The history of the life sciences and, indeed, of Western civilization can be divided rather neatly into pre-Darwinian and post-Darwinian periods. Darwin’s 1859 treatise, On the Origin of Species, was not the first work to propose that organisms had descended from other, earlier organisms and the mechanism of evolution it proposed remained controversial for years. Nevertheless, no biologist after 1859 could ignore Darwin’s theories and few areas of thought and culture remained immune to their influence. Darwinism was attacked, defended, debated, modified, ridiculed, championed, interpreted, and used not only by biologists but also by philosophers, priests, sociologists, warmongers, cartoonists, robber-barons, psychologists, novelists, and politicians of various stripes. This course will introduce the major themes of Darwin’s works and explore their diverse, often contradictory impacts on science and society, concentrating on themes prominent between 1859 and the onset of the Second World War but also highlighting some of the more recent concerns.

- **Recommended reading**
  - Peter Bowler (1992) *The Fontana History of the Environmental Sciences*.
  - Charles Darwin (1859, many later editions and reprints) *The Origin of Species*.
  - Paul Lawrence Farber (1994; paperback, 1998) *The Temptations of Evolutionary Ethics*.
  - David Hull (ed.) (1973) *Darwin and His Critics: The Reception of Darwin’s Theory of Evolution by the Scientific Community*.
  - Daniel Kevles (1985; paperback, 1995) *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*.