PHIL2049

Evolution, Mind and Culture

Session 1, Fully online/virtual 2020

Department of Philosophy

Contents

Disclaimer

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
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Credit points
10

Prerequisites
40cp at 1000 level or above

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. It explains its central concepts such as natural selection, fitness, adaption, and units of selection. It will also debate current modifications to evolutionary theory, such as evolutionary developmental biology, niche construction and the so called Extended Synthesis. A substantial part of the unit, however, involves investigating extensions of evolutionary theory to the explanation of human mind and culture. In particular, recent theories of cultural and cognitive evolution such as Evolutionary Psychology, gene-culture coevolution, and cognitive-developmental niche construction will be examined in detail. Issues, such as the ambitions and limitations of evolutionary explanations of human ethical and sexual behaviour will also be discussed. No background in biology or science is assumed.

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:

ULO1: critically evaluate the theories and arguments studied, identify their strengths and weaknesses,

ULO2: Understand some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture.

ULO3: Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.

ULO4: express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly

Assessment Tasks

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Assessment details are no longer provided here as a result of changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Students should consult iLearn for revised unit information.

Find out more about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and potential impacts on staff and students

General Assessment Information

All tasks will be assessed using the criteria listed under the description of each task, such as: Understanding, critical evaluation, written expression (etc). A detailed rubric for each task will be supplied on iLearn.

Delivery and Resources

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

Any references to on-campus delivery below may no longer be relevant due to COVID-19.

Please check here for updated delivery information: https://ask.mq.edu.au/account/pub/display/unit_status

This unit uses an iLearn website and Echo360 lecture recordings (https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MQ/). The website contains links to lecture notes, ilecture recordings, and other learning materials. Students will therefore require access to a computer and a good internet connection in order to access all the material, and participate in the unit effectively.

Lectures are designed to provide an important foundation for tutorial discussions which will be held every week for 10 weeks. In order to get the most of those discussions and to foster a sense of common intellectual purpose, **attendance is highly encouraged**. If you have a regular conflict that will prevent you from attending one or both of the lectures, you should consider enrolling as an external student.

Lectures and Tutorial Times

Lectures are on Mondays 10am-12pm at 23 Wallys Walk - 105 Tutorial Rm

Tutorials take place every week on Mondays either 1pm-2pm at 23 Wallys Walk - 202 Tutorial Rm Tutorial Rm or 2pm-3pm at 4 Western Rd - 302 Tutorial Rm

Students are **not** required to purchase any books for this course. All readings for tutorials will be

made available via iLearn. Further readings for essays will be recommended.

Readings

All readings will be made available on iLearn. Some readings and topics are taken from these textbooks:

Sterelny, K., & Griffiths, P. E. (1999). *Sex and death: An introduction to philosophy of biology.* University of Chicago Press. à S&G

Godfrey Smith, Peter (2013) *Philosophy of Biology*. Princeton Foundations of Contemporary Philosophy. Princeton University Press. à PGS

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Academic Integrity Policy
- Academic Progression Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Fitness to Practice Procedure
- Grade Appeal Policy
- Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public
- Special Consideration Policy *(**Note:** The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.)*

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the Student Policy Gateway (https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit Policy Central (https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/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/study/getting-started/student-conduct

Results

Results published on platform other than eStudent, (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA

student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

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 help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Getting help with your assignment
- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- Subject and Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.