

Introduction to “Teaching evolutionary theory in higher education”: A special issue of *EvoS Journal*

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I am proud to bring to readers the first special issue of *EvoS Journal: The Journal of the Evolutionary Studies Consortium* – “Teaching Evolutionary Theory in Higher Education.” We have 6 articles in this issue that span the topics of how specific disciplines address the instruction of evolutionary theory, specific assignments and course designs related to evolutionary theory, and how course textbooks and evolutionary literature perpetuate misunderstandings about evolutionary theory.

Evolutionary theory is notable for its breadth in explaining a variety of phenomena – from morphological features to behavioral; from individuals to groups; from what nature creates to what organisms create – and beyond (see Garcia et al., 2011; Wilson, 2007). Evolutionary theory is also notable for the misconceptions that surround it at all stages in the United States educational system (see Clough & Wood-Robinson, 1985; Moore, Mitchell, Inglis, Day & Jacobs, 2002). When taught, evolution by natural and sexual selection are often simplified in a way that breeds misunderstanding, which further act as a barrier to employing evolutionary theory in a meaningful way. This is unfortunate because of the sheer applicability of evolutionary theory to many aspects of life that affect how we interact with one another and our environments.

Therefore, this special issue adds to the accumulating methods of rectifying these misconceptions and teaching evolutionary theory and its applicability in a meaningful way in the higher education setting. In line with the mission of *EvoS Journal*, we bring together multiple disciplines in this issue, including how evolutionary theory can be integrated within History (Hinshaw, this issue), STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics; Walker, this issue), and Psychology (Carmen, et al., this issue). Contributors illustrate concrete ways that evolutionary theory can be taught using science fiction (Rohrbacher, this issue) and imaginary, or alien, ecosystems (Hayes, this issue). Finally, a review of evolutionary literature reveals ways in which misunderstandings about the theory are perpetrated in the study of the human mind (Varella, do Dantos, Ferreira, & Bussab, this issue).

I wish to thank all of the contributors to this special issue for their time in producing these articles, and for their passion in teaching the next generation of evolutionary scholars. In addition, I thank *EvoS Journal's* new co-Editors Glenn

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Geher and Daniel Glass, and Editorial Assistant Briana Tauber. The dedication with which these three embody the mission of the evolutionary studies consortium is truly inspiring.

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