

Meeting time and place: 5:00 - 6:50 PM, Mondays, BC 2202

Instructor: Jim Loughry

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Office hours: 12:30-2:00 PM R, or any other time by appointment

General course description: This is a seminar course involving in-depth examination of current issues in ecology and evolution. Educational outcomes associated with this course include numbers 1 and 2 as specified by the VSU Biology Department for its Master's program, and general outcomes numbers 3, 4, 5, and 7 as specified by the University.

This year's topic: Great Debates in Ecology and Evolution

There are a number of long-standing controversies in biology that are rooted in philosophy and cannot easily be resolved empirically. In the first part of the course we will discuss some of these. I will provide one or more short readings relevant to each topic that introduce the issue at hand. The class will be split into two groups, with each group assigned to advocate one side of the argument (see course schedule for group assignments). Each group must provide at least one (or more) peer-reviewed papers to be read by the entire class that support their side of the issue. These readings must be made available at least **one week** prior to the date when they will be discussed in class.

In the second part of the course, each of you will identify a current controversy in your own area of specialization, provide readings relevant to the topic and lead a classroom discussion of it.

Required books: None

Completion of the course requires the following:

1. Presentations: As described above, each of you will lead a classroom discussion during the second half of the semester that covers a current controversy in your own area of specialization.

During the first class meeting we will fill in a schedule for the presentations. Presentations should be relatively brief (~ 30-45 minutes) and highlight what you view as the main issues for debate. **DO NOT** just recap what is in the papers; everyone will have read them already and we will not require a blow-by-blow retelling. Rather, try to focus on points of controversy, unanswered questions and so on. Your presentation is worth a maximum of 100 points and will be graded by me. Emphasis will be placed on the clarity of your presentation and your effectiveness in leading the class discussion.

2. Review Paper: Each of you must write a review paper about one of the topics discussed in class. You must get your topic approved by me no later than midterm (**Thursday, March 5**) and

BIOL 7010 Course Schedule

Month	Day	Topic	Discussion Leader(s)
January	13	Organizational meeting	NA
	20	MLK: No Class	NA
	27	Reductionism versus Holism	Pro-reductionism: Castellano, Crews & Hector Pro-holism: Lamb, Le, Rodriguez & Slaton
February	3	Teleology	Pro: Crews, Hector, Le & Slaton Con: Castellano, Lamb & Rodriguez
	10	Adaptation	Pro: Castellano, Hector, Lamb & Slaton Con: Crews, Le & Rodriguez
	17	The Nature of Natural	Pro: Castellano, Le & Slaton Con: Crews, Hector, Lamb & Rodriguez
	24	Theory of Mind	Pro: Castellano, Crews, Rodriguez & Slaton Con: Hector, Lamb & Le
March	2	Nature versus Nurture	Nature: Castellano, Lamb & Le

