Webpage: www.fiu.edu/~honors2
The website will be updated throughout the year and will contain discussion questions, lecture supplements, suggested links, sample final exam.

Classrooms and Professor Contacts
This course meets Mondays/Wednesdays @ 14:00-15:15
Lecture or large-group classes meet on Wednesdays in DM 100
Discussion or small-group classes meet on Mondays as follows:

Prof. Garrote’s group: GC 276
   Office hours: By appointment: DM 233; ruben.garrote@fiu.edu; (305) 348-1620

Prof. Placide’s group: GC 272
   Office hours: By appointment: DM 233; placides@fiu.edu; (305) 348-6184

Prof. Rocco’s group: CP 103
   Office hours: By appointment: ZEB 360A; roccot@fiu.edu; (305) 348-6151

Prof. Simpson’s group: CP 115
   Office hours: By appointment: CP 217A; simpsonc@fiu.edu; (305) 348-1565

Overview
The course is divided into three sections across the two semesters, and aims to answer the questions “What are we?” “Who are we?” and “Who am I?” Students are exposed to arguments about the role of genes in human cultural and social behavior, and examine the degree to which science (genetics) can provide the answers to these questions. As they read about cultures and experiences that are different from theirs, students also explore their own ideas about foreign cultural practices, critically examining their reaction the latter.

Required Reading
Students will be responsible for reading the following texts:


   Course Pack (available at FIU Copy Center)
Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation: Attendance is required and will be reflected in the final grade. Also, material will be covered in class that is not covered in the readings, thus each absence will negatively affect the student’s ability to do well on assignments and the examination. For every unexcused absence the final grade will be lowered 1/3rd of a letter. An explanation of an absence must be provided within one week. Work not submitted on time will lose points.

   All students are expected to be on time to class and to remain in class for the duration of the lecture. Unexcused late arrivals and early departures will be counted as absences.

2. Reading: Students are expected to read all assigned material before the indicated class meeting and be prepared to discuss it in class. Failure to do this will reflect negatively on his or her final class participation grade.

3. Writing: This course has two weekly writing components: a preview and a position paper. Students are advised to carefully proofread all papers before submitting them. Students with marginal writing skills should consult the university’s free tutoring services: On-Campus Learning Center: PC 247; Online Learning Center: w3.fiu.edu.

   3a. Preview: Students will write a brief summary of the week’s reading, of approximately 100-150 words, which must be submitted before the indicated lecture. These must demonstrate acquaintance with the material read. Quoting should be minimal.

   3b. Position Paper: Students will write one- or two-page papers. These should demonstrate understanding of the lecture and readings and relate these to the overall themes of the course (as they emerge). In these expository essays, students will present an opinion about a topic, discuss it, explain it, and defend it.

   In writing their papers, students are expected to adhere to recognized standards of documentation. Each professor will indicate his or her preferred documentation style(s) (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.). Papers will be graded according to the following criteria:

   - Organization and purpose: Is the purpose clearly stated? Is the paper coherent?
   - Well-reasoned and insightful selection from and use of readings: relevance, logic, etc.
   - Integration of lecture and readings in support of your thesis
   - Writing style: clarity of thought, word choice, grammar, etc.
   - Adherence to professor’s guidelines in use of headings, citations, spelling, etc.

4. Discussion Leadership: Each student will serve as discussion leader at least once per semester. Leaders must submit two discussion questions for posting on the course web site. Send questions through the course website no later than noon on SUNDAY preceding the discussion. Leaders are responsible for reading all submitted questions and leading their section discussion.

5. Semester Project: Students will complete a semester project, which is DUE MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH. They must submit a one-page project proposal by October 3rd. The
proposal must be approved by their professors before students may complete the project. Each student will choose from A or B below and respond in the medium of his or her choice.

A. Identify and explain your conciliating theme. What over-arching theme colors your ideas about how the world works and fits together? Explain how this theme affects your thoughts on different areas of life such as those mentioned above. (E.g., science, especially physics, is Wilson's conciliating theme; it is how he views and explains all aspects of life and the world. It affects what he thinks about such diverse topics as religion, politics, free will, art, etc.)

B. Provide an example of, or describe an aspect of the world which you feel exemplifies or defies Wilson’s Consilience. Support your argument with examples and explanations.

This is intended to be a substantial assignment to creatively deal with an assigned topic, within the context of the course’s overall themes. Students are encouraged to respond to the assignment in the medium of their choice; however, posters and dioramas are not allowed. Regardless of the medium chosen, it is essential that the ideas are clearly communicated to the person viewing/reading/grading your project. To that end, the project must be accompanied with a written interpretation. If a written paper is chosen, it should be at least nine pages long.

Several projects from each section may be selected for large-group presentation.

6. Final Oral Exam: Students will sit for a final oral examination at the end of each semester. The oral exams are individual. Sample questions will be posted on the website.

Grade Criteria:
Student work will be assigned grades according to the following scale:

A- to A+ = Excellent to exceptional work, free of technical errors and displaying grasp of concepts, depth of analysis and comprehension at an impressive academic level
B- to B+ = Good to very good work, surpassing minimal standards in student performance, but with some occasional technical errors
C- to C+ = Average to above average work, meeting minimum standards, but marked with technical errors and/or exposing gaps in student performance
D- to D+ = Poor to below average work, barely meeting minimum standards, replete with technical errors and/or deficient in student performance
F = Unacceptable work, failing to meet minimum standards

Each assignment will count for a percentage of the final grade:

CLASS PARTICIPATION (includes weekly previews) 20%
WEEKLY POSITION PAPERS 30%
FINAL PROJECT 25%
FINAL ORAL EXAM 25%
Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:
Students are expected to do original work. They are required to complete this work individually, except when collaborating in the group project. All cases of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the assignment and possibly for the entire course.

Definition of Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another’s original ideas or words, either directly or as a paraphrase, as one’s own or without proper citation. (This extends to works “published” on the internet.) It is both illegal and unethical, and amounts to both theft and cheating. Penalties are swift, severe, and irrevocable.

Students should refer to The Honors College Plagiarism Policy: http://honors.fiu.edu/plagiarism.htm. They are responsible for understanding what amounts to plagiarism, and will be held to strictest standards.

Policy: If a student is suspected of having plagiarized another’s work he or she may be required to provide the instructor with original notes and outlines for papers in question, as well as photocopies of the sources consulted. Egregious cases of plagiarism, as judged by the instructor, will result in a grade of F for the course and will be reported to the Dean. The final grade may be reported as FX, meaning failure for academic dishonesty. An FX cannot be expunged from your transcript.

The instructor reserves the absolute right to make judgments about plagiarism based on his expertise, experience, and evidence in the piece of writing itself.

Students who remain in the course agree contractually to abide by this policy.

Course Outline

Week 1
Mon., Aug. 29
Introduction: Student roles, Class rules, capture student data

Wed., Aug. 31
Guest Lecture: The Enlightenment Project, Prof. Bruce Hauptli
Due: Read J. Holt, Big-bang Theology; K.L. Woodward, How the Heavens Go

Week 2
Mon., Sept. 5
Labor Day — UNIVERSITY CLOSED

Wed., Sept. 7
Lecture: The Universe, Quanta and Butterflies, Prof. Caroline Simpson
Due: Position paper on Hauptli lecture. Preview of Wilson, ch. 4; Tom Godwin, Cold Equations; Jeffrey Bennett et al., Selections from The Cosmic Perspective: “Weather and Chaos”, and “Does God Play Dice?”; Tanis Eder, An Accidental World. (There is also an optional paper on website.)

Week 3
Mon., Sept. 12
Student-led Discussion.
Due: Position paper on Simpson lecture; Wilson, ch. 4; and additional readings.
**Due:** Preview Wilson, chs. 5

### Week 4

Mon., Sept. 19 Student-led Discussion.  
**Due:** Position paper on *Reduction and Synthesis* lecture; Wilson, ch. 5


### Week 5

Mon., Sept. 26 **HONORS COLLEGE CONVOCATION**

**Due:** Preview Richard Rorty, *Against Unity*

### Week 6

Mon., Oct. 3 Student-led discussion on holism and reductionism.  
**Due:** Position paper on *Mindwalk*

**SEMESTER PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE**

Wed., Oct. 5 Guest Lecture: *Mind as Function of the Brain*, TBA  
**Due:** Preview Wilson, ch. 6; Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars*

### Week 7

Mon., Oct. 10 Student-led Discussion.  
**Due:** Position paper on Sacks and *Mind as Function of the Brain* lecture.

Wed., Oct. 12 Guest Lecture: *Free Will and Biological Determinism*, Prof. Marty Tracey, Jr  
**Due:** Preview Wilson, chs. 7-8. Readings: Louis Menand, *The Gods are Anxious*; Melvin Konner, *The Buck Stops Here*; Nigel Williams, *A Biologist’s Thinking Man*; Nicholas Wade, *A Gene for Romance*

### Week 8

Mon., Oct. 17 Student-led Discussion.  
**Due:** Position paper on Tracey lecture and additional readings.

Wed., Oct 19 Guest Lecture: *Consilience and the Place of Art*, Prof. John Bailly  
**Due:** Preview Wilson, ch. 10; E.H Gombrich, *Psychology and the Riddle of Style*; L. Bohannan, *Shakespeare in the Bush*; Komar and Melamid’s Most Wanted Paintings, at [www.diacenter.org/km](http://www.diacenter.org/km) and Valerie Hillings’ excerpts about it (in readings booklet); and [www.gene-sis.net](http://www.gene-sis.net)

### Week 9

Mon., Oct. 24 Student-led Discussion.  
**Due:** Position paper on Bailly lecture; Wilson, ch. 10; additional readings; and two websites.
Wed., Oct 26  Guest Lecture: *Consilience and the Place of Religion*, Prof. Daniel Alvarez  
**Due:** Preview Wilson, ch. 11 and additional readings: S. Begley, *Science Finds God*; S. Blackburn, *An Unbeautiful Mind*

**Week 10**  
Mon., Oct. 31  Student-led Discussion.  
**Due:** Position paper on Alvarez lecture, Wilson, ch. 11 and additional readings.

Wed., Nov. 2  Guest Lecture: *Naturalism without Reductionism*, Prof. Bruce Hauptli  
**Due:** Preview Thomas Nagel, *What is it Like to Be a Bat*

II. WHO ARE WE?

**Week 11**  
Mon., Nov. 7  Student-led Discussion.  
**Due:** Position paper on Hauptli lecture and Nagel reading.  
**Due:** SEMESTER PROJECT

Wed., Nov. 9  *Perception and Context*, Prof. Ruben Garrote  
**Due:** Preview *Flatland*.

**Week 12**  
Mon., Nov. 14  Student-led Discussion.  
**Due:** Position paper on Garrote lecture and associated readings.

Wed., Nov. 16  Better Projects Showcased

**Week 13**  
Mon., Nov. 21  ORAL EXAMINATIONS

Wed., Nov. 23  ORAL EXAMINATIONS

**Week 14**  
Mon., Nov. 28  ORAL EXAMINATIONS

Wed., Nov. 30  ORAL EXAMINATIONS

**Week 15**  
Mon., Dec. 5  ORAL EXAMINATIONS

Wed., Dec. 7  ORAL EXAMINATIONS