This class is a graduate-level course in the evolution of religion. The principal purpose of the class is to introduce students to the current theories and research examining the evolution of religion. The class will have a seminar format. This means that all students are required to read all assigned readings before the class, and must be prepared to discuss them in class. Preparation for discussion implies both notetaking and time allocated to synthesizing the material. Students should expect to be called on and to evidence preparation for discussion. The general tone of the discussion should be supportive of a free exchange of ideas. Approximately 60% of the grade for the class will be based on the quality of class participation. The remainder of the grade (40%) will be based on a research project, which will be discussed during the first class.

Course Topics and Reading Assignments (other topics and readings will be added based on student interests):

**Theological Incorrectness**

**Counter-Intuitive Concepts and Supernatural Belief**

**Afterlife Beliefs**

**Supernatural Belief and Prosociality**

**Supernatural Punishment**

**Adaptationist versus By-Product Scenarios**
Kirkpatrick, L. 2008. Religion is not an adaptation: some fundamental issues and arguments
Harris, E. and P. McNamara 2008. Is religiousness a biocultural adaptation?

**Multilevel Selection**
**Signaling Theory and Religion**


**Ritual**


**Morality**


**Religion and Violence**


Bushman, B. et al. 2007. When God sanctions killing. *Psychological Science*.


**Magic and Superstition**


**Ontogeny**


**Health and the Evolution of Religion**


**Demography**


**Evolutionary Scenarios**


Dennett, D. 2006. Chapters 5-7 (pp. 116-199) in *Breaking the Spell: Religion as Natural Phenomenon*.