**USC**Dornsife

Core 103

Darwin & Darwinism

**Fall 2018/MW 8:30-9:50 am/Taper Hall 118**

**Discussions Fri 8-8:50, 9-9:50 VKC 107**

**Lab Wed 5-7:50, VKC 150**

**Instructor: Dr. Devin Griffiths/Taper 402K**

**Office Hours: Wed. 12:30-2pm, THH 402K**

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**“I have always felt that I owe to the voyage the first real training or education of my mind; I was led to attend closely to several branches of natural history, and thus my powers of observation were improved …. Everything about which I thought or read was made to bear directly on what I had seen or was likely to see; and this habit of mind was continued during the five years of the voyage.”**

**—Charles Darwin**

**Course Description**

This is a course about Darwin and the modes of thinking which he enabled. We will seek to understand his major theories, but also the way his major writings were taken up by later readers, and the profound effect of these ideas not only on the sciences, but on human history, especially questions of race, economics, and sex. It is also a class about the ranginess of the imagination, the interdisciplinary nature of creative thought, and the way that an idea in a poem or book can walk over and shape how we perceive the world around us. If Darwin has had a massive impact not only on the way biologists, but also novelists, poets, and political theorists address the world, this is because he himself was an enormously curious and varied thinker, able to imagine connections between various fields of understanding and walks of life.

Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection, published in 1859 as *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, set off a shock wave that continues to shape how scientists, social thinkers, and writers think about natural history, development, and the origins of society. More than a century later, Darwin remains the most influential scientific thinker in modern history. But when Darwin set sail on the H.M.S. Beagle in 1831 – for a five-year trip that would convince him that species evolved – he was a freshly-minted undergraduate who had already dropped out of medical school, an enthusiast of nature hikes and geology, but also of poetry and historical novels. In the first section of the course, we will step into Darwin’s shoes, reading what he read during and after the Beagle voyage, exploring how he lived, and replicating the initial field work that laid the foundation for some of Darwin’s most important discoveries. In the second portion of the course, we will explore the culmination of this fieldwork in Darwin’s later discoveries, especially *On the Origin of Species*, *The Descent of Man*, and the debates that swirled around evolution. In the final portion of the class, we’ll look at the impact of Darwin’s theories on the “pseudo-sciences” of the nineteenth-century, including research into race and eugenics, on twentieth-century discussions of social and psychological evolution (and the controversies they have spawned), and finally, on modern evolutionary science.

Our lectures, discussions, and field trips will introduce us to Darwin’s writings and reception, but also encourage us to think about the context for his research and historical transformations in how his work was read and understood by both specialists and casual readers.

\*\*\*NOTE: Syllabus subject to revision during semester.

**Learning Goals**

\* Develop a thorough understanding of Darwin’s theories and their reception

\* Learn to explore and understand the historical context for those ideas and science

\* Evaluate how scientific ideas draw from and shape their wider cultural milieu

\* Weigh the importance of humanist approaches to the history of science

\* Work to collaborate, exchange ideas, and make persuasive arguments about the history of evolutionary science and its controversies

**Required Books**

* Darwin, The Voyage of the Beagle 978-0140432688
* Darwin, On the Origin of Species 978-0140439120
* Dana, Two Years Before the Mast 978-0375757945
* Gould, The Mismeasure of Man 978-0393314250
* Norton Anthology of English Literature, The Major Authors 9th ed. 978-0-393-91963-9.
* Wiener, The Beak of the Finch 978-0679733379

**Additional Readings**

All other readings will be stored as pdfs in the class dropbox folder ([link](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/nale1r6qoajspjv/AABUnuSdOHA_DgdgaqoUKirha?dl=0)):

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**Grading Breakdown**

25% Final

20% Midterm

15% Final Research Presentation

15% Facebook Presentations

15% In class participation and discussion

10% Participation in field trips and labs

**Facebook Presentations:** Over the course of the semester, each student will produce a 4-minute video response to one of the week’s readings. It will be the responsibility of all other students to comment on that response by Wednesday at 9 a.m. Extra credit for responses that reference previous responses OR introduce material from outside of class.

**Facebook Link:** [**link**](https://www.facebook.com/CORE103DarwinDarwinism-996998843835756)**.**

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**Weekly Schedule *(subject to change as schedules necessitate)***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Topics/Daily Activities** | **Readings & Homework** | **Deliverable/Due Dates** |
| Week 1 8/20-24 | Getting started: syllabus and goals, lectures on natural theology. | Readings from Paley and Bell, Milton, *Paradise Lost*: *NA* 799-800; 873-876, 878-86. |  |
| Week 2 8/27-31 | Darwin’s influences | Readings from M: Lamarck, Lyell, W: Humboldt, Blake, “The Lamb,” “The Little Black Boy,” “The Tyger” *NA* 1458-9, 1465 |  |
| Week 3 9/7 | Voyaging 1: | First half of both Darwin’s *Voyage of the Beagle* (**W Intro-Ch. 14** + Shelley, “Mont Blanc” *NA* 1788) and Dana’s *Two Years Before the Mast* (**W Bio + pp. 1-100)** |  |
| Week 4 9/10-14 | Voyaging 2: | Finish *Voyage of the Beagle* (**M Ch. 19-20; W. Ch. 21-Concl.**)d *Two Years Before the Mast* (**M. 150-300; W. Finish +**  Hemans, “Indian Woman’s Death Song” *NA* 1407) | Sat. 15: Field Trip: Catalina Island |
| Week 5 **9/17-21** | Natural Selection | Begin *On the Origin of Species* (**M. Intro, ch. 1-4; W. Ch. 7, 9-10 +**  John Clare, “The Nightengale’s Nest” and “The Mouse’s Nest” *NA* 1853, 1863.). | In Lab: Analyze Field Work |
| Week 6 9/24-28 | Sexual Selection | Finish *On the Origin of Species* (**M. ch. 12-14 +** Mary Wollstonecraft, “Vindication of the Rights of Women” *NA* 1501-23.) **W** selections from *The Descent of Man* [+ Elizabeth Barrett Browning “Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” *NA* 2211 optional]) |  |
| Week 7 10/1-5 | Slavery, Abolition, and Theories of Race | Selections from *The Descent of Man*, and from Britt Rusert, *Fugitive Science*. OPTIONAL: watch Ryan Coogler’s “Black Panther” (2018). Browning, “Caliban Upon Setebos” *NA* 2152 | **MIDTERM (In Class Wednesday)** |
| Week 8 10/8-12 | Darwin’s Contemporaries and the Huxley Wilberforce Debates | Readings from Lewes, Marx, Budge. Hopkins, “Binsey Poplars” *NA* 2231 | **Field Trip: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles Oct. 10** |
| Week 9 10/15-19 | Darwinism, Social Darwinism, and Eugenics | Readings from Spencer, Galton, Spalanzi |  |
| Week 10 10/22-26 | Darwinism and Pseudo-science | Selections from Wells, Samuel Butler, Robert Louis Stevension *NA* | Guest Lecture: Evolutionary Science Today (Sang-Hee Lee of UCR). Friday, 10/26, 8am |
| Week 11 10/29-11/2 | The New Synthesis and Molecular Genetics | Readings to include Watson and Crick, *The Beak of the Finch* (**M. ch. 1-14; W. ch. 15-Concl**). Elizabeth Bishop, “The Sandpiper.” |  |
| Week 12 11/5-9 | Darwinism and Gender Theory | Readings from Roughgarten, Grosz. Poems by Adrienne Rich, Claudia Rankine |  |
| Week 13 11/12-16 | Darwinism and modern Race Theory | Gould *Mismeasure of Man* (**M. Ch. 1-5; W. Ch. 7 + Epilogue + pp. 20-26**), Sam Harris-Ezra Klein debate. Derek Walcott, *“A Far Cry from Africa*” *NA* 2854. |  |
| Week 14 Thanksgiving  11/19-21 | Darwin as Ecologist and Philosopher | Chapter from *The Age of Analogy*, selections from Dona Haraway, Anna Tsing, Richard Doyle |  |
| Week 15 11/26-29 | Final Presentations | Prepare and deliver final research presentations |  |

**Catalina Report:** Working in pairs, each student will prepare a research report, based on observations made on Catalina Island, that develops hypotheses about the history of the islands geology, wildlife, or plant life, highlighting further questions and additional observations which would be needed to pursue that hypothesis.

**Final Research Presentation:** Working in pairs, each student will prepare a final research presentation that explores the relation between one of the works we read for class and some present-day issue (and includes a 10-work bibliography). This can be based on work or research that you are already doing.

**Optional Weekly Presentations:** As an alternative or supplement to the final research presentation (which is at the end of the course), any student or pair of students who is/are doing work outside the class that relates to one of the week’s readings **can also** reach out to me and suggest a 15-minute talk laying out their own work and how it relates. This will not count for extra credit, but if you wish, it can take the place of the final research presentation.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory for the class. If you knowthat you are going to be absent on a specific day for a valid reason school trips, etc.), please discuss it with me in advance. For each absence beyond two your grade will be reduced by 1/2 letter.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards*<https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage [sarc@usc.edu](mailto:sarc@usc.edu) describes reporting options and other resources.

## **Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* <http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html>provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* [*http://emergency.usc.edu/*](http://emergency.usc.edu/)will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.