing of human intelligence from the chains of religious dogma. The excesses of both National Socialism and Stalinism have been laid at his door. At times his followers have tried to make his insights into a new secular, humanistic religion. This class will dig deep into Darwin's life, work and legacy, examining how a retiring, sickly, modest, and incredibly hard-working nineteenth-century bourgeois family man irrevocably changed the way we view ourselves and our world.

This course is a history of science colloquium for graduate and undergraduate students. This means lots of reading and lots of discussion. Attendance is mandatory, as is participation. The class will be graded on a combination of discussion participation (35%) and written work (65%). The latter will take the form of a series of reading responses, which students will do every week between second and ninth weeks, plus an introduction and conclusion, the whole to be turned in to me at the end of the class. Graduate students may undertake a research paper, if they wish.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

FIRST WEEK: GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

Book of Genesis, excerpts, to be read in class

SECOND WEEK: THE LIFE AND WORK OF CHARLES DARWIN

Darwin website at Christs College

Charles Darwin (1859) *On the Origin of Species*, chapters. 1-5

THIRD WEEK: WALLACE

Charles Smith *Capsule Biography of Alfred Russell Wallace*

Alfred Russell Wallace (1858) 'On the tendency of varieties to depart indefinitely from the original type'

FOURTH WEEK: THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES II

Charles Darwin *Origin of Species*, chapters 6-8, 13, 14

FOURTH WEEK: THE DESCENT OF MAN I

Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, part I

Alfred Russell Wallace "Darwinism Applied to Man"

Alfred Russell Wallace (1869) 'The Origin of Moral Intuitions' *Scientific Opinion*

SIXTH WEEK: DARWINISM, ETHICS AND POLITICS

Petr Kropotkin, (1902) *Mutual Aid*, introduction

Friedrich von Bernhardi (1914) "the Right to Make War' from *Germany and the Next War*

Julian Huxley (1943) 'Evolutionary Ethics' Romanes Lecture

Theodosius Dobzhansky (1946) *Heredity, Race and Society*, excerpts, tbd.

SEVENTH WEEK: SOCIOBIOLOGY AND ITS CRITICS

E. O. Wilson (1975) 'Man: from Sociobiology to Sociology' in
Sociobiology the New Synthesis

The Sociobiology Study Group of Science for the People (1976)
'Sociobiology, another biological determinism' *Bioscience*

E.O. Wilson (1976) 'Academic vigilantism and the political significance
of sociobiology' *Bioscience*

EIGHTH WEEK: NATURAL SELECTION AND CHRISTIANITY

Francis Collins (2007) *The Language of God: a Scientist Presents
Evidence for Belief* excerpts, tbd.

NINTH WEEK: REWILDING AND DE-EXTINCTION

Elizabeth Kolbert (2012) "Recall of the Wild: the quest to engineer a
world before humans." *New Yorker*, December 24th, 2012

David Biello (2014) "Fact or Fiction?: Mammoths can be brought back
from extinction." *Scientific American*, June 10th, 2014

TENTH WEEK: THE HUMAN JOURNEY

Human evolution revisited.