



## Module

# The Evolution Controversy

Science Module for a course in either Religious Studies or Theology

Drop in to a course syllabus (with modifications) in

Evolutionary Biology

Old Testament; Genesis

Introduction to Theology

Systematic Theology: Creation

1 week's assignment for a 3 hour class meeting

### THE EVOLUTION CONTROVERSY

This module will cover the controversy over Charles's Darwin's theory of evolution in contemporary Christianity, Islam, science, and public education. The contending schools of thought will be briefly summarized, compared, and contrasted: (1) the theory of evolution as science only; (2) reductionist materialism or atheism; (3) biblical and scientific creationism; (4) intelligent design; and (5) theistic evolution.

This module will be valuable to students studying the Hebrew scriptures, because the interpretation of the Bible is central to this controversy. It will also be valuable to students in systematic theology, because it amplifies the doctrine of creation and challenges the theologian to confront both *creatio ex nihilo* and *creatio continua*.

What theologians and ethicists need to take seriously within the framework of theistic evolution is the problem of suffering. Suffering is built into nature. How can religious faith in a gracious and loving God be reconciled to the indisputable fact that the evolutionary struggle for life necessarily includes disease, predation,

suffering, and death? Theologically this is called the *theodicy problem*, and even Charles Darwin addressed the issue when constructing his theory of descent with modification due to natural selection.

### DLO (Desired Learning Outcomes)

Added to the set of DLOs for the entire course. The student should also demonstrate...

1. knowledge of the competing schools of thought and describe them fairly;
2. awareness of the particular mode of biblical interpretation assumed in the debate;
3. integration of Darwinian evolution into questions surrounding God's creation.

### REQUIRED READING

Ted Peters & Martinez Hewlett, *Can You Believe in God and Evolution?* Nashville TN: Abingdon Press, 2009; ISBN 0-687-33551-5 (pbk).

Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species*, Chapter IV.

[http://www.evolbiol.ru/docs/docs/large\\_files/charles\\_darwin.pdf](http://www.evolbiol.ru/docs/docs/large_files/charles_darwin.pdf)

### RECOMMENDED READING

Celia Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution*. Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8006-4013-2 (pbk).

John F. Haught, *Science and Faith: A New Introduction*. New York: Paulist Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8091-4806-6 (pbk).

Karl Rahner, "Christology within an Evolutionary View of the World," TI, V: 8.

Pope John Paul II, "Evolution and the Living God," *Science and Theology: The New Consonance*, ed., Ted Peters. New York: Harper, Westview1998; 149-152.

George V. Coyne, S.J., "Evolution and the Human Person: The Pope in Dialogue," *Science and Theology: The New Consonance*, ed., Ted Peters. New York: Harper, Westview1998; 153-161.

Anne M. Clifford, C.S.J., "Biological Evolution and the Human Soul: A Theological Proposal for Generationism," *Science and Theology: The New Consonance*, ed., Ted Peters. New York: Harper, Westview1998; 162-173.

OHN = *On Human Nature*, eds., Michel Tibayrenc and Francisco J. Ayala.

Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-420190-3.

**This comprehensive volume is valuable for Science classes.**

OHN 8 T.M. Preuss, "The Human Brain: Evolution and Distinctive Features"

OHN 16 M.V. Flinn, "The Human Family: Evolutionary Origins and Adaptive Significance"

OHN 24 W.M. Baum, "Behavior Analysis, Darwinian Evolutionary Processes, and the Diversity of Human Behavior"

OHN 30 J. Roughgarden, "Homosexuality and Evolution: A Critical Appraisal"

OHN 32 T.W. Deacon, "Human Variability and the Origins and Evolution of Language"

OHN 33 F.J. Ayala, "Human Evolution and Progress"  
OHN 35 F.J. Ayala, "Adaptive Significance of Ethics and Aesthetics"  
OHN 37 M. Tibayrenc, "The Race/Ethnic Debate: An Outsider's View"  
OHN 38 M. Ruse, "Social Darwinism"  
OHN 39 T. Borchert, "History and Diversity of Religion"  
OHN 41, T. Peters, "Universal Humanity, Religious Particularity, and Scientific Reductionism"

RCRS: *The Routledge Companion to Religion and*

*Science*, eds., James W. Haag, Gregory R. Peterson, and Michael L. Spezio. London: Routledge, 2012.  
ISBN 978-0-415-49244-7 (hbk) or 978-0-203-80351-6 (ebk).

**This comprehensive volume is valuable for almost all modules.**

RCRS 22 Ursula Goodenough, "The biological antecedents of human suffering"

RCRS 23 Holmes Rolston III, "Suffering through something higher"

Websites:

Harun Yaha (Islam), <http://www.harunyahya.com/>

Answers in Genesis, <https://answersingenesis.org/>

Intelligent Design, <http://www.intelligentdesign.org/whatisid.php>

Clergy Letter Project,

[http://www.theclergyletterproject.org/Christian\\_Clergy/ChrClergyLtr.htm](http://www.theclergyletterproject.org/Christian_Clergy/ChrClergyLtr.htm)