

EvoS-2



Teachers: Filipa Vala (post-doc, CBA), Margarida Matos (DBA professor, CBA researcher)

Calendar: April 30th-May 17th 2012

Duration: 30 hours

Schedule: 14h-16h, 4 days per week and a 6h mini-international symposium with 4 speakers (planned for the 12th of May)

Objectives

Evolutionary theory provides a framework for the understanding of all living systems. Nevertheless, throughout the 20th century, with a few exceptions, evolutionary biologists have “avoided” using evolution to tackle problems related to our own species. EvoS is a program created by David Sloan Wilson which acknowledges that evolutionary theory provides a framework for understanding all living processes including humanity, and aims at turning evolutionary theory into a common language to all areas that pertain to the natural world and human affairs. This advanced course is part of the initiatives aimed at launching EvoS at the University of Lisbon.

General Plan

- Quick review of basic concepts in Evolutionary Biology: patterns and processes in evolution, micro and macro-evolutionary processes, speciation.
- Evolutionary biology applied to humans in an historical perspective: eugenics, sociobiology’s “bad name”, evolutionary psychology.
- A brief recap of the Nature versus Nurture debate viewed in its socio-political context: the ideological debate of the 70’s-80’s (Darwin versus Marx)
- The Nature versus Nurture debate revisited: different theories of the mind; language as an example that “solves” the debate
- The history of human societies viewed as an environmental adaptation process: biological evolution, cultural evolution, and gene-culture co-evolution.
- Evolutionary biology as a means to solve problems in our societies – two classical examples: Darwinian medicine, conservation biology.
- “Darwinian behaviour” in humans – where’s Darwin? the classic example: incest avoidance; a new example: religion.
- Problems of the Darwinian paradigm applied to human behaviour – examples from Behavioural Economics (*Homo sapiens versus Homo economicus*), nepotism.
- Is human free-will an adaptation? A new framework for the evolution of the human mind.
- Short International Symposium (4 Seminars)

- Development of short individual dissertations on topics of student choice

Location: Departamento de Biologia Animal, FCUL

Nº (min, max) students: 5 - 15

Minimum formation: 'Licenciatura' (bachelor) in Biology or related areas

Fee: free for 1st year PhD students in the Doctoral programme in Biology (UL), 'Biodiversity, Genetics and Evolution' (UL; UP) and 'Biology and Ecology of Global Changes'; 150 euros for FCUL master students; 200 euros for research technicians and other PhD students; 250 euros for others.

Deadline for applications: April 15th, 2012

Candidates should send a short CV and a motivation letter to Filipa Vala at the following email address:

fdvala@fc.ul.pt