

**Evolutionary Studies Seminar**  
**EVO 301, section 03; 3 credits**  
**Mondays; 4:30 - 7:10 ; Spring 2009**  
**Humanities 015**

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"Evolution is a process in which information regarding the environment is literally incorporated, incarnated, in surviving organisms through the process of adaptation. Adaptation is for Darwinians, an increment of knowledge."

— Gerard Radnitzky

"Learning about natural selection is like having a premature orgasm. You think it will take a long time and lead to a tremendous climax, but then it's over almost as soon as it began!"

— David Sloan Wilson

## The Course:

This course, based on a similar course offered by our sister program at Binghamton, is the anchor of the Evolutionary Studies (EvoS) program. The course's goals are many, but the primary goals are to expose students to evolutionary theory and principles as well as to major scholars who are applying evolutionary theory to their respective disciplines (e.g., anthropology, biology, geology, philosophy, and psychology). Indeed, this is the highlight of the course: the EvoS Seminar series. The guest speakers will share their papers with us, prior to their arrival, so we'll have time to reflect on their topic. We'll also get the chance to meet with them before the lecture – giving us an opportunity to discuss their work in an informal, intimate setting. We are also hoping to have pizza parties right after each public lecture to provide further opportunities to discuss the different topics and interact with our speakers.

We will be reading, writing, thinking, and talking about diverse topics such as the evolution of armor in invertebrates, the ultimate origins of human war, the evolutionary biology of physical attractiveness, and the evolutionary logic of psychopathology. In addition to adding to your understanding of evolutionary theory, this course also should:

1. help you to critically evaluate different scholarly approaches to evolution;
2. get you to develop an appreciation for how evolutionary theory applies across academic disciplines;
3. enable you to write coherently and think critically about topics related to evolution;
4. provide a space for thinking philosophically about the issues that go *beyond* the science and into human affairs;
5. develop your ability to think like an evolutionist and apply the EM (evolutionary model) to everyday life;
6. give you more insight into yourself, others, and the world;
7. ignite in you (if not already present) a passion for the evolutionary model and lens;
8. provide an environment in which you feel safe to be open to question and re-think your assumptions and beliefs;
9. make your synapses grow and connect.

## Required Reading:



Wilson, D. S. (2007). *Evolution for Everyone: How Darwin's Theory Can Change the Way We Think About Our Lives*. New York, NY: Delacorte Press. At the campus bookstore or online.

The other readings, including ones provided by our invited speakers, are (or will be) on Blackboard (Bb)—in the **Course Documents** section. The readings will be due on the day where they are listed in the Schedule.

## **Determining Your Final Grade:**

This is an intensive writing course—and intense it will be. You will have a term paper to write, as well as a journal to keep. In addition, you will be asked to bring in a question or comment per class, write reading-response papers, give a brief oral presentation, and take the final—a take-home.

- **Questions:** 11 points (1 point each)
- **3 Reading Responses:** 18 points (Up to 6 point each)
- **Evolutionary Journal:** 20 points (10 points for having 15 (or more) entries; up to 10 points for the entry you've selected for evaluation.)
- **Paper:** Up to 30 points
- **Presentation (Evolutionary Journal entry or Research Paper) :** 11 points for doing it when it's due
- **Take-home Final:** Up to 10 points

### **1) Evolutionary Journal: Worth up to 20 points**

**(10 points for having 15 (or more) entries; up to 10 points for the entry you've selected for evaluation.)**

Darwin kept diaries and secret notebooks all throughout his life. I'd like you to keep one, too. At least, for part of this class. In your day-to-day living and observations of people, places, and things, start to see the world like an evolutionist or naturalist. Use the lens of natural and sexual selection, of evolutionary theory, on everything in which you come into contact. An entry can be as short as a paragraph and as long as you want. The only thing that will *not* get 10 points is a journal of 15 paragraphs. Entries will likely be of different lengths, depending on many variables. I would like you to write this on the computer in a document called "Evolutionary Journal." You should number and date each entry—and make sure to save a copy, back it up, etc. You might consider printing it out each time you write it and saving it in a folder. Please put the number of the entry, along with the day and date in the upper right-hand corner of the page, like so: Mon., 1/26. #1. Include a cover sheet with a title, your name, and the date. Examples of titles: "Field Notes on the Behavior of Patrons of P&Gs," or "An

Evolutionary Lens on Sarah," or "A Darwinian Notebook on a Part of My Life, January 26-April 12," etc. Please put these pages together with either a large paper clip or inside a one-pocket folder. For having 15 of these entries by April 15 (that's a little over one per week) you will receive 10 points. You'll decide which entry you feel is the most interesting, novel, and well-written (my criteria for grading) and indicate (with a star) that it is the one you would like graded. Please place it on the top of the others. There are many, many benefits to this assignment—one is practical: the journal can be a source and inspiration for your paper! You also can develop your best entry into an oral presentation.

## **2) Question or Comment: 1 point each. (Worth up to 11 points.)**

Every time we meet, please have prepared 2 copies of your well-thought-out question, interesting idea, fact or comment you wish to share with us. There's no make-up on these, but that would only be a problem for your grade if you were absent excessively! These memes should be generated from your readings.

## **3) Three Reading Responses: 18 points (Up to 6 points each)**

For the readings you do when we are not going to hear a lecture, you should read the assigned readings very carefully—annotating where you feel appropriate. The annotations in your readings will help you to write your 'reading responses'. Each one should be about 2 pages. I would prefer you to write on at least 2 points from the readings. Paraphrase the author's idea, or quote it if it's short—you can also condense the quote if you are able to retain the sense of the quote. Essentially you are reacting and responding to some of the ideas from your readings, so how you do this is up to you. Something *not* to do is to begin with: "This was an interesting chapter." You should aim to cut out all filler and get to the heart of the ideas. Showing that you are synthesizing the ideas from other readings and lectures is good! If you're unsure about how to do these 'reading responses', feel free to come see me or Dylan.

## **4) Paper: (worth up to 30 points)**

7-15 pages. Times-New Roman, 12 pt. Double-spaced; APA style.

[See: <http://www.uwsp.edu/PSYCH/apa4b.htm#IF> written by Mark Plonsky of the University of Wisconsin at Steven's Point for APA (American Psychological Association)format/style.]

You should turn in a draft on **April 6**.

The final paper is due on **April 20**.

There are two ways to approach this paper. One way is to do it like a standard research paper — where you are essentially putting it all together and making sense of the literature. For example, one student wrote a paper in last year's EvoS course entitled "Causes for the Evolution of Rape." She began: "The topic of evolution causes controversies in many scholarly and lay communities. Some topics within evolution provide for even more debate between these communities. One of these topics is the evolution of rape. This paper will discuss the evolutionary aspects of rape involving women attacked by men." Another approach is to come up with a completely novel way to apply evolutionary principles to something common and everyday. Like Duchamp who took the toilet out of context and made it art, you could, for example, take the toilet and put it into an evolutionary context! Maybe there's a way of studying toilet use (public or private) from an evolutionary perspective?

I encourage you to let me know what your topic is once you've decided upon it; you can do this by email, or after class, or during my office hours. Below are some more topic ideas for your paper, but this list is by no means exhaustive. I'm more than happy to talk with you and help you develop your paper topic if you're having trouble.

### **Some possible topics:**

- Mating Intelligence/Glenn Geher
- Fitness Indicator theory/Geoffrey Miller
- Handicap principle/Amotz Zahavi
- Costly Signaling /Amotz Zahavi
- evolutionary feminism
- Darwinian medicine
- Darwinian literary studies and theory
- Darwinian Psychiatry
- The Savannah hypothesis
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- **evolutionary theories and principles related to:**
- love
- sex
- the orgasm
- sperm competition
- the capacity of commitment
- mating systems
- aesthetics/beauty/art
- religion
- morality
- politics
- mental illness
- economics
- laughter
- yawning
- eating disorders
- specific emotions and feelings, such as:
- grief
- gratitude


- forgiveness

## 5) Oral Presentation

The final two class periods will be completely dedicated to students' oral presentations. Your oral presentation should be based on your term paper or a very developed Evolutionary Journal entry. If you choose to do the journal entry option, please let me know. Your talk should take approximately 10 minutes (and you should expect several minutes of question-and-answer). You are welcome to you use PowerPoint.

## Teaching Assistant

The TA (Teaching Assistant) for this course is Dylan Glenn-Johanson. Dylan graduated from the Honors program here (with a major in Psychology) in 2006, and was my student five years ago this January. Dylan has a magnificent mind and will be a real asset to this course. In addition to generally assisting with the course, Dylan will also: attend the class and help contribute to and facilitate discussion; be available to meet with students to go over writing assignments and help students understand material; assist with collecting of work and giving feedback on some of the work.

Jan 26	Introduction. Syllabus.	
Feb 2	The Evolutionary Model Wilson (2007; Chs: 1-4) Bb: Buss	<b>Reaction paper #1 due.</b>
Feb 9	<b>Guest Lecture - Gordon Gallup</b> <b>The Science of Sex Appeal: An Evolutionary Perspective</b> 	
Feb 16	<b>Guest Lecture - Warren Allmon</b> <b>What Did Darwin Do?</b>	
Feb 23	The Evolution of Love Wilson (2007; Chs: 4-8) Bb: Haselton & Gonzaga	<b>Reaction Paper #2 due.</b>
Mar 2	<b>Guest Lecture - David Livingstone Smith</b> <b>The Most Dangerous Animal: Human Nature and the Origin of War</b>	



**Guest Lecture - Justin Garcia**  
**Intimacy, Infidelity, and the Individual**

Mar 9



**Guest Lecture - Maryanne Fisher**  
**How Women Compete for Mates**

[No class Mar 16]  
Mar 23



**Guest Lecture - Alexei Savchenko**  
**Hooray! The Genome Project is Complete! What Happens Next?**

Mar 30

Apr 6  
Evolution and Psychopathology/Mental Illness  
Wilson (2007; Chs: 13-15)  
Bb: Nesse  
Bb: Price & Stevens

**Draft of paper due.**  
**Reaction paper #3 due.**

**Guest Lecture - Ben Normark**  
**Phylogeny and Evolution of Unusual Genetic Systems in Armored Scale Insects**

Apr 13

**Evolutionary Journal due.**

**Guest Lecture - Aaron Haselton**  
**Diet, Sex, and Aging for Supermodels (*supermodel organisms*, that is)**

Apr 20

**Paper due.**

Apr 27	In-Class Presentations	
May 4	In-Class Presentations	
May 11; 5pm.	Final	<b>Hand in final.</b>

**N.B. Readings and schedule subject to change!**

**Also:** On **Feb, 12th** (THURSDAY) at 5:30, David Schmitt, psychologist, Bradley University and Director of the International Sexuality Description Project will be in LECTURE CENTER 100 talking about Darwin’s Legacy in the Behavioral Sciences: Human Mating Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (*Darwin Day Speaker*).

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**Communication with me:**

I'll put important updates, like changes in the readings (additions/deletions, etc.) up on Blackboard. Very important updates, like cancellation of class and/or a change in office hours, I will put on Bb *and* also send out emails to your newpaltz.edu addresses. I'm a lover of email, so you're best off reaching me at andrewsa@newpaltz.edu rather than voicemail. Also, if my office hours conflict with your schedule, I'm happy to coordinate another time to meet with you—just see me after class or email me about it.

**Attendance:**

Since the class meets only 14 times, it's important not to miss class. If you *do* have to miss class, you don't have to explain to me why. I understand that sometimes students *want* me to know that there is a legitimate reason for their absence, but it's not necessary. Also, please make every effort to be on time.

**Cell phones:**

Please turn your cell to silence mode. If you're a caregiver and you need to be in touch with a child or parent, etc., please turn to vibrate mode and answer phone outside of class.

**Academic Integrity:**

From the SUNY New Paltz statement on academic integrity: “Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work. Cheating, forgery, and plagiarism are serious offenses, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action.”



For more information regarding the policy of academic integrity here at the college, you can go to: [http://www.newpaltz.edu/studentaffairs/regulations/campus\\_rules.html#academic](http://www.newpaltz.edu/studentaffairs/regulations/campus_rules.html#academic).

Also, please see me if you're unsure about what violates this policy.

### **Late assignments (not including drafts):**

Four points off for every day late; I will not accept emailed papers. If you are going to turn something in late, please bring it to the Psychology office (Humanities 3<sup>rd</sup> floor) and hand it in to Jane Lehman, the dept. secretary, who will date it and put it in my mailbox.

### **Inclement weather:**

When snow or ice appear dangerous for driving, even if the college has not closed, you should check Blackboard and your email, in case I cancel class.

### **Mental Health:**

Finally, wonderful as it is, sometimes college life can be very stressful. Fortunately, SUNY New Paltz offers a “variety of services to the campus community ranging from individual and group counseling to campus-wide educational programs that contribute not only to the growth of individual students, but also to the benefit of academic programs in related disciplines, to campus life, and to the educational/cultural life of the region.”

<http://www.newpaltz.edu/counseling>

Student Health & Counseling Building

Phone: (845) 257-2920 Fax: (845) 257-3162

Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

### **Directions to the Psychological Counseling Center**

The Psychological Counseling Center is located in the Student Health and Counseling Building, first door to the right. This building can be found between Esopus Hall and Gage Hall, facing the pond and just off Southside Loop Road. Parking is provided for our clients in front of our building.

### **Students Helping Students**

There are times when students in distress feel more comfortable talking to a fellow student rather than approaching one of the professional staff at the Psychological Counseling Center (PCC). Recognizing the campus community's need for student-helpers, the PCC has created two peer crisis intervention organizations: OASIS and HAVEN.

#### **OASIS**

OASIS is a student-staffed, counseling and crisis intervention center and telephone hot-line. OASIS volunteers are trained and supervised by the hotline Coordinator, shift supervisors and the PCC staff to respond to students' telephone calls and walk-in requests for support, information, and referral.

- OASIS Office Location: Deyo Hall G13c
- Office Hours: 8 p.m. - 1 a.m. (Closed during all breaks.)
- Phone: 257-4945

OASIS offers confidential peer counseling and crisis intervention to help students deal with difficulties

in life areas such as:

- loneliness
- depression
- relationships
- roommate hassles
- academic problems
- suicidal thoughts.

Students can also call the OASIS Center for information and referrals on:

- drugs and drug identification
- sexual issues and related diseases
- medical emergencies
- campus and community services.

### **HAVEN**

HAVEN is a peer counseling program that offers confidential telephone and walk-in counseling and education to students who are survivors of, or who are concerned about rape and other unwanted sexual experiences. HAVEN volunteers are trained and supervised by the PCC staff. HAVEN also maintains a 24-hour emergency beeper service for emergencies. HAVEN and the Beeper Service are closed during all breaks.

- HAVEN Office Location: Deyo Hall G13c
- Office Hours: Office Hours: 8 p.m. - 1 a.m. (Closed during all breaks).
- Phone: 257-4930 Emergency Beeper Service: 879-0067 (Closed during all breaks).

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### **From the director of EvoS, Glenn Geher:**

As luck would have it, you are taking this course during the semester of Darwin's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday (2.12.2009). Further, as more luck would have it, you are taking this course during the period in which the National Science Foundation is supporting our program with lots of money to help with things such as the speaker series for this course. This is a good time to be taking this course!

In 2005, the Quarterly Review of Biology published a paper on the evolution of laughter (written by Matt Gervais and David Sloan Wilson). While this fact is not necessarily impressive in an absolute sense, consider this: This article is based completely on the paper that Matt Gervais (then an EvoS student at Binghamton) wrote for his paper in an undergraduate EvoS course (very similar to this same class). Shoot high. I want these papers to be great.

Toward this end, note that, with funding from the National Science Foundation and the help of Rosemarie Sokol Chang, Jennifer Waldo, David Sloan Wilson, and many scholars across the country who are supporting the idea of "Evolutionary Studies" in higher education, we have just started an

international journal that will feature high-quality papers WRITTEN BY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS in a peer-reviewed, published format. This journal, titled “EvoS: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium,” is partly designed to showcase the work of students in EvoS programs around the nation. Getting your paper for this class published in this journal will be a much bigger achievement than receiving an A in this class. THINK BIG!

Note: *EvoS: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium* is a web-based journal – and high-quality PowerPoint presentations may be considered for inclusion on this site.

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EvoS Survey Link:

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Re53V\\_2fHN9S8j8ysKer\\_2ba6g\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=Re53V_2fHN9S8j8ysKer_2ba6g_3d_3d)

Please take a few minutes and complete the survey at the above link. This survey is being administered to all the classes that are included in the Evolutionary Studies Minor, but you don't have to be a part of the minor in order to take the survey. We are interested in exploring general knowledge and attitude about evolution. Your participation is completely confidential (you have to create a UserID at the beginning, but we will NEVER be able to connect it to you).

Thanks - see you soon!

GG