



Charles Darwin's home, Down House, near London: the sand walk, greenhouse, and manor house.

## ***Basis of Evolution Syllabus***

**Dr. Homer Montgomery**

### **PROFESSOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

Office	972.883.2480	(last resort contact)
Mobile	469.951.8110	(secondary contact)
Office Location	Founders North 3.308A	
Email Address	mont@utdallas.edu	(primary contact)
Office Hours in person	W 0800-1700 / TR 1400-1700	

### **GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, & other restrictions	None
Course Description Objectives	Basis of Evolution provides wide-ranging discussions of the unifying theory of the origin and modification through time of all organisms. Pertinent history, the fossil record, natural and sexual selection, evolutionary psychology, and philosophy are prominent topics. Each class is designed as a student-centered encounter with the underpinnings of evolutionary theory. Students will produce several written abstracts detailing various facets of evolutionary theory based on their readings of primary research and research syntheses. Students will complete a research project as part of a small group. The professor in this course functions primarily as a coach. As much as possible, the class will be driven by the students. Note the work of previous students in the form of various papers and Podcasts.
Objectives	All students will become conversant with evolutionary theory. All will engage in probing discussions and activities. We will encounter numerous topical and controversial issues.
Methodology	All projects will respect student's prior knowledge and perspectives, be learner centered, and be products constructed by a group. The professor in this course will function as a coach. An active online discussion board will be maintained.
Activities	Each week is designed as encounter with underpinnings of evolutionary theory. You must complete all of the readings and other assignments in the folder for that week.  Students will produce weekly 500-word abstracts that address the Topic of

	<p>the week. Upload the file to the Digital Dropbox and then be sure to send it before time is up. A quiz will time in on Monday at 0800. Quizzes will appear in the folder for each week. Both assignments time out at 1700 on Friday nights, Central Standard Time (Dallas time).</p> <p>Your major grades include a midterm group-research project and a detailed self-assessment at the end of the course. Groups will be assigned after class begins.</p> <p>You are also required to post to the discussion board.</p>
Learning Outcomes	Students will be able to fluently, broadly, and correctly understand and discuss theory.
Required Texts & Materials Provided	<p>Dawkins, R., 1976, <i>The Selfish Gene</i>, Oxford University Press          Miller, G., 2000, <i>The Mating Mind</i>, Doubleday          Ridley, M., 1993, <i>The Red Queen</i>, Penguin          Ridley, M., 1996, <i>The Origins of Virtue</i>, Penguin          Whittaker, R., 1999, <i>Island Biogeography: Ecology, Evolution and Conservation</i>, Oxford University Press.</p> <p>(optional) Roughgarden, J., 2006, <i>Evolution and Christian Faith</i>, Island Press</p>
Suggested Texts, Readings, & Materials	Compiled in the folder for each week

## ASSIGNMENTS & ACADEMIC CALENDAR

[Topics, Reading Assignments, Due Dates, Etc.]

You may need to look up some terminology in the notes. There are several good Web sources for this task. You might also want to augment the notes with online sites and post the URLs on the discussion board. Remember to stick with reputable sites such as those produced by museums, universities, and the like.

Week	Topic	Book Assignments	Other Assignments Abstract and Quiz due at 1700 (CST) each Friday
One	Introduction	Darwin	Quiz
Two	Charles Darwin and his writings	Darwin	Abstract Quiz
Three	Natural selection, speciation	Darwin	Abstract Quiz
Four	Sexual selection	Miller	Abstract Quiz

Five	Patterns and classification		<a href="#">Abstract</a> <a href="#">Quiz</a>
Six			Group projects are due Wednesday at 1700
Seven	Island biogeography	Whittaker	<a href="#">Abstract</a> <a href="#">Quiz</a>
Eight	Evolution of intelligence and language		<a href="#">Abstract</a> <a href="#">Quiz</a>
Nine	Primate/Human evolution		<a href="#">Abstract</a> <a href="#">Quiz</a>
Ten	Memes	Dawkins	<a href="#">Abstract</a> <a href="#">Quiz</a>
Eleven	Origins of Virtue	Ridley	<a href="#">Abstract</a> <a href="#">Quiz</a>
Twelve	Cooperation and competition	Ridley	<a href="#">Abstract</a> <a href="#">Quiz</a>
Thirteen	The Selfish Gene, Richard Dawkins	Dawkins	<a href="#">Abstract</a>
Fourteen	The Red Queen	Ridley	Self assessment due Wednesday at 1700

## ABSTRACTS

### Concept

Abstracts are difficult to write. They must be seriously concise. Each word should be weighed for effectiveness.

### Format

Each abstract will focus on current research dealing with the topic of the week. The length is 500 words ( $\pm 5$  words) as determined by "Word Count" in MS Word or other word processor. Highlight the body of your abstract. That is the important number. The count includes just the body of the text. Your name, the title, and references are not counted. Missing the word count will produce penalties. For assistance in writing effective abstracts please see:

<http://research.berkeley.edu/ucday/abstract.html>

## QUIZZES

### Concept

The weekly quiz may be taken any time during the week from Monday at 0800 through Friday at 1700 (Central Standard Time). Please note that once you open the quiz, you only have 30 minutes in which to complete it. The quizzes can be challenging if you have not completed the assignments for the week.

#### Format

Mostly short answer and based on the material in the folder for that week.

### **MIDTERM PROJECTS**

#### Concept

Students will collaborate within their assigned groups and will produce a quality research project. The project:

- will be of innovative design
- will be of verified **group** effort
- will be uploaded to the GROUP discussion board before the due date and time

Each student will:

- peer-review the work of all of the other groups
- post remarks that are both critical and helpful on the GROUP board

#### Topics

Numerous areas of focus are possible in disciplines such as the origin of life, evolution of life, hominid evolution, sexual selection, evolutionary psychology, etc. We will discuss this in class.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT**

#### Concept

Your final exam is a thorough, thoughtful self-assessment. Ask yourself what you have learned and what you do not understand. Provide clear evidence for all statements. You will produce an insightful window onto your progress. During this process you will learn more about yourself. A tip to consider: begin today with short self-evaluations based on a rubric of your creation.

#### Format

Your self-assessment should include samples of a variety of the following:

- discussions (class and/or group)
- reflections
- weekly self-evaluations
- checklists and/or inventories
- synopses of interviews with your professor
- highlights of your group project including surveys, photos, etc.
- other examples of learning and creativity

You will submit your assessment document on WebCT.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

#### **Grading (credit)**

Abstracts: 110 points

Quizzes: 110 points

Group research project: 100 points

Self-assessment: 130 points (comprehensive)

Discussion posts: 50 points (for a minimum of 50 substantive posts over the course of the semester)

**Make-up Assignments**

None without prior approval of instructor

**Extra Credit**

None

**Late Work**

Accepted only with written excuse

**Special Assignments**

None

**Classroom Citizenship**

Respect should be shown at all times.

**Student Conduct and Discipline**

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations that govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, A to Z. Guide, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

**Academic Integrity**

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts, or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the Web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism

(see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

### **Email Use**

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address, and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individuals corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

### **Withdrawal from Class**

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of F in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

### **Student Grievance Procedures**

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's Handbook of Operating Procedures.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy to the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic-appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

### **Incomplete Grades**

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

### **Disability Services**

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and

Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:  
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22  
PO Box 830688  
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688  
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolling students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

### **Religious Holy Days**

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment. If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-campus instruction and course activities that are off-campus, out-of-state, or foreign are all subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at [http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm). Additional information is available from the office of the school dean.

**These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.**

### **Discussion Board**

The Discussion Board is used for student-student and student-instructor discussion and is available via the 'Discussion Board' button in the primary navigation area on the left-hand side of the Blackboard window.

### **UTTC Technical Requirements**

Technical requirements for taking an online class via the UT TeleCampus are available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,83.html>. Review the 'Computer Requirements' and 'Browser Configuration' areas before logging in to your course.

### **UTTC Technical Support**

All technical issues should be reported to Embanet, the TeleCampus's 24 x 7 professional helpdesk. Information on how to contact Embanet is available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,83,87.html>.

Technical Support FAQs are also available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,83,88.html>.

### **Digital Library**

The UT TeleCampus Digital Library supports the research and library needs of UTTC students and faculty by providing and coordinating a variety of library resources and services, including remote access to electronic resources, borrowing privileges at numerous academic and public libraries, reference and technical assistance.

Information on using the Digital Library is available at <http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu/index.cfm/4,0,64.html>.