

**University of California, Davis**  
**Department of Philosophy**  
**INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF BIOLOGY**  
**PHI 38, WINTER 2015**  
**Wellman 212, TR, 10:30 - 11:50 AM**

## Contact Information

**Instructor:** Professor Roberta Millstein

**Office:** 2287 Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH), aka Death Star (corner of 3rd and A)

**Office Hours:** Tues 2-3 PM, Thurs 12-1 PM, and by appointment

**E-mail:** [RLMillstein@UCDavis.edu](mailto:RLMillstein@UCDavis.edu) (*the best way to reach me; please include Phi 38 in Subject*)

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**TA:** Michael Hunter, [mhunter@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mhunter@ucdavis.edu)

Discussion sections in 235 Wellman. **A01: Thurs 6:10-7 PM, A02: Thurs 7:10-8 PM**

## Required Readings

All required readings will be available on the course website on SmartSite, <https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu/>

## Course Description

This course investigates philosophical analyses of biological concepts and controversies, with particular attention to topics that are (or should be!) of general concern. Issues to be discussed include: the debates over creationism and intelligent design; adaptationism and sociobiology; gender and science; race; disability/disease; debates over the existence of animal minds and animal language.

The goals of this course are: 1) to introduce you to some of the major issues within the philosophy of biology; 2) to encourage you to critically examine your own beliefs as well as the beliefs of others; 3) to provide the opportunity to discuss, both in class and in a more sustained written form, your ideas and arguments concerning important issues in the philosophy of biology.

## Class Policies

- If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please come *to my office* (during office hours, or make an appointment) to discuss as soon as possible.
- You are responsible for *all* material covered in class, including announcements, discussions, etc. – whether you are in class or not. *Take notes on discussions as well as lecture.* Be aware that the topics in this class build on one another, so you will need to keep up.
- Since we will be discussing the readings in class, you should bring the reading for the day to each class.
- Announcements are usually made at the beginning of class, so *please be on time.* Comings and goings are disruptive and distracting, so please keep them to an absolute minimum.
- Do not use laptops, tablets, or cell/smart phones in class for activities unrelated to the class (texting, Twitter, Facebook, etc). A [recent study](#) shows that it hinders learning both for the user and those nearby. You might [learn more taking notes by hand](#) in any case.
- *Silence* your cell/smart phone or anything else that might make noise.
- Please do not bring guests (friends, children, etc.) without my permission.
- Eating in class is ok if it is done quietly and unobtrusively.

## Class Requirements

**Your grade will be based on the following** (all dates subject to change):

- 5%** - Comments/questions on each day's readings, **posted to the Forums on SmartSite *before* class**. Each on-time posting is graded CR/NC. Late=NC (No exceptions).
- 5%** - Group work in your Discussion Section. Each participation is graded CR/NC.
- 60%** - Three two-page analytical essays submitted on SmartSite by **10 PM Fri: Jan 30, Feb 20, and Mar 13**
- 30%** - Comprehensive take-home final exam submitted on SmartSite by **5:30 PM Wed, Mar 18**.

**You must complete all three analytical essays and the final exam in order to pass the class.** In the case of a borderline grade, **class participation** will be given serious consideration.

### Important note on plagiarism/cheating:

It is a violation of the Code of Academic Conduct to turn in work that is not your own. This includes: turning in the work of another student with your name on it, buying/copying a paper off the Internet, using the words *or* ideas of others without proper quotation and citation. In accordance with Regulation 550 of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate, **a grade of "0" will be assigned to examinations or assignments on which cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty is admitted or determined to have occurred by proper adjudication.** If you have trouble with the class material or have personal issues that prevent you from doing your work, come talk to me.

**Tentative Reading Schedule** - All dates and readings are subject to change. All readings will be available on the course website on SmartSite, <https://smartsite.ucdavis.edu/>

Date	Topic	Reading (by author)
Jan 6	Introduction	Syllabus
Jan 8	Nature of science	Woodward and Goodstein
Jan 13	What is evolution?	Flank; Gee, Howlett & Campbell
Jan 15	Creation science trial	Act 590, Overton
Jan 20	Movie: "Intelligent Design on Trial" - part 1	Behe expert report
Jan 22	Movie: "Intelligent Design on Trial" - part 2	<i>no reading, but post to SmartSite re: movie</i>
Jan 27	Intelligent Design trial	Plutynski
Jan 29	Adaptationism/sociobiology	Gould
Feb 3	Adaptationism/sociobiology	Caplan
Feb 5	Adaptationism/sociobiology	Thornhill & Palmer
Feb 10	Adaptationism/sociobiology/gender	Hrdy
Feb 12	Gender and the biological sciences	Okruhlik
Feb 17	Race	Pigliucci and Kaplan
Feb 19	Race	Andreasen
Feb 24	Biological normality	Amundson
Feb 26	Biological normality	Ereshefsky
Mar 3	Animal minds	Kennedy excerpt
Mar 5	Animal minds	Keeley
Mar 10	Animal language	Pinker excerpt
Mar 12	Animal language	Lloyd