

# Darwin and Darwinisms

HISC 173/273

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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: THE LIFE AND WORK OF CHARLES DARWIN

Adrian Desmond and James Moore (1994) *Darwin: Tormented Evolutionist*

Graduate students may prefer to read Janet Browne's two-volume life of Darwin.

### SECOND WEEK: THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES I

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

Charles Smith *Capsule Biography of Alfred Russell Wallace*

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

### THIRD 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

Graduate students read parts I and III

Alfred Russell Wallace "Darwinism Applied to Man"

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

## FIFTH WEEK: THE DESCENT OF MAN II

Charles Darwin *The Descent of Man*, part III

Graduate students read *Expression of the Emotions in Man and the Animals*

## SIXTH WEEK: DARWINISM AND POLITICS

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

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

## SEVENTH WEEK: THE ETHICS OF THE EVOLUTIONARY SYNTHESIS

Julian Huxley (1943) ‘Evolutionary Ethics’ Romanes Lecture

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

## EIGHTH 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 1977 ‘Academic vigilantism and the political significance of sociobiology’ *Bioscience*

## NINTH WEEK: NATURAL SELECTION AND CHRISTIANITY

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

## TENTH WEEK: PRIMATES R US

*Project Nim / Rise of Planet of the Apes*