

**Liberal Studies 487**  
**Senior Seminar on Evolution and Creation**  
**SPRING 2005**

**Instructor**

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**Office Hours**

MH 504A

MW 2:30-3:30

TTh 1:30-2:30

F 10:00-11:00

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

*Science on Trial: The Case for Evolution* by **Douglas J. Futuyma**.

*Finding Darwin's God*, by **Kenneth Miller** *Refuting Evolution2*, by **Jonathan Sarfati**

LITTLE PROFESSOR TEXT BOOKS

725 N. PLACENTIA AVE., FULLERTON, (714) 996-3133

Material on the **course website**:

[http://nsmserver2.fullerton.edu/departments/chemistry/evolution\\_creation/web](http://nsmserver2.fullerton.edu/departments/chemistry/evolution_creation/web)

**Course Synopsis**

Liberal Studies 487 is an interdisciplinary study of evolutionary biology's impact on modern culture, particularly within the context of religious doctrines about creation. In the United States, this relationship has developed within a unique religious, educational and political environment. Enrollment in LS 487 should enable students to address the complexity of this situation by considering a wide variety of scientific arguments and theological perspectives. Courteous respect for all student religious affiliations will be maintained at all times.

Course reading materials are drawn from many disciplines, including biology, biochemistry, physics, geology, philosophy, comparative religion and history. Religious views to be discussed include "young earth creationism", "theistic evolution", "progressive creationism", and "intelligent design theory". Study of the institutions and denominations that support these views will provide students with an enhanced understanding of the religious diversity of their society.

**Expected Student Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete Liberal Studies 487 should be able to effectively articulate knowledge of the following aspects of the relationship between evolutionary science and religious doctrines of creation.

- the scientific basis and content of modern evolutionary biology
- religious and scientific objections to specific aspects of evolutionary theory

- the philosophical issues raised by conflicts between scientific and non-scientific reasoning
- the distinctive characteristics of scientific and theological reasoning and discourse
- the historical and cultural contexts in which evolutionary theories have developed
- the diversity of religious perspectives on evolution, both pro and con
- the legal status of creationism and other alternatives to evolutionary biology in public education

### **Methods of Assessment**

Assessment of student knowledge and the ability to articulate it will include the following procedures:

- Three closed book examinations written in class will require knowledge of the content of the course, understanding of key concepts, and analysis and critique of actual published, broadcast or internet based arguments for specific creationist or evolutionary positions as well as objective questions about creationist views and evolutionary biology.
- Observation of class discussion will assess student ability to verbally articulate knowledge and carry out productive discussion of evolution and creation, particularly with people with whom they disagree.
- Three short critical essays on selected reading assignments will assess student understanding and ability to critically analyze controversial religious and scientific arguments.
- A longer 1500 word essay will be submitted in draft for critique prior to revision and final submission.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES**

Grades will be determined through a variety of assessments.

- 1. Daily class attendance** will be recorded. Regular class attendance is essential to success in a seminar class.
- 2. Some of your grade will be determined by your contribution to class discussions.** Productive class participation on your part requires that you read the assigned material critically and come to class ready to articulate your own position or interpretation. There are many ways to contribute to a particular class:
  - Ask questions about issues raised in the reading assignments.
  - Comment on a recent incident or development relevant to evolution/creation.
  - Call the seminar's attention to something interesting you found on an evolution/creation website or e-mail discussion group; **see the class website for possibilities.**
  - Participate in e-mail discussion with other students and the instructor
- 3. There will be three in-class written examinations, one of which will be a final exam.** Part of each exam will include objective questions requiring short factual answers. The essay part of each exam will require analysis and critique of actual published, broadcast or internet-based arguments for various creationist or evolutionary positions.
- 4. Three 600 –700 word essays will be required during the semester in response to specific reading assignments.** Students have the opportunity to read or summarize a draft of their essay for feedback prior to the due date. Essays must be submitted electronically.

Late essays will not be accepted. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment. Repeated plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

5. You will write one 1500 word essay on an author of your choice. See the separate instructions for this essay assignment.

Performance for each requirement will be assessed according to the following point system, resulting in a possible total of 440 points.

Attendance: 50  
Class Participation: 50  
Three in-class exams: 40 each  
Three short essays: 40 each  
One long essay: 100

**Grades** are assigned to each requirement according to the following percentages: 90-100: A; 80-89: B; 70-79: C; 60-69:D; below 60: F. Final grades will be determined using the same percentages for the total possible 450 points.

Written work is evaluated according to three criteria as follows.

1. **Mechanics:** spelling, punctuation and organization (20%)
2. **Comprehension:** How well do you demonstrate understanding of the claims or arguments you have read? (50%)
3. **Critical analysis:** How well have you critiqued the author using relevant sources and well constructed arguments? (30%)

#### **Examination Makeup Policy**

Students whose health or unexpected circumstances make it impossible for them to take a mid-term exam on the day scheduled may be allowed to take a makeup. They must, however, contact the instructor within twenty-four hours after the time scheduled for the exam, provide appropriate documentation, and arrange to take the make-up during the week subsequent to the scheduled time. Students who are unable to complete the final paper or final exam as scheduled may request an incomplete for the course using the appropriate petition form.

#### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. In accordance with the policy stated in the CSUF University catalogue, any student who attempts to read and use another student's exam will receive a failing grade for that exam; any use of notes during examinations will result in a failing grade for the examination. Plagiarism on essays will not be tolerated. For the CSUF policy on plagiarism, see:

<http://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/judicial/Plagiarism.htm>

#### **Withdrawal from Class**

The procedure for withdrawing from classes at CSUF may differ significantly from that of other colleges. Be sure to read the University's withdrawal policies in the Class Schedule. Note that after the first two weeks of classes authorization to withdraw may be granted only for "the most serious reasons, which is defined as a physical, medical, emotional or other condition which has the effect of limiting the student's full

participation in a class. Poor academic performance is not sufficient reason for withdrawal."

**LBST 487 Essay Assignment  
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This semester the essay assignment is to write an analytic essay of at least 1500 words on one of the following individuals:

Michael Behe	Richard Dawkins	Duane Gish	S. J. Gould
Terry Gray	Kent Hovind	Phillip Johnson	Keith Miller
Glenn Morton	Jonathan Sarfati	John Woodmorappe	Stephen Meyer
Howard Van Till	Jonathan Wells		

**Procedures**

1. Choose an author from the list and get approval from the instructor to write on the author of your choice. If you prefer to write on an unlisted author, check with the instructor to see if your choice is acceptable. Your choice of author must be submitted by **May 4** and approved by **May 6**. If you and another student choose to write on the same author, any significant overlap between the two essays will be considered plagiarism and will result in an F grade for the course for both students.
2. Consult with the instructor concerning the publication by your author that will be the primary focus of your essay. Your choice must be approved by **May 6**.
3. Submit an electronic draft of your essay by **May 11**. Your draft will be referred to turnitin.com for a plagiarism scan. I will grade your draft and suggest revisions.
4. Submit an electronic final version of your essay by **May 23**, the day of the final. Your final essay will also be referred to turnitin.com for a plagiarism scan.

**Content and goals of the essay**

1. Summarize the life history, education, and career of your author. What is your author's present religious affiliation; how might this commitment affect or constrain your author's position on issues concerning evolution or creation?
2. What are some of your author's most important publications? Provide bibliographic information and comment on the venue for these publications. What publishers or websites are involved? To what extent are these publications peer reviewed and by whom?
3. What is one issue that your author is particularly concerned about with respect to debates over evolution and creation?
4. Choose one or two websites, articles, or book chapters that you see as particularly indicative of your author's position. Give complete bibliographic information. Explain why this particular publication is significant for your author.
5. Summarize the main points your author argues for in the publication you have chosen. How does this particular argument fit into the more general position your author takes regarding evolution and creation?

6. Most importantly, **critique your author's argument** in the publication you have chosen. How compelling is the author's argument in light of all you have learned about the issues and concepts relevant to evolution and creation? Explain to what extent you agree or disagree with the argument. Explain the basis of your agreement or disagreement. Why do you agree or disagree? What sources are most important to you as you argue for your agreement or disagreement?

### Assessment

100 points will be assigned to your essay according to the following distribution:

1. Timely approval of author choice 5 points
2. Timely approval of publication choice 5 points
3. Timely submission of first draft 5 points
4. Quality of first draft 30 points  
Essay drafts will be graded according to the following criteria:
  1. **Mechanics:** spelling, punctuation and organization 6 points
  2. **Comprehension:** How well do you demonstrate understanding of the claims or arguments you have read? 12 points
  3. **Critical analysis:** How well have you critiqued your author using relevant sources and well constructed arguments? 12 points
5. Timely submission of final essay: 5 points
6. Quality of final essay. 50 points  
Essays will be graded according to the following criteria:
  1. **Mechanics:** spelling, punctuation and organization 10 points
  2. **Comprehension:** How well do you demonstrate understanding of the claims or arguments you have read? 20 points
  3. **Critical analysis:** How well have you critiqued your author using relevant sources and well constructed arguments? 20 points

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All essays, including first drafts, will be submitted to turnitin.com. Plagiarism of any significant extent on either first drafts or final essays will result in a course grade of F.

Students should study the **CSUF Student Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism:**

<http://www.fullerton.edu/deanofstudents/judicial/Plagiarism.htm>

Two other useful discussions of plagiarism are:

<http://facpub.stjohns.edu/~roigm/plagiarism/>

<http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/index.cfm>