BIO 494 / HPS 494 / BIO 598: Darwin & Design

Fall 2006

Dr John M. Lynch (john.lynch@asu.edu, Irish A 219).

Class Time: W 8:40 – 11:30 am

Office hours: TTh 12:00 – 1:00, W after class, or by appointment.

This course aims to introduce you to how scientists, theologians & philosophers have explained the (apparent) design of natural objects such as organisms. The history of the design argument and the response by modern scientists will be used to illuminate the current controversy in American public schools over “intelligent design”.

Required Texts:

- All other readings will either be provided or made available online.

Supplementary Resources:

Our class website will be at http://darwinanddesign.blog.asu.edu and will be a collaborative blog. There I will post announcements, readings and news items on intelligent design. You will also have the opportunity to post comments, your own news items and questions.

Required Coursework:

- Attendance and active participation in class and online [50%] – you will be allowed one absence, excused or otherwise.
- Group assignment (details to follow) [50%] – please note that each student will receive a separate grade for this work and your peers will be asked to assess the contribution of each student.
- Graduate students will also be asked to complete a research paper on a topic of their choosing. This will be worth 50% of the grade.
Schedule of Classes

Aug 23  Introduction to the class and the current controversy
**Viewing:** Unlocking the Mystery of Life

Aug 30  A Brief History of the Modern Design Movement
**Reading:** Browse http://www.discovery.org/csc/

Sep 6   Classical Thought: Plato and Aristotle
**Reading:** Plato, *Timeaus*; Aristotle, *Physics & Metaphysics* [Online]

Sep 13  Newton and the Modern Anthropic Argument
**Reading:** Newton, extracts from *Principia* [Online]
**Viewing:** The Privileged Planet

Sep 20  Hume and Kant on the Design Argument
**Reading:** Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*; Kant, extracts from *Critique of Pure Reason* [Online]

Sep 27  The Blind Watchmaker: Design After Darwin
**Reading:** Dawkins, *Climbing Mount Improbable*

Oct 4   A Classic Response: Hodge’s “What is Darwinism?”
**Reading:** Hodge, *What is Darwinism?*

Oct 11  The Case for Intelligent Design
**Viewing:** Irreducible Complexity

Oct 18, 25 & Nov 1  **Group work.** Class will not formally meet though I will be available for consultation. [4 weeks]

Nov 8   **Presentation of group work.** Draft of group work due Nov 3rd

Nov 15, 22 & 29  Topics for further discussion to be decided based on student interests.
These could include — ID and information theory, mainstream theology and evolution, evolutionary mechanisms, legal aspects of ID, evolutionary developmental biology.
Final group work due, *via* email, December 6th