

Syllabus for Colloquium: Evolution and Society

HON 406.H1 & 416.H1 Spring 2015

Thursday 5:00-8:00 pm, Jan 22, 29, Feb 5, 12, 26

Foster Science Building, Room 456

ACU Mission Statement:

The mission of Abilene Christian University is to educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

Faculty Facilitators:

Dr. Joshua Brokaw

Office: Foster Science Building Room 479D

Office Hours: 10-11 am (MWF), 12-1 pm (MW) & 1:30-2:30 pm (TR), or appointment*

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Dr. Kelly Elliott

Office: Hardin Administration Building Room 324

Office Hours: 9-11am (MWF)

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Course Description:

This course consists of five weekly meetings to discuss chapters of the book, *Evolution: The History of an Idea* by Peter Bowler, and supplementary materials. Each week a different student group will lead discussion and choose any additional supplementary materials for consideration. Students will be evaluated based on a position paper and class participation.

Textbook: *Evolution: The History of an Idea* by Peter Bowler (2009). Cost ~ \$30 (See 'Reading Books List' document for more information).

Topic and Purpose: In this colloquium, we explore the history of evolutionary theory globally, nationally, and even within the community of Abilene Christian University as it has impacted humans and been impacted by humanity. Evolution is a central organizing principle that has transformed the science of biology. Yet, in many human societies, evolutionary theory remains countercultural. While many people either welcome or dread the ways that an evolutionary perspective has and will shape our thinking and attitudes, the scientific development and acceptance of evolutionary theory has also clearly been impacted by cultural circumstances. There may be more questions asked than definitive answers given in this colloquium. This is expected when considering new perspectives on such controversial topics shaped by and impinging on our own worldviews. Our goal for students and facilitators is to grow in our knowledge, understanding and perspective and apply those outcomes to live responsibly and compassionately.

Anticipated Outcomes and Competency Measures: This colloquium provides the opportunity to consider the interconnections of cultural circumstances and the development of scientific theories. Course competencies include increased understanding of 1) the influence of **context** on the process of **discovery**; 2) the influence of **context** on the development of concepts of **ethics, values, and purpose**; 3) the development of worldviews/theories regarding the **concepts of natural and supernatural**; 4) the relationship between **shared knowledge and community inclusion**.

Grade Assessment:

Grades	Weight	Criterion
Attendance	(20%)	% Completion
Pre/Post Assessment	(15%)	Completion
Reading	(10%)	% Completion
Presentation, Abstracts	(20%)	Rubric Scale
Position Paper	(35%)	Rubric Scale
Total	(100%)	

Grade Scale:

A:	90 %
B:	80 %
C:	70 %
F:	< 70 %

Attendance/Participation: Perfect attendance, reading and participation in discussions are expected. Preparation outside of class is required. Learning and mental engagement are approximately proportional to effort, as are grades in this colloquium. Because attendance is 20% of the final grade, missing an entire meeting is equivalent to the loss of 4 points on the final course grade.

Pre/Post Colloquium Assessments: These assessments are web-based surveys composed of several questions related to the colloquium topic. **Both assessments must be completed in order to be useful and to receive any credit.** Answers do not necessarily have “correct” options. Rather, these surveys will be used to assess the impact of the colloquium on the answers (and responders). Individual responses will be analyzed by the faculty facilitators but will not be released to anyone else but the responder. However, patterns of change among all participants in the course at large will be shared with the group in order to allow individuals to compare their own answers before and after the colloquium and to the overall group. **The pre-colloquium assessment is due before the first meeting. The post-colloquium assessment is due within one day following the last meeting.**

Reading:

Knowledge of physical and cultural context is critical for evaluation of the individually held worldviews that guide every facet of our interactions with those around us. Increased knowledge and careful consideration of the origins of concepts leading to and resulting from evolutionary theory will be critical for discussion in this colloquium and impact many of our future attitudes and decisions. Thus, we have included the level of completion of reading as a small part of the course grading criteria.

Each student will be asked to copy and fill out the following in an email to the faculty facilitators. Due Feb 26th.

I can honestly say, "I read the entire textbook." This is a practical exercise in ethical behavior.

YES NO (choose one)

Name: _____ Witness: _____ Date: _____

If no, indicate the percentage of pages you read. _____

Group Presentations:

The presentation of ideas during this colloquium is a responsibility shared by all participants. Approximately 2/3 of each weekly session will consist of group presentations led by a different group during each meeting. Each group will choose a session to present materials from the text and supplements to the class. This is not a summary of the readings; all participants are expected to have read and have knowledge of the materials. However, each group will act as facilitators for discussion. The content of the first meeting will be generated by the faculty facilitators, and the remaining four meetings will be primarily led by the student groups.

Each group presentation must include an abstract that will be distributed electronically to all colloquium participants prior to the meeting time. The **abstract** will include four elements (see below). Note that elements 1 and 2 should be produced by the group; elements 3 and 4 contain individual components. The group as a whole should edit the final, complete document and ensure that it is distributed.

1. A 150-200 word summary of the topic(s).
2. An argument for why the topic is important.
3. A list of 2-3 interesting, new, or unexpected facts from the reading, generated by each group member. These are determined independently and may overlap with those of other group members.
4. A list of 2-3 important questions raised by the reading, generated independently by each group member. These questions may also overlap with those of other group members.

The group will choose **one of the questions from element 4 for each member to consider further**, and each member will **lead discussion of her/his chosen question**.

Here is the basic rubric for evaluating the group presentation.

Abstract: according to level of completion of all four elements.	10 points
Presentation: clarity, depth of understanding, level of engagement.	10 points
Total	20 points

Position Paper: The topic should consider some aspect of the connection between human society and evolutionary theory discussed in this colloquium.

A position paper is a statement of a position, point of view, conviction, or belief on a specific topic. It is a reasoned bit of thinking that supports a position. It is much more than just your opinion. It answers the question, "What do you think and why?"

- Your paper should be as clear and concise as possible (**no more than 4 double spaced pages** of body text).
 - Recognize that this is a greater challenge than a longer paper.
 - Your paper should achieve the objectives below.
1. **A Position Statement:** Take a position. In most cases, state your position in positive terms. The scope should be suitable to topics covered in the colloquium. We are looking for a simple declarative sentence. State your position clearly and succinctly at the beginning of your paper.
 2. **Evidence of Research:** Academic sources and references must be cited to lend credibility to your position. Include a minimum of five sources. The required and supplementary texts and sources cited in the texts are good sources; Wikipedia, encyclopedias, and virtually all web pages are not (you can almost always find something better). Use a consistent and widely accepted citation style (See <http://citationmachine.net/>). Include a works cited page and parenthetical citations within the narrative.
 3. **Synthesis and Analysis:** Sources should be synthesized to make relevant and critical connections that specifically address the chosen topic. Demonstrate understanding of connections with past contexts and future trends. Make appropriate, logical conclusions connected to the position statement.
 4. **Effective Communication:** Use error-free standard English that communicates meaning to readers with clarity. Carefully organize responses to the topic. Each paragraph should have a focused idea and sufficient supporting detail; the topic and order of each paragraph should be relevant and supportive to the position statement.

**Evaluation will be based on: P- the position statement (5 pts.), R- evidence of research (10 pts.), S- synthesis and analysis (10 pts.), C- effective communication (10 pts.) for a total possible of 35 points.*

Class time: Our (5) three hour sessions will be divided into 3 segments of $\approx$ 55 minutes with a five minute break in between. With your help we will watch the clock and keep you on schedule... so be on time. On most days, segment one will be administrative and faculty guided; segment two will be student led presentation and discussion; and segment three will be an interactive dialogue of open-ended questions formulated by both students and faculty related to the preceding presentation.

Schedule: Class Files should be checked each week for updates and announcements.

Week	Date	Presentation	Assignment for Next Week
		Prior to first class	Bowler Ch 1 & 5 Pre-Learning Assessment Due
1	Jan 22	Introduction to Evolution and the Major Modern Paradigms	Bowler Ch 2-4 and supplements
2	Jan 29	Group 1: Before Darwin, Ch 2-4	Bowler Ch 6-8 and supplements
3	Feb 5	Group 2: Darwin in Europe, Ch 6-8	Darwinism Comes to America
4	Feb 12	Group 3: Darwinism Comes to America	ACU history resources
	Feb 19	No Class	Faculty Conference Travel
5	Feb 26	Group 4: Evolution at ACU	Text Reading Signature Post-Learning Assessment Due
	Mar 26	Position Paper Due	

Learning Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, you must contact the *ACU Student Disability Services Office* (part of *Alpha Academic Service*) at (325) 674-2667 to make an appointment with the Director of Disability Services. In order to receive accommodations, you must be registered with them for each class in which you need accommodations. They will make necessary arrangements in cooperation with instructors.

Behavior/Dress Code: Any behavior or dress that distracts other students from learning will receive one warning. If there is a second infringement, you will be asked to leave class.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is defined as academic work completed as assigned for each class. Violations of academic integrity and other forms of cheating involve the intention to deceive, mislead, or misrepresent. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: 1) Cheating on tests and quizzes, 2) Failure to give credit to sources used in a work in an attempt to present the work as one's own, 3) **Submission of papers or projects obtained from another source (e.g., research service or club paper file) as one's own**, and 4) Falsifying information orally or in writing. Academic misconduct may result in, but is not limited to, a zero on the assignment and/or an F in the course. Additionally, the department chair, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of Student Life will be notified. See the full university policy, including how to appeal a decision, by following this link:

<http://www.acu.edu/campusoffices/studentlife/judicialDocuments/AcademicIntegrityPolicy.pdf>.

Policy Regarding Questionable Materials: As with all worthy areas of academic inquiry, material in this course will likely challenge your understanding of the world (i.e. challenge worldviews). It is our objective to provide the space for your questions and your personal development during this process because "Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great" (I Timothy 3:16a).