

Perspectives 2699 B & C Spring 2016

The Historical Basis of the Evolution/Creationism Controversy

College of Arts & Sciences, Valdosta State University

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Emails: Please use our *Blazeview* emails for course matters
My VSU email lesliesj@valdosta.edu should only be used only if it is urgent.

Office Hours: Tues 11:30-12:30 & Wed 2:00-3:00 or By Appointment. Please feel free to call the office or email to schedule a more convenient time. Anytime I am in my office, you are welcome to stop in to ask questions.

Class Meetings: The class will meet once each week for a single block session for the two credit hours, but you will be responsible for watching videos and doing other assignment between classes. Always check the syllabus.

Course Description: An examination of the various issues contributing to the ongoing Evolution/Creationism Controversy. Readings will center on the philosophical aspects of the intersections of religion and science. Class discussion will facilitate open dialog from multiple perspectives. Class presentations will clarify common misunderstandings of biological evolution and show how miscommunications lead to this clash between disparate discourse communities.

Course Objectives: This class satisfies one of the two general education courses required in Section B: Perspectives of the VSU core curriculum as prescribed by the University System of Georgia. The primary emphasis falls under Area 6: Perspectives on Cross-Cultural Understanding & Expression. As part of the core curriculum at VSU, Perspectives courses foster interdisciplinary learning and global awareness. Perspectives courses explore topics that cross disciplinary boundaries with an emphasis on the interaction of two or more disciplines. The goal is the development students' ability to synthesize varying points of view and connect issues that affect individuals within our region with those affecting individuals in other parts of the world.

Learning Outcomes: VSU Area B states that: *Students will demonstrate knowledge of global and regional perspectives in areas such as the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences.* The regional perspective will involve the demonstration of how this evolution/creationism controversy is basically an American phenomenon that is particularly contentious in the South. The global perspectives will come from the demonstration of an understanding of the worldwide history of religion and impact this debate can have on other societies around the world.

Academic Honesty: Class members are expected to maintain high standards of integrity. This course will use the VSU Handbook Code of Ethics as a basic standard of behavior, but everyone in the class is required to read the Biology Department Plagiarism Policy and you are expected to sign-off that you understand this document as part of your student information sheet. Dishonesty will not be tolerated and any student misconduct will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Evidence of cheating will result in no credit for the assignment or depending on the case, a grade of "F" for the course. Never copy text from a book or website and represent it as your own work.

Special Services: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should discuss this need with me at the beginning of the semester. Students not registered with the Special Services Program should contact the Special Services Office, Farber Hall 1115, 245-2498.

Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act: Grades cannot be posted by Name or Social Security Number. Scores and student work will not be given over the telephone, by email or to another student.

Perspectives 2699B – *Course Objectives*

Essential Question: Why is there so much social controversy surrounding the Theory of Evolution?

Enduring Understanding: Recognize how misrepresentation of the Theory of Evolution and the failure to understand the distinction between scientific and religious knowledge has led to the Evolution/Creationism Controversy.

Basic Knowledge & Skills Students Will Acquire:

Epistemological Distinctions between Religion and Science
Evolutionary History of Humans
Fundamentals of Human Genetics

Learning Outcomes: Students will be expected to:

- I. Distinguish Religious & Scientific Knowledge
- II. Describe the defining characteristics of each discipline in the context of biological evolution
- III. Compare and contrast the position of Scientists & Creationists on the issue of teaching evolution in public schools

Proof of Mastery: for each will be demonstrated by the knowledge & skill shown in:

- I. Assignments – Completion of regular reading and writing assignments on Blazeview
- II. Participation – Active responses during lecture, Oral Reports, & Summaries of Course Content
- III. Midterm & Final Exams - Based on Readings, Videos, Lectures, Discussions, & Outside Talks

Attendance: You are expected to attend all class meetings. If you miss class, I expect an email in Blazeview with a good reason. Being tardy or leaving early (without a stated reason) 3 times is an unexcused absence. If you are absent for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining notes from another student. Make contact with a classmate and exchange phone numbers early in the semester. Anyone who misses more than 20% of the class sessions can receive a failing grade for the course. I will not give you the notes or tell you what you missed because it is your responsibility to keep up. Absences may be excused if you have a valid reason approved and write a 1-single-spaced page paper that contains a paragraph synopsis of what was discussed and additional paragraphs on the topic based on outside sources that must be cited properly.

Assignments: Assignments will be explained in class and posted on *Blazeview*. The electronic submission of your papers in *Blazeview* must be done by the deadline or the grade will be reduced by 10%. Late submissions after the DropBox closes 24 hours later will not be accepted. No Exceptions! Paper assignments will be typewritten, single-spaced and no more than one page in length. Your formal name and the date should be in the upper right corner and there should be a title. Papers will be graded for both content and writing on 10 point scales. (10 = Excellent, 8= Good, 6= Just Adequate.) Read the Writing Requirements in this Syllabus Carefully. If you miss the description of the assignment in class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to clarify any details.

Examinations: Examinations will assess your conceptual understanding of the information in course readings, on assigned videos, or discussed in class. Do NOT try to memorize the information because the test questions will probe your understanding of the big picture. **Your lecture notes are the study guide.** I am not interested in whether you are good at rote learning. We will discuss the type of questions you can expect before the midterm and will go over that exam during the following class session. If you have an emergency and can't make any test, be sure to contact me within 24 hours by office phone or by email. Make-up exams will only be given for valid reasons with documented excuses and these will be essay tests that are much more difficult. The final examination will be comprehensive, consist of 100 multiple choice questions, and cover all accumulated course content for 30% of your grade.

Assessment:

Blazeview Writing Assignments	30%
Term Paper	10%
Attendance & Participation (Including Oral Reports)	10%
Examinations	50%
Midterm Exam (20%)	
Comprehensive Final Exam (30%)	

Learning Community: In a class of this size, we can all learn from each other. I want to see you all supporting the educational progress of each other on a regular basis. Remember, anything you can explain to someone else will be something you understand even more thoroughly, so this is a good way to solidify your personal knowledge. If you step up and do something such as offering to share information on Blazeview with everyone or organizing an open study session, it will be reflected in your participation grade. You are not competing with your classmates for top grades. I would be more than happy to give them to everyone in the class who earns them.

Class Format: The Evolution/Creationism Controversy is perpetuated by an absence of productive, civil discourse between religious and scientific stakeholders. This course creates an academic space for such a conversation that is based on information from Religion, Science, and a variety of other disciplines including: Anthropology, History, Sociology, Philosophy, Law, Education, & Communication. These sessions will not be endless monologues from the front of the room. Students are encouraged to ask questions and will frequently be asked questions in something of a Socratic dialog.

Class Discussions: Given that you all have different personal experiences, each of you can bring something unique to our conversations. We will be working to create a comfortable environment where you can share ideas without feeling vulnerable to criticism, so please show respect for your peers. We are going to be discussing topics that are very personal for some people, so think before you repeat something outside of class. It is fine to say something about what was discussed, but do so with regard for your classmates. This means not naming the person specifically, or objectifying them with a negative racialized, gendered, or other description. Context is fine and often important, but think about how you say things inside and outside of class. We all make mistakes. I like to say, “My white foot hangs precariously close to my white mouth when I speak out on issues of race or ethnicity.” If someone takes offence, the first thing you do is apologize, then take some time to think about why you might have bothered them. If you do not know why – ask. If you find yourself offended by someone, including me, please let us know, either gently in public or preferably in a private conversation where you will have time to explain yourself.

Participation: There will be short class presentations in which everyone will be assigned a different topic to present as part of the class discourse. If you miss class, you get no grade for these, and it will hurt your participation grade. We will also have some a discussions on Blazeview. Everyone is expected to read these and respond. Think about what you post before you do it. Concentrate on adding new ideas to these conversations. Finally, active positive participation is expected of all students during class. Everyone is should be involved in the conversations that are part of this course. Consistent and thoughtful contributions will be noted. Individual grades will be penalized for failure to become involved, thoughtless/rude behavior, or anything that detracts from the learning experiences of other students.

Email: There is a certain standard of etiquette in higher education that is very different from the way you interact with your friends while texting. My title is Dr. Jones and you should start any email with that included in a greeting. The first thing you should do is give me the context of which of my classes you are in and your name. The next sentence should contain the reason for your message. After you explain yourself, you should close the message properly.

Class Sessions: Most students come to class to learn and I will not tolerate behavior that disrupts the learning environment. Come to class prepared to concentrate & pay attention. Since some people may not know what is expected in a college classroom, the following rules should make this clear. If I have to stop class and speak to you about a disruption, I will ask to see you after class, and if it happens more than once your participation grade will be impacted negatively.

Class Rules:

1. Attend to your personal needs before class and refrain from getting up during class unless it is urgent.
2. Class will start promptly at 3:30, please have your notebooks open, be ready to pay attention and begin. If you are late, take a seat in the empty row and be sure to check with me after class to have your absence changed to tardy.
3. Once class begins, refrain from side conversations. If you are asking about a word in lecture, make it short & quiet.
4. If a classmate is being rude or distracting you, let them know or say “Shhhhhhhh” loud enough for me to hear.
5. The VSU rules are no eating or drinking in classrooms. Water bottles are fine.
6. You are welcome to have your laptops, pads, & phones in class to record lectures, look up terms, and photograph slides. However, this is not an invitation to skype, take calls, or read & send texts. If anyone is bothering you with such behavior, report them to me after class or by email. There will be grade penalties for this type of disruption.
7. Class will end at 4:45, unless you see “THE END” on a slide before, so do not pack up & rustle your packs before this.

Perspectives 2699 B & C: Tentative Class Schedule Sp 2016 (Subject to Change)

Date	Class Topic
Jan 12/14	Mosaic of Quotations
19/21	Worldviews
26/28	Origin Stories
Feb 2/4	Mythos & Logos
9/11	Nature of Religion
16/18	Nature of Science
23/25	Creationism (<i>Atlas</i>)
Mar 1/3	Evolutionary Thought
3	Midterm
8/10	Midterm Exam
	Spring Break March 14-18
15/17	Evidence for Evolution
22/24	Biological Evolution
29/31	Legal Cases & Global Impact
Apr 5/7	Crisis in Education
12/14	Why Not Intelligent Design? (Dr, Muncy)
19/21	Nazarenes Exploration
26/28	Does God Mix with Science?
May 4	Wednesday (2:45 - 4:45pm) CUMULATIVE FINAL EXAM

Writing Guidelines from Dr. Leslie S. Jones

During my first semester of college, my English professor asked me “if English was my second language?” That is how badly I wrote because I had gone to a DOD (Department of Defense) high school in Germany and had never been taught how to write properly. Somehow I worked hard and taught myself to write well. Now people compliment me for being a good writer. I tell you this because I am not a “natural writer,” but with effort I learned how to do it just like I learned new sports and other skills. I promised myself that I would always try to help my students to become better writers, so this is why I expect you to write well in my classes. Here are some of my tips. You may have to work hard to learn to write, but it is worth the struggle. Always proofread your own work out loud so you can hear your mistakes. Ask friends who are good writers to read your papers and help you revise them. If you need more help, take your papers to the SSC before they are due and get their help with revisions. Take pride in what you do and the good grades will follow. -lsj

Objective

These assignments have been designed help you to learn, outside the classroom, through your own writing. Writing is a way to learn because if you can construct sentences about something, it will organize your understanding in your mind or let you know that you need to look up more information. Papers are also an opportunity to display your knowledge through more than just exams or what you might or might not say in class. These assignments also allow you to show your own style of expression and personal interests, so you should take pride in them. Be sure to think about what is expected for the assignment and address that specifically. **If you do not follow these guidelines, your grade will be reduced.**

Focus

Well-crafted writing always has a specific purpose. Decide on the topic and a specific case you want to make before you start writing. Even if it is only a paragraph, every composition should have a central idea. Your thesis should directly address the nature of the writing assignment. Write the thesis down and check throughout the writing process to be certain that the work supports it. Starting a paper can be the hardest step, so if you feel blocked, try brainstorming. Take a blank sheet of paper without lines, and just write down any ideas you have. Look over the thoughts for ideas that go together.

Organization

Before you begin to write, think through how you plan to develop your thesis and use an outline to structure your thoughts. An Introduction and Conclusion will be the first and last paragraphs of a paper or lines of a single paragraph. Start paper with something catchy in the first sentence to interest the reader. Make it perfectly clear, in the introductory statement or section, what your point or central idea will be. Support that concept throughout the body of your paper. Paragraphs or sentences in the middle will be the Body of your text. Subheadings are not to be used on short assignments; let the topic sentences of the paragraphs serve that purpose. Avoid using phrases such as “In this paper I will discuss...” since it is much more sophisticated to avoid this type of “crutch statement.”

Paragraphs

Divide the paper by major themes and make each of these a distinct paragraph. You should have at least 2-3 paragraphs on a 1-page paper. The first sentence of each paragraph is a topic sentence that shows what the paragraph covers. **ONE SENTENCE IS NEVER AN ENTIRE PARAGRAPH** because there should be at least 3 sentences elaborating any significant idea.

Format

Always put an original title on your paper. Think of something that summarizes the unique slant you are taking. It should catch my interest. Your papers are to be typed using something comparable to 12-point Times New Roman type, single-spacing, and 1 inch margins. Other professors often expect double-spacing, but I prefer to read single-spacing and require your papers to be single-spaced. The lengths of these papers are stated in the assignments. After a draft, if the paper is too long, go back through and shorten it up by taking out the less important aspects. If it is too short, go back and incorporate more support or add more detail to what you are saying. When I say 1-page that means substantial text (600-800 words) and the references (if required) on a single page. Use the word counting function on your word processor to be sure your text is per assigned page when single-spaced. If I say 1-paragraph, I mean a single well organized assembly of about 300 words.

Requirements for Submission

Submit your work on Blazeview in either a Word or PowerPoint document depending on the assignment. PDFs and other formats will not be accepted. Your name should be on the upper right side of the paper on the line above the title. Use your initials as the first part of the file name, and then add the name of the assignment. The due date will be indicated on the Blazeview Dropbox, and those will close 24 hours after the due date. Late work will be graded down by 10%. If you fail to submit your work by the time the box closes, it will not be accepted, so that is the reason to turn assignments in early.

Grading

Short papers will each be worth 10 points and longer assignments will be worth up to 100 points. Assignments will be described in class, so listen carefully and be sure that you know what is expected or ask about anything that is unclear. There will also be a description on the Dropbox in Blazeview. Focus on the objective of the assignment and address it clearly in thesis of your paper. You can dramatically improve your work if you critique your own rough draft and revise it at least once. Outside feedback can also make a difference. Proofread to avoid careless errors. Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar do effect the quality of your work. These papers will be graded on Effort, Quality, Organization, Content, Proper citations and whether or not you followed these directions. I will look specifically at your coverage of the topic and the thoughtfulness and clarity of your presentation.

Citations

Be very careful about giving appropriate credit to the sources of any outside information or ideas that you use. In science papers, when you include information that is general knowledge (something that could be found in 2 or 3 books), it does not require a citation in the text. Be sure to reword or paraphrase text from any of your sources to avoid plagiarism. Paraphrasing means changing more than 1 word in a sentence. Think about what something says and completely restate it in your own words. Avoid making your paper look like a mosaic of other people’s ideas by using as few direct quotes as possible. The best idea is to quote someone only when the wording is extremely original and/or it can’t be stated differently. A direct quote always requires a citation in the text with the page where the quote was found.

References

You should have properly formatted references at the bottom of a single page or end of a longer paper. Use the APA or American Psychological Association style. The Purdue Owl website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>) is an excellent source of information.

Article: Author, A.A., Author, B.B., Author C.C. (Year). Article title. *Title of Periodical*, Volume Number (Issue), Pages.

Book: Author, A.A. (Year). *Name of Book*. Place: Name of Publisher.

Website: Author, A.A. (Date of Publication). Article Title, Retrieved from URL or doi: 10.XXXXX/XXX

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