

Charles Darwin as Influencer of Literature and Art LLC Winter 2024

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SYLLABUS

PRESENTER(S)

Week 1 Wednesday, January 10

Hour 1	Introductions of class members	<u>All</u>
Hour 2	Overview of key Darwinian concepts Overview of Darwin as a cultural “influencer”	<u>Ruth</u> <u>Libby</u>
	Overview of syllabus	<u>Ruth & Libby</u>

Week 2 Wednesday, January 17

Themes: Darwin as keen observer, visionary, and synthesizer. Humans as storytelling animals.

Sources for Week 2

- *Darwin’s Origin of Species* by Janet Browne (Grove Press, 2006)
- Video: “The storytelling animal”: Jonathan Gottschall at TEDxFurmanU
- Audio for slide: “Pegwell Bay, Kent: A Recollection of October 5th, 1858,” painting by William Dyce (1858-60)
- Audio for slide: “Little Dancer Aged Fourteen,” sculpture by Edgar Degas (1881)
- “You Are Here: Missing Links, Chains of Being, and the Language of Cartoons” by Constance Areson Clark (.pdf)

Hour 1	Discussion of <i>Darwin’s Origin of Species</i> by Janet Browne	<u>Martha</u>
Hour 2	Discussion of Darwin in cartoons and art (1850s – 1900)	<u>Robert & Lois</u>

Week 3 Wednesday, January 24

Themes: Genes + remembrance of things past + environment = the shape of the present and how it is constructed. Scientists (Darwin and others) and mystery writers use the same analytic methods to examine evidence and develop their stories.

Sources for Week 3

- “The Literary Darwinists” by D.T. Max in *The New York Times*, 2005 (.pdf)
- “The Creation Myths of Cooperstown” by Stephen Jay Gould in *Natural History*, 1989
- “Darwin and the Detective: Aspects of the Darwinian Worldview and the Sherlock Holmes Stories of Arthur Conan Doyle” by Hilary A. Goldsmith in *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 2010 (.pdf)
- Jeremy Brett as Sherlock Holmes in “Silver Blaze” (1892) television series episode

Hour 1	Literary Darwinism	<u>Nancy</u>
Hour 2	Darwinian approaches/strategies in the detective novel	<u>David C.</u>

Week 4 Wednesday, January 31

Themes: Creation mythologies in evolution, religion, and folklore.

Sources for Week 4

- Audio or transcript: “Evolution and Wonder: Understanding Charles Darwin” at *On Being with Krista Tippett*
- Q&A with Rebecca Stott, author of *Darwin’s Ghosts: The Secret History of Evolution*, in the *New York Times*
- Video: “Evolution and Creationism as Science and Myth” by Eugenie C. Scott, PhD for UC Hitchcock Lecture Series at UC Berkeley
- Read a few of the *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling
- “A Visit to Dayton” by Stephen Jay Gould in *Hen’s Teeth and Horses Toes* (.pdf)

Hour 1	19 th -century creation mythologies in evolution, religion, & folklore	<u>Diana</u>
Hour 2	20 th -century creation legal trials The State of Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes & Kitzmiller, et al. v. Dover Area School District	<u>Frank & Tom</u>

Week 5 Wednesday, February 7

Themes: The struggle for survival in life and in fiction.

Sources for Week 5

- Audio for slide: “Morning,” painting by Edwin Landseer (1853)
- Audio for slide: “On Strike,” painting by Hubert von Herkomer (1891)
- Audio: Dame Gillian Beer on “Struggle and Strikes: The ‘Survival of the Fittest’ in Art and Literature” (references “On Strike” by Hubert von Herkomer and “The Ascent of Man,” an epic poem by Mathilde Blind)
- Social Darwinism on History.com
- “Charles Darwin’s *Descent of Man*, 150 Years Later” by Lydia Pyne in *JStor Daily*, 2021
- “Black Responses to Darwinism 1989-1915” in *Disseminating Darwin: The Role of Place, Race, Religion, and Gender*, 1999 (.pdf)

Hour 1	Edith Wharton: Survival of the Fittest in the Gilded Age	<u>Libby</u>
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Hour 2	Social Darwinism, racism, and eugenics in America	<u>Sheila & Dick</u>
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Week 6 Wednesday, February 14

Themes: Mutations are generated randomly and continually. Nature is indifferent to which species and which organisms survive. Life goes on for higher organisms thanks to two genders.

Sources for Week 6

- Video: “What caused the Cambrian explosion?”
- “Survival of the Luckiest,” a review of *Wonderful Life* by Stephen Jay Gould by James Gleick in the *New York Times*, 1989
- Video: Elaine Showalter introduces *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf from The British Library
- “Survival of the Fittest in the English Department: Jonathan Gottschall tried to save literary studies. Instead, he ruined his career,” by David Wescott in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2015 (.pdf)
- The Woman Who Challenged Darwin’s Sexism by Rebekah Rubin in *Smithsonian*, 2017
- “Darwin and the Women” by Sarah S. Richardson in *Nature*, 2014 (.pdf)

Hour 1	Lessons from the Burgess Shale	<u>Patricia</u>
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Hour 2	The Modernists (Virginia Woolf & others) & Darwinian concepts	<u>Kenneth</u>
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Week 7 Wednesday, February 21

Themes: Authors explore the Galapagos

Sources for Week 7

- *Galapagos* by Kurt Vonnegut
- "Life on the Rocks: The Galapagos" from *Teaching a Stone to Talk* by Annie Dillard (.pdf)
- Old-fashioned "book reports" on other Galapagos novels (see Additional Sources list or choose your own)

Hour 1	Vonnegut and Dillard	<u>Chuck & Mark</u>
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Hour 2	Other Galapagos novels	<u>David K.</u>
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Week 8 Wednesday, February 28

Themes: Darwin in wider cultural context & true Galapagos stories

Sources for Week 8

- Murder in Paradise: The Tale of the Baroness and the Bohemians by Mars van Grunsven, in *Literary Hub*, 2019

Hour 1	Darwin's place in the cultures of science & medicine and Reflections on a visit to the Galapagos	<u>Herb</u> <u>Stephen</u>
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Hour 2	Discussion of early 20 th -century Galapagos "settlers" Wrap up	<u>Ruth</u> <u>Libby</u>
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