

# Sex, Death & Outlaws

Spring 2018 – PHIL 212

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*Office hours:* TuTh 5:00PM–6:00PM  
*Lectures:* TuTh 2:00PM - 3:15PM  
*Room:* Stephens Hall 300

## Course description

This seminar introduces students to conceptual issues in evolutionary biology. Some of the issues discussed in this seminar include: How does natural selection explain the evolution of complexity? What are organisms? What is the role of chance in evolution? How can altruism evolve by natural selection?

## Core Curriculum Course Learning Outcomes

1. Gather and analyze evidence from a variety of sources pertinent to the issue under study, including materials that might support opposing points of view.
2. Evaluate the logic of persuasive rhetoric in arguments for all major positions on a topic and formulate cogent counter-arguments to each one.
3. Articulate an understanding of the ethical dimensions of significant issues or dilemmas under study.
4. Construct and assess possible solutions to problems or dilemmas within an informed ethical and societal context.
5. Communicate arguments and conclusions effectively and clearly.

## Required text

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings and their due dates can be accessed from the link:

<https://makp.gitlab.io/teaching/schedule-phil212.html>

## Top Hat

We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: <https://www.tophat.com/pricing>.

After you register for a Top Hat account, you will need to enter the join code for our class. The join code is 582438.

## Graded work

There will be in-class questions, one presentation, and three papers. In-class questions will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions based on the readings and class lectures. In-class questions will be submitted via Top Hat. The due dates of the presentations will be decided in class. The presentation rubric can be accessed from the link:

<http://makp.gitlab.io/teaching/presentation-rubric.html>

Your final grade will be computed as follows:

| Date    | Graded work                | Value |
|---------|----------------------------|-------|
| Feb. 28 | Paper #1 (Module 1)        | 25%   |
| Apr. 11 | Paper #2 (Modules 2 and 3) | 25%   |
| May 17  | Paper #3 (Module 4)        | 25%   |
| –       | In-class questions         | 10%   |
| –       | Presentation               | 15%   |

## Grading scheme

Letter grades are defined as follows:

|    |        |    |              |
|----|--------|----|--------------|
| A  | 94–100 | C+ | 77–79        |
| A- | 90–93  | C  | 70–76        |
| B+ | 87–89  | D+ | 65–69        |
| B  | 83–86  | D  | 60–64        |
| B- | 80–82  | F  | 59 and lower |

## Schedule

| Date                               | Topics   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Weeks 1-4<br>Feb. 28               | Module 1: The Engines of Evolution<br><b>Paper #1 (Module 1)</b>                                       |
| Weeks 5-8<br>Weeks 9-10<br>Apr. 11 | Module 2: Evolution as Tinkering<br>Module 3: What Are Organisms?<br><b>Paper #2 (Modules 2 and 3)</b> |
| Weeks 11-16<br>May 17              | Module 4: Living in Groups<br><b>Paper #3 (Module 4)</b>   |

## Academic Policies

### Missed graded work

If you miss any graded work, including papers, you must provide a medical note or other formal documentation within one week if you wish to make up missed work. Otherwise, a grade of 0 will be recorded.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance to class is expected.

### Academic Honesty

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All acts of academic dishonesty will be penalized according to the Student Academic Integrity Policy:

<https://inside.towson.edu/generalcampus/tupolicies/index.cfm>

### Disability Accommodation

This course is in compliance with Towson University policies for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Disability Support Services (DSS), 7720 York Road, Suite 232, 410-704-2638 (Voice) or 410-704-4423 (TDD).

Students who expect that they have a disability but do not have documentation are encouraged to contact DSS for advice on how to obtain appropriate evaluation. A memo from DSS authorizing your accommodation is needed before any accommodation can be made. For more information about DSS, please visit their website:

<http://www.towson.edu/dss/>

### **Policy on Repeating the Course**

This course may be repeated only once without the prior permission from the Academic Standards Committee.