Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Course Profile

RHTH/CC 504  Epic of Creation

Gayle E. Woloschak, PhD, DMin
Professor of Radiation Oncology and Cell and Molecular Biology
Northwestern University School of Medicine
Chicago, IL

Adjunct Professor of Religion and Science
Lutheran School of Theology Chicago
Zygon Center for Religion and Science
Chicago, IL

g-woloschak@northwestern.edu
gayle.woloschak@gmail.com
cell 630-842-5060
janus.northwestern.edu/wololab

Office Hours:
Office hours will be by appointment (email or phone) and 30 min after each class.

Course Objectives:
The topic of biological evolution and how it relates to the theology-science discussion is probably one of the most important dialogues as it impacts the broad culture and society through political, educational, and conceptual contexts. The major goal of this course is to provide an educational framework that will promote accurate and informed discussion in the theology-science arena. The following specific areas of learning will be the focus of the course:

1. To acquire a background on the scientific models for biological evolution and specifically to discuss some examples of these models
2. To examine theological reflections on the evolution-theology issues
3. To examine arguments that are used to counter evolutionary models of the origin of humanity
4. To experience scientific experiments examining relatedness among species for particular genes and proteins
5. To reflect upon questions in biology, most especially evolutionary biology, that impact our understanding of the human person

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Have a good understanding of evolution and theological concepts related to it
2. Be prepared to interface with issues of evolution in pastoral situations
3. Develop a project that will be useful for interfacing with parish or educational communities
4. Have a better understanding of approaches to science and religion dialogue

Strategies for learning:

In order to achieve these outcomes we will:

1. Dialog with leading scholars about the science of evolution from biology, chemistry, astrophysics and other disciplines that impinge on the area.
2. Participate in a computational project to permit examination of sequence similarity among different species to understand evolution at the DNA level.
3. Sessions with the course instructor and students will be conducted to permit a thorough examination of pastoral issues important for evolution.

Course requirements:

1. Complete all readings prior to class
2. Prepare FOR THE 2ND WEEK OF CLASS a short 2-3 page reflection paper discussing your personal attitudes and prejudices about evolution prior to taking the course. This will be turned in on the first morning of class. (10% of grade)
3. Be prepared in class to participate in discussions, ask questions, and reflect opinions based on the topic, personal experience, and readings (20% of grade)
4. Be prepared during the final session of class to make a 15-20 min presentation on some topic from the readings or general field of biological evolution and theology that is of interest to you and your experiences in your pastorate. The student can discuss a topic that is controversial in the evolution-religion debate, a theme that is recurring in a pastoral community on the topic, problems that are impacted by the discussion, or some other issue related to the topic that is relevant for the student. (20% of grade)
5. A 12-15 paper due 30 days after the class that goes in depth into some topic discussed in the course. (50% of grade)

Required readings:


TO BE PROVIDED AS PDFs:


**Not required but interesting reading:**


Useful web resources:

Evolution.berkeley.edu
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/evolution/library/

**Academic Policies:** The professor follows all policies and procedures of LSTC regarding teaching and learning. Please consult the *LSTC Student Handbook*, Current edition. Here are some areas of interest.
**Communications during Semester:** Periodically, students or the professors may find the need to miss class. The professor will only accept in person or email notification of absences. Any other method will be considered as “unexcused” and more than two (2) unexcused absences will adversely affect the final grade.

The professor will communicate through LSTC email or preferably through gayle.woloschak@gmail.com