

Learning Outcomes & Artifacts

- Learning Outcome 1: Students will identify ways in which evolution by natural selection is compatible with the Judeo-Christian view of God as creator.
 - Artifact: first 5-page paper
- Learning Outcome 2: Students will address how one can live a life with meaning and purpose and forge a more just society for the common good by exploring the ethical implications, as well as the legal, religious, and/or social implications, of a contemporary bioethics topic.
 - Artifact: second 5-page paper
- Learning Outcome 3: Students will analyze what the Genographic Project proposes about the biological nature of human life and the development of a society for the common good.
 - Artifact: essay on the last take-home exam

Assessment Data

	A	B	C	D	Average
Evolution	3.0	2.3	Not yet available	2.7	2.67
Ethics	2.8	2.2	Not yet available	2.1	2.37
Genographic	3.2	2.1	Not yet available	3.0	2.77

Overall Average: 2.6

Closing the Loop

- Learning Outcome 1, Evolution
 - We believe that some of the lack of success at achieving this outcome is due to the wording of the question in which we ask whether the Judeo-Christian world view is “compatible with” evolution by natural selection. We think that students who appear to understand the concept of the compatibility of faith and reason in the Catholic and other Judeo-Christian traditions still answer that they are not compatible, and may be misinterpreting what it means for them to be compatible. Next semester, at least one section will try asking this question with new wording, potentially something like “Are evolution by natural selection and the Judeo-Christian world view of God as creator unavoidably conflicting?”
- Learning Outcome 2, Ethics
 - We find that students at this stage of education often still have a difficult time with the idea that there is no absolute answer to a question. They struggle with the idea that science can only offer some clarity on underlying facts, but that it can’t offer a right or wrong answer to an ethical question. We hope to improve performance and understanding in this learning outcome by more explicitly communicating that science will never offer answers to questions of ethical value, and by modeling the use of science as an invaluable and powerful foundation for understanding the underlying details of scientific ethical questions, but that the ethical decision ultimately requires information from values that are not imparted by the scientific method or scientific knowledge.
- Learning Outcome 3, Genographic Project
 - Most students thoroughly enjoy participating in the genographic project. The concept that each student’s data represents one single genetic path in their ancestry that likely includes many thousands of overlapping paths is difficult to convey to students. Furthermore, even if they have an understanding of this, they have difficulty relating the implications of that for human society. We hope to improve performance on this learning outcome by improving the way we explain the project and the fact that the ancestral path they see in the project is one of many thousands of genetic paths through which their ancestry has passed. We also hope to focus more in class discussion on what this means for modern society and common good.