



PHL 249

Biology, Mind and Culture

S2 External 2014

Philosophy

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Rachael Brown

rachael.brown@mq.edu.au

Contact via rachael.brown@mq.edu.au

W6A, Rm 726

Mondays 2-3pm and Thursdays 3-4pm

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

12cp or admission to GDipArts

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is devoted to examining the ways in which evolutionary biology can shed light on the nature of the human mind and culture. The unit begins with an introduction to evolutionary theory and a discussion of some foundational issues concerning its nature and structure. What is fitness? What is adaptationism? What is the unit of selection? A substantial part of the unit, however, involves investigating extensions of evolutionary theory to the explanation of human mind and culture. The unit examines recent theories of cultural evolution, evolutionary epistemology, and evolutionary psychology. A special study is made of the ambitions and limitations of socio-biology: in particular, of socio-biological explanations of human sexual and ethical behaviour.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)

The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied,

identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other views (1,2,5)

An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)

Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
iLearn Quiz 1	10%	27/08/14
iLearn Quiz 2	10%	10/10/14
iLearn Quiz 3	20%	12/11/14
Tutorial participation	20%	N/A
Essay	40%	17/11/14

iLearn Quiz 1

Due: **27/08/14**

Weighting: **10%**

An online quiz (administered via iLearn) covering material from Topic 1 and 2 of the course. The quiz will include both multiple choice and short answer questions. The quiz will be available on the unit iLearn site for completion from midday on Friday 22nd of August until midday on Wednesday 27th of August. Once you begin the quiz you will have 2.0 hours in which to complete it. You may only attempt the quiz once.

If you do not complete the quiz without a medical certificate you will be deemed to have failed the assessment. Reasons such as needing to attend another course, or work commitments outside of University will not be considered as grounds for non-completion.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)
- The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other

views (1,2,5)

- An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

iLearn Quiz 2

Due: **10/10/14**

Weighting: **10%**

An online quiz (administered via iLearn) covering material from Topic 3 of the course. The quiz will include both multiple choice and short answer questions. The quiz will be available on the unit iLearn site for completion from midday on Monday 6th of October until midday on Friday 10th of October. Once you begin the quiz you will have 2.0 hours in which to complete it. You may only attempt the quiz once.

If you do not complete the quiz without a medical certificate you will be deemed to have failed the assessment. Reasons such as needing to attend another course, or work commitments outside of University will not be considered as grounds for non-completion.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)
- The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other views (1,2,5)
- An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

iLearn Quiz 3

Due: **12/11/14**

Weighting: **20%**

An online quiz (administered via iLearn) covering material from Weeks 7-12 of the course. The quiz will include both multiple choice and short answer questions. The quiz will be available on the unit iLearn site for completion from midday on Friday 7th of November until midday on Wednesday 12th of November. Once you begin the quiz you will have 3.0 hours in which to complete it. You may only attempt the quiz once.

If you do not complete the quiz without a medical certificate you will be deemed to have failed the assessment. Reasons such as needing to attend another course, or work commitments outside of University will not be considered as grounds for non-completion.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)
- The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other views (1,2,5)
- An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Tutorial participation

Due: **N/A**

Weighting: **20%**

Internal students are required to attend 70% of all tutorials, prepare for tutorials and to participate in discussion of required readings for each tutorial.

The mark is based in part on the extent to which students come to class well prepared, having done the required reading and having considered the tutorial questions/exercises. It is also based on the extent to which students make a constructive contribution to classroom discussion.

Class participation marking criteria:

- **Outstanding contributor:** Contributions in class reflect extensive preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive; provide major insights and direction for class discussion. Challenges are substantiated and persuasive. Makes an important contribution to class discussion overall.
- **Good contributor:** Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are often substantive; provide useful insights and some direction for class discussion. Challenges are substantiated and often persuasive. Makes a significant contribution to class discussion overall.
- **Adequate contributor:** Contributions in class reflect adequate preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive; provide some insight but rarely offer direction for class discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, substantiated and persuasive.

Makes a contribution to class discussion overall.

- **Unsatisfactory contributor:** Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are rarely substantive; rarely provide insight but do not offer useful direction for class discussion. Contributions may be distractions rather than constructive. Does not make a positive contribution to class discussion overall.
- **Non-participant:** This person says little or nothing in class. There is not an adequate basis for evaluation. Makes no contribution to discussion.

(Adapted from Tyler, J. (2004) Class Participation Assessment Guide. Department of Education, Brown University).

External students are required to post online a discussion point in response to set readings by the end of the week in which those readings are set. They should also provide courteous and relevant feedback on at least one other post in 7 weeks of the semester. The marking criteria are the same as for internal students.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)
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- An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Essay

Due: **17/11/14**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will write a research essay of 2000 words which provides a careful critical examination, based on reasons, argumentation and evidence, of one of the topics covered in the course. A list of essay questions will be made available on iLearn, and the research essay must answer one of these set questions.

A detailed essay plan must be brought to the tutorial two weeks before the due date for the essay for discussion and feedback (i.e. Week 11). An essay plan worksheet will be provided on iLearn to aid in production of this plan. External students will be paired to share essays and to provide feedback. Copies of the plans and feedback must be sent to the course convenor during Week 11.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)
- The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other views (1,2,5)
- An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Delivery and Resources

Lectures: 2 hours per week

Tutorials: 1 hour per week

Echo 360 lectures online

Required Materials:

- Kim Sterelny & Paul E. Griffiths (1999) *Sex and Death: An Introduction to Philosophy of Biology*. Chicago University Press.
- Kevin N. Laland & Gillian R. Brown (2011) *Sense & Nonsense: Evolutionary Perspectives on Human Behaviour (2nd Ed.)*. Oxford University Press.
- Further material available on iLearn throughout semester.

Unit Schedule

Wk.	Lecture A Topic	Lecture B Topic	Tutorial Topic	Key Events
Topic 1. Introduction				
1	What is Philosophy of Biology?	What is Natural Selection?	No tutorials this week	
Topic 2. Adaptation, Perfection, Function				
2	Adaptationism I	Adaptationism II	Evolution, Natural Selection	
Topic 3. What is Selection Acting On?				
3	The Cooperation Paradox	Gene's Eye View	Adaptationism	

4	Extended Phenotype	The Organism Strikes Back	Gene's Eye View	Test 1 due 27/8
5	Group Selection	Biological Individuality	Extended Phenotype, Responses to Gene's Eye View	
6	Extended Inheritance: Epigenetics, Memetics	Niche Construction and Developmental Systems Theory	Group Selection	
Topic 4. Evolutionary Explanations of Human Behaviour				
7	A History of Human Uniqueness	Sociobiology	Extended Inheritance, DST	
	MID-SEMESTER BREAK			
8	PUBLIC HOLIDAY	Sociobiology	Essay Writing	Test 2 due 10/10
9	Evolutionary Psychology	Evolutionary Psychology	Sociobiology	
10	Gene-Culture Co-evolution	Gene-Culture Co-Evolution	Evolutionary Psychology	
11	Cognitive-Niche Construction	Cognitive-Niche Construction	Essay Workshop	Essay plan must be completed.
12	Comparing and Integrating Approaches	Comparing and Integrating Approaches	Gene-Culture Co-Evolution and Cognitive-Niche Construction	
13	No lectures this week - Essay Meetings	No lectures this week - Essay Meetings	No tutorials this week - Essay Meetings	Test 3 Due 12/11
				Essay Due 17/11

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html>

Grading Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html>

Grade Appeal Policy <http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management

[t/policy.html](#)

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the [Learning and Teaching Category](#) of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement.

They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)
- The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other views (1,2,5)
- An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Assessment tasks

- iLearn Quiz 1
- iLearn Quiz 2
- iLearn Quiz 3
- Tutorial participation
- Essay

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy and biology (1,2)
- The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other views (1,2,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Assessment tasks

- iLearn Quiz 1
- iLearn Quiz 2
- iLearn Quiz 3
- Tutorial participation
- Essay

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Assessment tasks

- iLearn Quiz 1
- iLearn Quiz 2
- iLearn Quiz 3
- Tutorial participation
- Essay

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- The ability to understand and critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and develop an appreciation of the ways in which these positions have developed in response to identification of problems in other views (1,2,5)
- An ability to express and expound the positions studied clearly and lucidly (1,5)
- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Assessment tasks

- iLearn Quiz 1
- iLearn Quiz 2
- iLearn Quiz 3
- Tutorial participation
- Essay

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Students should start to develop their own philosophically informed views on the issues studied and defend their views, clearly and courteously in response to critical evaluation from others in discussion and in writing (1,2,3, 5,6,8)

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
04/08/2014	Inconsistency between essay blurb and course timeline rectified.
30/07/2014	Year for dates of assessment were corrected.