

A&S 195-01
Introduction to Liberal Arts and Sciences
Fall 2013

Meeting Time: Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45 a.m.

Classroom: Simpkins 27

Instructor: Dr. Jose Fernandez

Office Address: Simpkins 09

Office Phone: 309-298-1042

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:30 p.m. & 3:30-4:00 p.m., Wed. 1:00-2:00 p.m., and by appointment.

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Course URL: <https://westernonline.wiu.edu>

Course Description:

A comparative introduction to the major areas of the liberal arts and sciences. Students will learn how each area evolved and how each approaches problems and controversies. The course may take its particular focus each year from the university theme.

Course Overview:

Among the broad array of disciplines that compose the liberal arts and sciences, this course will concentrate primarily on two specific fields: literature and evolutionary science. In the spirit of interdisciplinary studies, this course will study and analyze works of fiction and evolutionary theory in relation to other fields of inquiry such as history, religion, sociology, and environmental studies. We will begin by exploring the elements of the scientific method and the history and development of scientific discoveries that gave birth to the modern sciences beginning around the 17th century. As the scientific method spread and new scientific fields were created, fiction writers such as Mary Shelley captured in their writings the importance and philosophical implications of these new discoveries in relation to humans. This course will concentrate primarily on the study of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, first published in *The Origin of Species* (1859), and its historical, social, religious, and scientific context. As the course progresses, we will explore the influence of evolutionary thinking at the turn of the 20th century in American writers such as Jack London. Then, we will focus on the reemergence of evolutionary science after the 1950s based on new scientific discoveries, such as the DNA molecule and its genetic component, and how these discoveries have been represented in fiction.

Course Goals and Objectives:

- Describe the development of evolutionary science, particularly Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection, and its significance from an historical, social, cultural, and religious perspective.
- Identify and explain some of the social, religious, and literary movements in America that were influenced by Darwinian evolution.
- Develop your ability to read and write critically about scientific ideas and works of fiction through the discussion of assigned readings, student responses, and class projects.
- Explore and analyze the convergence of literary works and scientific ideas as subjects for philosophical inquiry.

Required Texts:

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (Signet, 2000) ISBN: 9780451527714

Evolution: The Triumph of an Idea by Carl Zimmer (Harper, 2006) ISBN: 9780061138409

The Sea-Wolf by Jack London (Dover, 2000) ISBN: 9780486411088

Lord of the Flies by William Golding (Harcourt, 1963) ISBN: 978-1573226127

Anthill by Edward O. Wilson (Norton, 2010) ISBN: 9780393339703

Assignments and Evaluations:

Class Participation & Activities	150 points
Reading Responses	250 points
Literary Analysis	150 points
Leading Discussion	50 points
Controversy Paper & Presentation	150 points
Research Project & Presentation	250 points
Total	1000 points

Grading Scale:

A = 930-1000; A- = 900-929; B+ = 860-899; B = 830-859; B- = 800-829; C+ = 760-799;

C = 730-759; C- = 700-729; D+ = 660-699; D = 630-659; D- = 600-629; F = 599 or below.

Short Breakdown of Assignments and Evaluations:

- **Class Participation & Activities:** Your active participation during class will be necessary to fulfill the goals and objectives of this course. Class activities will include short in-class writing exercises, group discussions, and small group work on a regular basis. Attend class prepared by reading the assigned material before class according to the schedule of readings. Students are required to bring their syllabus, textbooks, and the appropriate material to each class.
- **Reading Responses:** Approximately 10 short online posts (1 double-spaced page or 300 words) worth 20-25 points each. Reading responses will help you to formulate ideas, arguments, reactions, and answers based on the assigned readings. Detailed instructions for each reading response will be posted on WesternOnline at least a week before the reading response is due. The posts will be submitted electronically via WesternOnline before the beginning of class. LATE posts will be accepted, but you will lose points for each class the post is late.
- **Literary Analysis:** This is a 3-4 double-spaced page (900-1200 words) paper that will help you to practice your analytical and writing skills based on your interpretation of a scientific or philosophical idea, theme, or any other literary device present in Shelley's *Frankenstein*. You are NOT required to consult secondary sources for this assignment, but rather to use textual evidence to support an ARGUMENT. Your literary analysis draft will be revised and resubmitted before you receive the paper's final grade.
- **Leading Discussion:** Each student will select a section(s) of a work of fiction and will lead a portion of the class discussion, along with me, based on the schedule of readings. Each student will create a set of approximately 10 questions that will be submitted on WesternOnline by the day of your leading discussion. The goal is to get students involved during class discussion by solicit responses and reactions from your classmates.

- **Controversy Paper & Presentation:** Students will select a controversy from a list of topics and write an analysis paper (3-4 double-spaced pages or 900-1200 words). You will describe and evaluate at least two competing views on a social, scientific, environmental, religious, or philosophical controversy related to evolutionary science. You are required to consult class and external sources for this paper. This assignment includes a 10-minute presentation of the controversy and competing views where all students will be asked to weigh on the evidence and offer their own evaluation.
- **Research Project & Presentation:** This project is an opportunity to improve your analytical, writing, and research skills and further explore one of the course's ideas, scientific concepts, or works of fiction of your interest. The project may take the form of a LITERARY analysis or an ARGUMENT paper of 5-6 double-spaced pages (1500-1800 words). This project will be based PRIMARILY on external sources. Students will present their arguments, findings, and conclusions during a 10-minute presentation at the end of the semester. The project will be developed in gradual steps and your draft paper will be revised and resubmitted before you receive a final grade for this project.

Guidelines for Paper Submissions:

I will post on WesternOnline an instructions sheet with an evaluation criteria for each of the three major papers. All your draft and revised papers will be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Word document via WesternOnline before the beginning of class when the paper is due (see schedule of writing assignments). **Late papers will be accepted, but you will lose 15 points for each class the paper is late.** You will get feedback on most draft papers before you receive a paper's final grade. Make sure to SAVE all your work on your computer or a flash drive. Computer issues are not an excuse for submitting incomplete or late work.

Attendance Policy:

Since this course will rely on students' active participation through writing activities, group work, and class discussions, attendance and punctuality are required. If you miss class due to illness, personal emergency, or any other reason, notify me via email before or after an absence occurs. You may have three excused or unexcused absences without penalty, but you are still responsible for meeting the assignments' deadlines (students will NOT be able to make up for missing class work). **Beginning with your fourth absence, you will lose 15 points from your class participation grade for each subsequent absence.** Habitual tardiness may negatively affect your grade as well. **Keep in mind that if you accumulate more than eight absences, you will NOT receive a passing grade in this course.**

Outside Class Communication:

The best way to reach me outside class is by email. I will respond to your emails promptly (within 48 hours). You are also responsible for checking your WIU email account and WesternOnline on a regular basis. Please feel free to stop by any time during my office hours or email me to make an appointment to discuss any aspect of the course such as your writing, a particular grade, or your overall performance in this course. Think about office hours as a time where I will be available to work with you individually on any of the class assignments. Note: if you visit me during office hours or arrange an individual conference while finding sources or writing your Controversy Paper, you will receive 15 extra credit points.

Classroom Etiquette

Students should turn off all their electronic devices before the beginning of class and should not be engaged in any other activity that is not related to the class. Please do not leave the classroom abruptly; if you need to excuse yourself for an important reason while the class is in session, please let me know before the class begins. Similarly, when working on the computer lab or small groups, students are expected to work on the assigned task. You are also expected to show civility and respect for other students' ideas, opinions, and beliefs expressed in writing or during class discussion. **Failure to comply with these expectations will negatively affect your class participation grade.**

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when students present a short or long piece of a work that was created by another individual or was taken from a source without properly acknowledging it. Plagiarism is a serious offense. **If you plagiarize any section of a formal assignment during this course, it may result in failure of the assignment and failure of the entire course.** If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, ask me or read the Western Illinois University's Student Academic Integrity Policy (<http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/acintegrity.php>).

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located at the Malpass Library, 3rd Floor, West Side. For more information, visit the University Writing Center website (http://www.wiu.edu/university_writing_center/).

Student Rights and Responsibilities

A complete list of your rights and responsibilities as a Western Illinois University student is available at (<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>).

Accommodations:

“In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Support Services and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services.”
Source: Official University Policy Manual (<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/syllabus.php>).

Important Dates:

Friday, August 23: Last day of open registration.

Friday, August 30: Last day of restricted registration.

Sunday, October 27: Last day to drop course and last day for a total university withdrawal.

Schedule of Activities, Readings, and Assignments:

This schedule is subject to change. If any of this information changes, I will inform you during class and post an updated version on WesternOnline.

Important Note: reading assignments are due by the date marked in the left column. Unless changes are announced, reading responses, draft papers, and revised papers should be posted or uploaded electronically on WesternOnline (WO) before class by the day they are due.

Wk	Date	Class Topic & Readings Due before Class	Reading Responses & Papers Due before Class
1	Tue., Aug. 20	Introductions & Academic Interests Guest Speaker: Dr. Amy Mossman, Arts & Sciences Program	
	Thu., Aug. 22	Course Overview, Goals and Objectives Topic: The Scientific Revolution before Darwin	
2	Tue., Aug. 27	Read: Kuhn's "The Historical Structure of Scientific Discoveries" (WO)	Syllabus Questionnaire Due
	Thu., Aug. 29	Read: Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> (Intro, Preface, Letter 1 to Chapter 8)	Reading Response 1 Due (Victor Frankenstein & 19th Century Science)
3	Tue., Sept. 3	Read: Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> (Chapters 9-18) Read: Excerpt from Holmes's <i>The Age of Wonder</i> (WO)	
	Thu., Sept. 5	Read: Shelley's <i>Frankenstein</i> (Chapters 19-end)	Reading Response 2 Due (Shelley's Description of Nature & Beauty)
4	Tue., Sept. 10	Topic: Darwin's Theory of Evolution Read: Zimmer's <i>Evolution</i> (Preface, Intro, Chapters 1-2)	
	Thu., Sept. 12	Excerpt from Darwin's <i>Origin of Species</i> and <i>Descent of Man</i> (WO)	Literary Analysis Outline & Draft Due
5	Tue., Sept. 17	Read: Zimmer's <i>Evolution</i> (Chapters 3-4)	Reading Response 3 Due (The Geological Record & Mendel's Laws of Inheritance)
	Thu., Sept. 19	Guest Speaker: Dr. Shawn Meagher, Biological Sciences	Literary Analysis Due
6	Tue., Sept. 24	Topic: Social Darwinism & Eugenics Read: London's <i>The Sea-Wolf</i> (Chapters 1-12) Read: Excerpt from Hofstadter's <i>Social Darwinism in American Thought</i> (WO)	Reading Response 4 Due (London and Darwinism)
	Thu., Sept. 26	Read: London's <i>The Sea-Wolf</i> (Chapters 13-26)	
7	Tue., Oct. 1	Read: London's <i>The Sea-Wolf</i> (Chapters 27-end)	Reading Response 5 Due (Sources on London and <i>The Sea-Wolf</i>)
	Thu., Oct. 3	Guest Speaker: Dr. Timothy Helwig, English Department Read: TBA (WO)	

8	Tue., Oct. 8	Topic: "The Two Cultures" Read: Excerpt from Watson's <i>DNA</i> (WO)	
	Thu., Oct. 10	No Class: Work on Controversy Paper	
9	Tue., Oct. 15	Topic: Human & Social Evolution Read: Zimmer's <i>Evolution</i> (Chapters 11 and 12) Read: Excerpt from Pinker's <i>The Language Instinct</i> (WO)	Reading Response 6 Due (The Fossil Record & Human Evolution)
	Thu., Oct. 17	Controversy Paper Presentations	Controversy Paper Due
10	Tue., Oct. 22	Read: Golding's <i>Lord of the Flies</i> (Chapters 1-4)	Reading Response 7 Due (Golding and Social Evolution)
	Thu., Oct. 24	Read: Golding's <i>Lords of the Flies</i> (Chapters 5-8) Read: Excerpt from de Waal's <i>Our Inner Ape</i> (WO)	
11	Tue., Oct. 29	Read: Golding's <i>The Lord of the Flies</i> (Chapters 9-end)	Reading Response 8 Due (Golding and the Demons of Our Nature)
	Thu., Oct. 31	Guest Speaker: Diane Sandage, Sociology Department	Project Topic, Research Question, & Draft Thesis Due
12	Tue., Nov. 5	Topic: "The Modern Synthesis" Read: Excerpt from Shubin's <i>Your Inner Fish</i> (WO)	
	Thu., Nov. 7	Topic: Research Project Workshop	Research Proposal, Sources, & Outline Due
13	Tue., Nov. 12	Topic: Evolution & Social Behavior in Nature Read: Wilson's <i>Anthill</i> (Chapters 1-9)	
	Thu., Nov. 14	Read: Wilson's <i>Anthill</i> (Chapters 10-18)	Reading Response 9 Due (Wilson and the South)
14	Tue., Nov. 19	Topic: Ecological Conservation Read: Wilson's <i>Anthill</i> (Chapters 19-27) Read: Excerpt from Carson's <i>Silent Spring</i> (WO)	
	Thu., Nov. 21	Read: Wilson's <i>Anthill</i> (Chapters 28-end)	Research Project Draft Due
15	Nov. 26 & Nov. 28	Thanksgiving Break: No Class	
16	Tue., Dec. 3	Topic: Evolution & Religion Read: Zimmer's <i>Evolution</i> (Chapter 13)	Reading Response 10 Due (Darwinism & Religion in American History)
	Thu., Dec. 5	Guest Speaker: Dr. John Simmons, Religious Studies	
17	Thu., Dec. 12	Research Project Presentations Starting at 8 a.m.	Research Project Due