Masters Seminar Philosophy of Biology

Terms 1 & 2, academic year 2005/06, University of Utrecht. Professors Johan Bolhuis & Herman Philipse

Please retain this handout & re-read it before writing your final essay!

1. Readings (compulsory): David L. Hull and Michael Ruse, *The Philosophy of Biology*. *Oxford Readings in Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

2. Time & Place: Thursday, 2-5 pm sharp, room C104, "Centrumgebouw Noord". First session Sept. 15.

3. Time management: 7,5 ECTS (= 210 h). Seminar attendance: $14 \times 3 = 42$ hours; preparation: $13 \times 7 = 91$ h.; final paper 77 h. **4. Requirements:** (a) attendance at 12 of 14 seminar sessions minimally, (b) 1 talk to introduce a session (c) 1 final paper of about 3500 words (maximum 5000 words), *to be handed in before 1 February 2006 (hard deadline!)*. See for requirements paper under point 6.

5. Set-up of seminar sessions. The sessions start with an introductory talk, prepared and given by two students (distribution of labour as they like), which contains (a) a clear statement of the problems tackled in the articles to be discussed, and a short summary of these articles; (b) a critical analysis of the arguments advanced by the authors; (c) three theses for debate, proposed and argued for by the students. The introductory talk takes at most 15 minutes (for 2 students together). The other students will evaluate the talk, both with regard to content as to performance, and they will have prepared thoroughly the articles to be discussed (see Reading List), so that they can ask critical questions etc. The set-up of the remainder of the sessions will vary: short lectures about backgrounds in biology and philosophy, textual analysis, discussion, etc.

6. Final paper. The final paper is the main basis (90%) for the mark students get for this seminar. The paper should be modeled upon articles in scientific or scholarly journals, and it should show that the student has studied thoroughly the literature and has taken part in the discussions during the seminar. More in particular, the paper should meet the following requirements:

a. Form. The paper consists of an *introduction*, which sets out the problem to be discussed and the theses to be defended; of a

main body in which the author argues for these theses, and it contains a short conclusion and a list of references. On the title page authors should state their full address and email address, and the title page should contain an abstract summarizing the paper in not more than 200 words. Notes will appear at the bottom of the pages, and references should be in standard style. In cases of doubt, students should follow *Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers at the University Press Oxford* or some other accepted standard.

b. Problem. The student should not only explain clearly the problem to be discussed in the paper, but also show why this problem is important given the present state of the literature on the subject as contained in Hull and Ruse. Of course, students are encouraged to read other articles as well and to refer to them in the paper.

c. Summarizing views of other authors. Summaries of the views of other authors should be clear and succinct, and accompanied by references to the relevant literature. Students should summarize the views of others only if this is necessary for their own arguments.

d. Theses to be defended; arguments used. Students should try to invent the theses they defend in the paper and they should also try to invent their own arguments, taking those of other authors into account.

Please keep a copy of the paper yourself.

7. Reading List (from Hull & Ruse) of chapters to be prepared:

session of	date	chapters	students
1	15 Sept.	introductory	session
2	22 Sept.	1&2&3	
3	29 Sept.	4&5	
4	6 Oct.	6&7	
5	13 Oct.	8&9&10	
6	20 Oct.	11&12&13	
NB 27 C)ctober n	o seminar	
7	3 Nov.	14&15&16	
8	10 Nov.	17&18&19	
9	17 Nov.	20&21	
10	24 Nov.	22&23&24	
11	1 Dec.	25&2	26&27
12	8 Dec.	30&3	1&32&33

- 13 15 Dec. 34&35&36
- 14 22 Dec. projects for papers