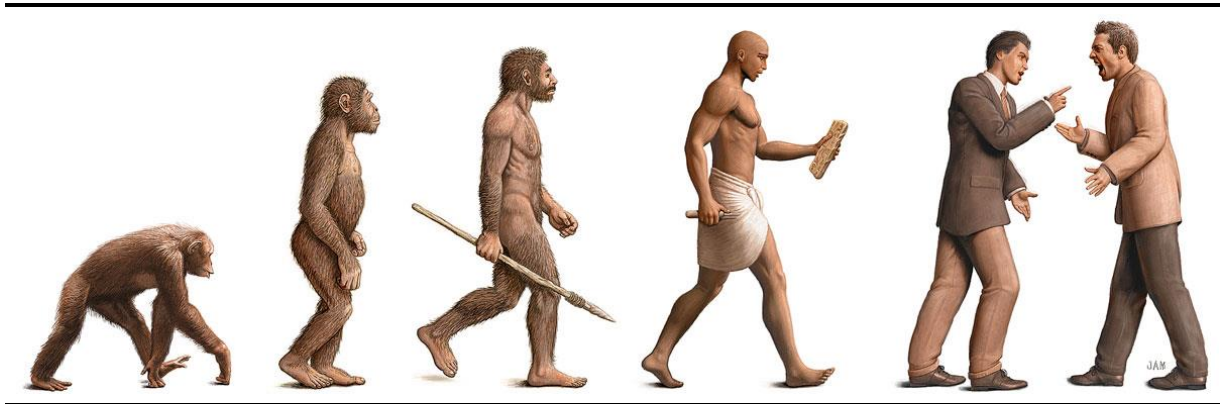


AN INTRODUCTION TO SCIENTIFIC CONTROVERSIES

"Science proceeds one funeral at a time"
— Attributed to Max Planck



Course Description

This course examines major controversies in the history and philosophy of science. The historical classes focus on the controversies which have transformed the way we view the world and perceive ourselves as human beings. The philosophical classes investigate (1) the nature of scientific knowledge, by comparing realist and instrumentalist epistemologies, and (2) the nature of the scientific process, by considering the social factors which influence the production and validation of scientific knowledge.

Course Requirements

A strong interest in the history and philosophy of science is expected as well as the ability to handle ideas and debate them. For the continuous assessment, students will have to write two short essays and take part in a blog discussion of a controversial scientific issue. For the final exam, students will have to produce a brief video documentary about a past or present scientific controversy. All the Cambridge English: C1 Advanced skills – written and aural comprehension as well as written and oral expression – will be mobilized. Students signing up for this module should therefore already have reached the B2 level.

Course Outline

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|---|---|
| 1: <i>Epistemology</i> : The Big Issues | 7: <i>History</i> : The Earth |
| 2: <i>History</i> : The Big Themes | 8: <i>History</i> : Evolution |
| 3: <i>History</i> : The Universe | 9: <i>History</i> : Mind |
| 4: <i>History</i> : The Atom | 10: <i>Epistemology</i> : Feyerabend & Latour |
| 5: <i>Epistemology</i> : Popper & Kuhn | 11: Video Controversy Project |
| 6: Blog Controversy Project | |