



PHL 249

Evolution, Mind and Culture

S2 Online 2019

Dept of Philosophy

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Disclaimer

Macquarie University has taken all reasonable measures to ensure the information in this publication is accurate and up-to-date. However, the information may change or become out-dated as a result of change in University policies, procedures or rules. The University reserves the right to make changes to any information in this publication without notice. Users of this publication are advised to check the website version of this publication [or the relevant faculty or department] before acting on any information in this publication.

General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor and Lecturer

Yves Saint James Aquino

yves.aquino@mq.edu.au

Convenor and Lecturer

Hoda Mostafavi

hoda.mostafavi@mq.edu.au

Credit points

3

Prerequisites

(12cp at 100 level or above) 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. 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:

A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture

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

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

An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly

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.

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.

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Online participation	20%	No	Ongoing
Online quizzes	30%	No	Week 4, 7 and 13
Essay Plan	10%	No	Week 10
Essay	40%	No	15/11/2019

Online participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

This unit will have 12 two-hour lectures (No lectures for week 9) and 10 one-hour tutorials (No tutorials for weeks 1, 7 and 9).

For online students, online discussion forums take the place of weekly face-to-face tutorials. As a rule, then, you should plan to spend about an hour each week responding to the discussion questions and to your classmates' posts, and devising your own questions and discussion points in response to the set readings for each week.

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).

Grading: Students will receive a grade for participation at the end of term. Interim report will be given on week 7.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Online quizzes

Due: **Week 4, 7 and 13**

Weighting: **30%**

A multiple-choice online quiz need to be answered for weeks 4, 7 and 13. Questions will be based on the weekly required readings. Quiz opens Friday 5pm for weeks 4, 7 and 13 and closes 48 hours later.

Assessment:

This assessment task will be assessed by the following criteria set out in the following learning outcomes:

1. A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture.
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 view.
3. An ability to understand and critically evaluate theories and arguments in the philosophy of biology.
4. An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly.
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.

Grading: Students have to submit answers to all quiz question for weeks 4, 7 and 13.

Grade: Between 1 to 100.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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

- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Essay Plan

Due: **Week 10**

Weighting: **10%**

Students will write a 500-word plan or outline for their essay. This will contain the main thesis, arguments and evidence to support it, potential objections and reply to these objection, a summary and a list of references. A guide for how to write such a plan will be made available on iLearn.

Assessment:

This assessment task will be assessed by the following criteria set out in the following learning outcomes:

1. A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture.
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 view.
3. An ability to understand and critically evaluate theories and arguments in the philosophy of biology.
4. An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly.
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.

Submission Instructions: Your essay plan should be submitted online via Turnitin. A link to Turnitin will be available on iLearn.

Feedback: Convenors/lecturers/tutors will provide detailed feedback within a week of submission to help students improve their final essay.

Grading: 0 to 10%.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Essay

Due: **15/11/2019**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will write a research essay of 2,000 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. There will be a guide on how to write a successful essay on iLearn.

Assessment: This assessment task will be assessed by the following criteria set out in the following learning outcomes:

1. A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture.
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
3. An ability to understand and critically evaluate theories and arguments in the philosophy of biology.
4. An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
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

Submission via Turnitin, with link on iLearn.

Grading: Students will receive a grade out of 100 for the paper. A grading rubric will be available on iLearn.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Delivery and Resources

This unit uses an iLearn website and Echo360 lecture recordings (<https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/login/MQ/>). The website contains links to lecture notes, iletecture 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, **watching the weekly online lectures is highly encouraged.**

Lectures and Tutorial Times

Lectures are on Mondays 10am-12pm at 12 Second Way 225 Tutorial Rm

Tutorials take place every week on Mondays either 1pm-2pm at 12 Second Way 232 Tutorial Rm or 2pm-3pm at 4 Western Rd 311 Tutorial Rm (External students are expected to engage in the online discussion forums in place of tutorials)

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

Unit Schedule

Date and topic	Topic	Tutorials
Week 1: Introduction	What is philosophy of biology?	No
Week 2: Standard evolutionary theory	The received view of evolution	Yes
	Conceptions of selection	
Week 3: Functional explanations in evolutionary theory	Adaptation	Yes
	Function	
Week 4: Genetics and evolutionary theory	Genetics	Yes
	Genotype, phenotype, molecular, behavioural	
Week 5: Reductionism in evolutionary biology	Advantages of reductionism	Yes
	Challenges of reductionism	
Week 6: Developmental Systems Theory (DST)	Developmental systems theory	Yes
	Misconceptions of DST	
Week 7: Extended Evolutionary Synthesis Part 1	Extended inheritance	No
	Niche construction	
Week 8: Extended Evolutionary Synthesis Part 2	Gene-culture co-evolution	Yes
	Culture	
Week 9: Reading week (Labour day - public holiday)	No Lectures	No
	No Lectures	

Week 10: Evolutionary Psychology and its criticisms	Sociobiology and Evolutionary Psychology	Yes
	Criticism from feminist and queer studies	
Week 11: Cultural Intelligence	Social learning	Yes
	The developmental niche	
Week 12: Evolution and the modern human Part 1 (Evolution and social cognition)	Theory of Mind	Yes
	Social understanding	
Week 13: Evolution and the modern human Part 2 (Evolutionary accounts of beauty and ugliness)	Evolutionary accounts of appearance	Yes
	Criticisms of evolutionary accounts	

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](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.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](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 \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](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 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

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.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

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
- 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.

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.

Assessment task

- Essay

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Assessment tasks

- Online quizzes
- Essay Plan
- Essay

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, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Assessment tasks

- Online participation
- Online quizzes
- Essay Plan
- 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, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Assessment tasks

- Online participation
- Online quizzes
- Essay Plan
- 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 outcomes

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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

- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Assessment tasks

- Online participation
- Online quizzes
- Essay Plan
- 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
- Synthesize and analyze information from a variety of sources concerning foundational concepts and arguments in biology and philosophy.
- An ability to express and expound the existing positions studied clearly and lucidly
- 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.

Assessment tasks

- Online participation
- Online quizzes

- Essay Plan
- 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 outcomes

- A working knowledge of some of the current major issues connecting philosophy, evolutionary biology and culture
- 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
- 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.

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- 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

Changes from Previous Offering

A new unit schedule and new resources.

Late submission

Late Submissions - Guidelines

Quizzes: No extensions will be granted. Students who have not submitted the task prior to the deadline will be awarded a mark of 0 for the quiz, except for cases in which an application for Special Consideration is made and approved.

Essay plan and Final essay: A penalty for lateness will apply -- two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for the essay plan and final essay submitted after the due date. No assignment will be accepted seven (7) days, including weekends, after the original submission deadline. This penalty does not apply for cases in which an application for Special Consideration is made and approved.

Changes since First Published

Date	Description
17/07/2019	Adjustments made to unit schedule and essay due date