Phil. 4733.23959: Philosophy of Biology  Spring, 2019  Course Syllabus

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Office Hours:  Thurs.  11:30 – 12:15
(and by appt.)
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Course Description:  Phil. of Biology provides an opportunity to explore critically issues within biological methodology and theory, concentrating on the unifying theory of biology —Darwinian Evolution. We will 1st work through the original public presentation of this theory in On the Origin of Species (1859), and then the combination of Darwinian theory and Mendelian Genetics, culminating in the Neo-Darwinian Synthesis of the 1930s. Finally, we will critically investigate more recent controversial issues within evolutionary biology (some chosen by students).

Course Material:  Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species (1st Edition!); Handouts; Material placed on D2L.

Requirements:  There will be 4 take-home exams, each distributed 1 week before it is due (cf. Daily Schedule for dates). The 1st Exam will, be worth 50 pts.; the 2nd, 75 pts.; the 3rd, 100 pts.; and the 4th, 125 pts. (350 pts.). Attendance will count for up to 20 additional pts. (0 unexcused absences = 20; 1 = 15; 2 = 10; 3 = 5); and participation in D2L discussions (cf. separate instructions) will count for up to 30 pts.  

Total: 400 pts.

Grading:  A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79, etc. Steady improvement will be counted in borderline cases (c.a. 1-1.5 percentage pts. from the higher grade).

No particular background is presupposed, but this is an upper-level class, and will be treated as such. Students are expected to do the required reading before class and be ready to discuss it, to attend class regularly, to proof-read their work carefully, turn it in on time, etc.

Policies: The University Syllabus-Attachment has been placed on D2L. Additionally: no make-ups will be provided without prior approval (same with grades of Incomplete); and I do not tolerate plagiarism of any kind...if a student is caught plagiarizing, I will recommend the maximum penalty.

Have a Good Semester!