

Spring 2013 Perspectives 2699B: The Historical Basis of the Evolution/Creationism Controversy

College of Arts & Sciences, Valdosta State University

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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 2:00-3:00 or By Appointment. Please feel free to call the office or use email to schedule a convenient time. Anytime I am in my office, you are welcome to stop in to ask quick questions.

Class Meetings: The class will meet once each week for a single block session for the two credit hours.

Textbooks:

The Case for God (2009) by Karen Armstrong, New York: Anchor Books

When Science Meets Religion (2000) by Ian Barbour, New York: Harper Collins

What Evolution Is (2001) by Ernst Mayr, New York: Basic Books

Evolution & Christian Faith (2006) by Joan Roughgarden, Washington DC: Island Press

Course Description: An examination of the various issues contributing to the ongoing Evolution/Creationism Controversy. Readings will center on the philosophical aspects of the intersections of religion and science. Class discussion will facilitate open dialog from multiple perspectives. Class presentations will clarify common misunderstandings of biological evolution and show how miscommunications lead to this clash between disparate discourse communities.

Course Objectives: This class satisfies one of the two general education courses required in Section B: Perspectives of the VSU core curriculum as prescribed by the University System of Georgia. The primary emphasis falls under Area 6: Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Understanding & Expression. As part of the core curriculum at VSU, Perspectives courses foster interdisciplinary learning and global awareness. Perspectives courses explore topics that cross disciplinary boundaries with an emphasis on the interaction of two or more disciplines. The goal is the development students' ability to synthesize varying points of view and connect issues that affect individuals within our region with those affecting individuals in other parts of the world.

Learning Outcomes: VSU Area B states that: *Students will demonstrate knowledge of global and regional perspectives history of religion and impact this debate can have on other societies around the world.no credit for the assignmen*

Essential Question:

Why is there so much social controversy surrounding the Theory of Evolution?

Enduring Understanding:

Recognize how misrepresentation of the Theory of Evolution and the failure to understand the distinction between scientific and religious knowledge has led to the Evolution/Creationism Controversy.

Class Format:

The Evolution/Creationism Controversy is perpetuated by an absence of productive, civil discourse between religious and scientific stakeholders. This course creates an academic space for such a conversation that is based on information from Religion, Science, and a variety of other disciplines including: Anthropology, History, Sociology, Philosophy, Law, Education, & Communication. These sessions will not be endless monologues from the front of the room. Students are encouraged to ask questions and will frequently be asked questions in something of a Socratic dialog.

Assessment:

Weekly Assignments	20%
Term Paper	30%
Midterm Exam	10%
Comprehensive Final Exam	20%
Participation & Attendance	20%

Written Assignments: One week after every class, students will submit a 500-750 word response to an assignment. These entries should be single-spaced, written in first person, and reflective. **These submissions are due by the start of the next class and will not be graded if they are late. NO EXCEPTIONS!** Grades will be out of 10 points as (10 = Excellent, 8 = Good, 6= Adequate, <5 = Deficient). If a student misses the description of the assignment in class, it is their responsibility to contact a classmate (Do Not Email the Instructor). At the end of the semester, these assignments will provide the basis for the term paper.

Examinations: The midterm and final will be a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. Do NOT try to memorize the information because questions will probe an understanding of the concepts and not measure rote learning. Students are responsible for all of the information presented in the lectures and anything covered in the course readings. **Lecture notes are the study guide.** The midterm will be scored for 100 points, but there will be 110 questions giving each person 10 free questions. In case of an emergency, the instructor within 24 hours by office phone or by email. Make-up exams will only be given for valid reasons with documented excuses and these will be essay tests that are much more difficult. The final examination will be comprehensive, consist of 200 multiple choice questions, and cover all accumulated course content.

Attendance: Attendance will be taken at every class session. Any absence, regardless of the reason, will reduce the attendance grade by 25% unless a make-up paper is submitted. The Make-up paper will be 1-2 single-spaced pages with 3 references. Students are responsible for getting notes from another student and submitting assignments even when they miss class. Anyone who misses more than 20 percent of the class sessions will receive a failing grade for the course. Emailing the instructor with the reasons for an absence is fine, but please do not ask if something was missed. Assume that it was! The instructor will not provide notes or repeat what happened in class.

Participation: There will be several short class presentations in which everyone will be assigned a different topic to present as part of the class discourse. If you miss these, it will hurt your participation grade. We will start a discussion on Blazevue after each class. EM

Perspectives 2630: Tentative Class Schedule (Subject to Change)

Date	Class Topic
Jan 9	Mosaic of Quotations - Myths & Truths
16	Mythos & Logos - The Controversy
23	Origin Stories
30	<i>History of God</i> (93 min DVD)
Feb 6	Nature of Religion
13	History of Evolutionary Thought
20	Nature of Science
27	Evidence for Evolution
6	Midterm Exam
Mar 11 - 15	SPRING BREAK – No Classes
20	Biological Evolution
27	<i>Expelled</i> (97 min DVD)
Apr 3	Dr. James Muncy - Why Not Intelligent Design?
10	<i>Religulous</i> (101 min DVD)
17	Chronology of US Legal Cases & War within Classrooms
24	How the Press Exacerbates the Controversy
30	Culmination - The International Scope of the Controversy
May 2	Thursday (12:30 - 2:30pm) CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM

Writing Guidelines

Objective

These assignments have been designed to help you to learn in the classroom, through your own writing. Papers are an opportunity to display your knowledge through more than just exams or what you might or might not say in class. These assignments also allow you to show your own style of expression and personality, so you should take pride in them.

Focus

Well-crafted writing always has a specific purpose. Every paper should have a distinct thesis or central idea. Your thesis should directly address the nature of the writing assignment. Decide on the topic and a specific case you want to make before you start writing. Write the thesis down and check back throughout the writing process to be certain that the work supports it.

Organization

Before you begin to write, think through how you plan to develop your thesis and use an outline to structure the paper. An Introduction and Conclusion will be the first and last paragraphs of your paper. Start paper with something catchy to the reader. Make it perfectly clear, in this introductory section, what your point or central idea will be. Support that concept throughout the body of your paper. Paragraphs in the middle will be the Body of your text. Subheadings are an effective way to support and indicate the organization of longer papers. Any paper over 3 pages probably needs subheadings. Avoid using phrases such as "In this paper I will discuss..." since it is much more sophisticated to avoid this type of "crutch statement."

Paragraphs

Divide the paper by major themes and make each of these a paragraph. You should have at least 3 paragraphs per page. The first sentence of each paragraph is a topic sentence.