

Evolution and Culture (Seminar)

Prof. Dr. Ullrich Günther
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wöchentlich | Montag | 10:15 - 11:45 | 12.10.2009 - 29.01.2010 | R 15

Studiengang, Gebiet, Modul/Fach, Semester, Be

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Contents

In the first part, basic concepts of evolutionary psychology are discussed. Human behaviour, which is traditionally perceived as culturally fashioned, is interpreted on the basis of empirical evidence from a Darwinian point of view. Such topics as morality, religion and gender behaviour are examined in this context and that of their cross-cultural variance. In a second part, different theories of evolution are discussed, with an eye on their cultural-political implications: ecological approaches (co-evolution and eco-evolution in systems/complexity theories), anthropological explorations (multi-linear evolution) and further perspectives (integral evolution, conscious evolution).

In addition to the weekly seminar (2 SWS), in an extra block-seminar (+1 SWS) cross-cultural perspectives and cultural awareness will be explored in practical exercises (cross-cultural training).

Goals

The objective of the course is for the student to understand and be able to critically discuss: (a) evolutionary-psychological perspectives on human behaviour and cultural traditions; (b) the evolutionary models of the development of culture and the multiple approaches to Darwin's heritage and evolution theories in their contemporary political and cultural relevance.

Agenda

12.10.2009 Introduction

Introduction to the contents and organization of the Seminar

19.10.2009 Basics of evolutionary psychology

Introduction to the principles.

Sources for 'Referat': Buss 2007; Cosmides & Tooby 1997.

See also the videos Pinker 1998a; 1998b

26.10.2009 Religion

An evolutionary-psychological perspective.

Boyer 2002; Wilson 2003; Atran 2005

02.11.2009 Morality and altruism

Kinship, benefits of mutual cooperation and the problem of cheating.

Buss 2007; Vugt & Lange 2006 (The Altruism Puzzle: Psychological Adaptation for Prosocial Behavior. In Schaller et al. pp. 237-262); Krebs 2005 (The Evolution of Morality. In Buss, pp. 747-775)

09.11.2009 Aggression

Appropriate the resources of others, ascend dominance hierarchies, inflict costs on sexual rivals.

Buss & Duntley 2006 (The Evolution of Aggression. In Schaller et al., pp. 263-286)

16.11.2009 Mate selection and gender roles

Why do men prefer young females and women high-status males?

Best & Williams 2001; Buss 2007; Emrich et al. 2004

23.11.2009 Evolution and culture

Evocation and transmission.

Norenzayan et al. 2006 (Evolution and Culture. In Schaller et al., pp. 343-366)

30.11.2009 Culture as Emergence

An archeological inquiry ;

Source for 'Referat': Chase 2006 (whole book)

07.12.2009 Beyond Natural Selection (1/2)

The 'Systems Thinking' turn in evolutionary theories ;

Source for 'Referat': Wesson 1991 (chapters 2 to 10)

14.12.2009 Beyond Natural Selection (2/2)

The 'Systems Thinking' turn in evolutionary theories ;

Sources for 'Referat':

- Bocchi and Ceruti 2002 (pp. 145-161 and pp. 228-241)

-Wesson 1991 (chapters 11 to 13)

04.01.2010 The "integral view" on evolution

From the evolution of consciousness to a "conscious evolution" ;

Source for 'Referat': Ed. Loye 2004 (pp. 1-10, 18-32, 67-180 and 239-266)

11.01.2010 Laszlo's general evolution theory

Holism and the self-evolution of universe, life, society and mind ;

Sources for 'Referat':

- Laszlo in Ed. Loye 2004 (pp. 39-51)

– Laszlo 1996 (whole book)

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18.01.2010 A feminist perspective on the evolution of culture

Eisler's "The Chalice and the Blade";

Source for 'Referat': Eisler 1987 (whole book)

25.01.2010 Closing discussion

Open discussion on the different versions of theories of evolution and their relevance to the evolution of human culture