

## (Un)Common Read (1 credit)

### On the Origin of Species

IDH2930 Section 2028 (class #27590)  
Time: Wednesday, period 8 (3:00-3:50)  
Location: Little Hall 0117  
Fall 2022

Instructor: Dr. James Austin

Professor, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, [austinj@ufl.edu](mailto:austinj@ufl.edu)

Office hours: Wednesday, Friday 10-12 Newins Ziegler 318 (email for an appointment).

#### Course objectives and learning outcomes

The objective for this course is for students to develop a rich understanding of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, challenge their ideas and conceptions about natural selection, and to appreciate the historical context and intellectual ideas behind Darwin's theory.

- Students will be able to advance a collective intellectual understanding of Darwin and his ideas through group discussion, active listening and speaking.
- Students will develop reflective thinking and writing skills by exploring what was learned and by making meaning out of the reading.

#### Course description

This is a discussion-oriented course centered around the 1<sup>st</sup> edition of Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species".

Darwin's book shares a deplorable fate with many other classics: it is known to everyone, yet rarely read. This is unfortunate because the book is much more than simply an overview of his transformative theory, but also gives us insight into the intellectual milieu in which it was developed.

Each week students will be expected to read the assigned chapter(s), prepare discussion notes, and participate in class discussion. Students will reflect on thought questions posed prior to their reading and will come to class with responses prepared to these questions. Students will discuss their ideas in breakout groups, followed by a class

discussion of the chapter. In addition to submitting weekly written ideas on the content, students will be responsible for submitting a blog (~1500 word) to the rest of the class at the end of the term in which they will reflect on the material read in the class and how their perspectives on Charles Darwin, his ideas, and the historical setting in which they were formed have been affected by reading his book.

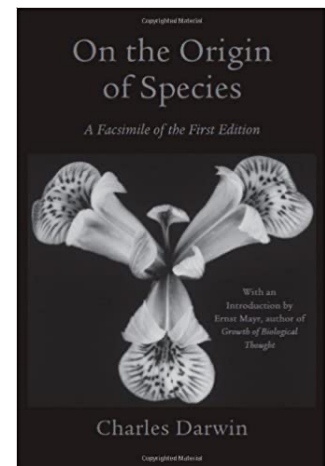
### Required reading

The 1<sup>st</sup> edition is selected for this course because it (rather than later issues) represents the best picture of Darwin's theory. It is also shorter, clearer and more tightly written. If you go to a bookstore and pick up a version of *Origin* it will likely be a 6<sup>th</sup> edition – so make sure to get the 1<sup>st</sup>.

You can read the first edition online for free! The website [Darwin Online](#) has made the book available (and all his other publications) as a pdf scanned from the original publication. [Download the pdf from this link.](#)

If you prefer to hold a book, the first edition is available as an inexpensive (\$12-\$24) paperback – find it on Amazon. Preferably you should get the [facsimile version](#) (pictured at right, published from Harvard Press), which is essentially a copy of the original typeset – the advantage is so that we can easily refer to specific references and pages and all be looking at the same thing. Other versions of the first edition (e.g. . [link to another version of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition on Amazon](#)) are typeset differently so what is at the bottom of page 24 in the facsimile may be somewhere on page 22 in another version (for example). The instructor will be reading from the facsimile version.

If you collect first editions, there is a copy available [here](#).



## Course schedule

Date	Reading Topic	Graded Assignment
Aug 24	Course Intro and background – no reading	
Aug 31	Read the Introduction (pg. 1 – 6)	Discussion notes, participation
Sep 7	Ch. 1 Variation under domestication	Discussion notes, participation
Sep 14	Ch. 2 Variation under nature	Discussion notes, participation
Sep 21	Ch. 3 Struggle for existence	Discussion notes, participation
Sep 28	Ch. 4 Natural selection	Discussion notes, participation
Oct 5	Ch. 5 Laws of Variation	Discussion notes, participation
Oct 12	Ch. 6 Difficulties on theory	Discussion notes, participation
Oct 19	Ch. 7 Instinct	Discussion notes, participation
Oct 26	Ch. 9 On the imperfection of the geological record	Discussion notes, participation
Nov 2	No class	
Nov 9	Ch. 10 On the geological succession of organic beings	Discussion notes, participation
Nov 16	Ch. 13 Mutual affinities of organic beings	Discussion notes, participation
Nov 23	No class	
Nov 30	Ch 14 Recapitulation and conclusion	Discussion notes, participation

Reading schedule is subject to change with sufficient notice to students (e.g. 2 weeks).

## Grading

Course evaluation will be based on the following:

Category	Description	Points
Weekly discussion notes. These notes will be used to gauge the students' depth of thought on the reading, and to help lead further discussion. Due before each class (Wed, 3 pm). 0.5 points lost per 6-hour period late. Required each week regardless of attendance.	Thought questions will be provided for most weekly reading assignments that will be used to focus discussion. You should also Write down independent thoughts about what is read. As the term moves forward, the number of "thought questions" provided will be reduced.	50 points
Participation. Each class will include small breakout sessions (~15 mins) followed by shared insights to the entire group.	Students will be expected to engage in weekly group discussions and will review each other's blog at the end of the semester. Each student will be allowed one mulligan for sickness or other excuse. The lowest weekly participation grade will be automatically dropped.	50 points
Total		100

Grading structure:

A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89.9
C	70 – 79.9
D	60 – 69.9
E	< 60

Class Participation and Attendance – Class participation will be measured during regular in-class activities and is based on attendance and contributions to class discussion (and blog peer-review). Attendance will be monitored daily. Absences will be excused if they meet UF's policies and the student provides written documentation. See Attendance under the Class Policies section below.

All students will be given one "freebie" attendance pass to count as an unexcused absence. The "freebie" was created because sometimes students are too sick to come to class but not sick enough to seek medical attention. It is highly recommended that students reserve their "freebies" for such situations.

Late assignments – Late discussion notes will lose 0.5 points (out of three total) for every 6-hour period late. (e.g., an assignment submitted 9:10 PM the day of class will lose one full point.)

I do not allow make up assignments in this class.

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. Click [here](#) to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Technical issues – Students should speak to the instructor about issues with the course during office hours or by appointment (not during class). Technical issues with Zoom should be addressed to the [UF computing help desk](#) at (352) 392-HELP (4357) or Hel

## Campus Student Resources

### Health and Wellness

*U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

*Counseling and Wellness Center:* [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

*Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

*University Police Department:* [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

*UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#)

### Academic Resources

*E-learning technical support:* Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

[Career Connections Center:](#) Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

[Library Support:](#) Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center:](#) Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

*Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)

*On-Line Students Complaints*: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)

## UF Policy Stuff

Grades and Grade Points - For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx> Attendance and Make-Up Work - Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Online Course Evaluation Process - Student assessment of instruction is an important part of efforts to improve teaching and learning. At the end of the semester, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course using a standard set of university and college criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open for students to complete during the last two or three weeks of the semester; students will be notified of the specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Academic Honesty - UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Honor Code](#). Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Software Use - All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.