

**SMU McLane/Armentrout/Bridwell Scholars Reading Groups
Spring 2021 Syllabus
Economics, Evolution, and the Environment**

Mon./Tues./Wed.: Dean Stansel, Ph.D., Research Associate Professor
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Bridwell Institute for Economic Freedom

<https://www.smu.edu/cox/Centers-and-Institutes/Bridwell-Institute>

Cox School of Business, Crow 282

Meeting Times. Our meetings will be held on Mondays (Bridwell), Tuesdays (McLane), and Wednesdays (Armentrout) at 6-7 pm, and Fridays (Armentrout) at 11am-

Come Prepared. Your **active participation is required.** Those who do not do so will not receive the \$1,000 stipend. Planning ahead is the best way to make sure you are contributing to the group discussion. You should have 3 or 4 specific questions or comments prepared in advance for each session – preferably related directly to the texts. If there’s a lull in the conversation, use that opportunity to ask one of your prepared questions. It is important that everyone has an opportunity to participate, so please monitor your level of participation accordingly. (With 60 minutes and 12 students, that’s only an average of 5 minutes each.)

Be Critical. There is room for disagreement. Don’t agree unthinkingly with the readings or each other. Reasonable people disagree, so be reasonable, but do so **respectfully.**

Be Humble. The writers we read did not know everything and neither do you. Be willing to listen to the writers and each other, and be willing to say, “I don’t know.”

Tentative Bridwell Institute Event Schedule

The most up-to-date list can always be found on our website:

<https://www.smu.edu/cox/Centers-and-Institutes/Bridwell-Institute/Events>

TBA

Workshop Series (designed for faculty but can also be used to make-up absences if necessary)

TBA

Meeting Schedule

<u>Meeting #</u>	<u>Dates (Mon./Tues./Wed./Fri.*)</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1	Feb. 1/2/3/5	second week of class
2	Feb. 8/9/10/12	
3	Feb. 15/16/17/19	
NO MEETINGS	Feb. 22/23/24/26	
Sat. Feb. 27, 9am-12:30pm, Mandatory Reading Group Summit (on Zoom)		
4	Mar. 1/2/3/5	
5	Mar. 8/9/10/12	
6	Mar. 15/16/17/19	
7	Mar. 22/23/24/26	
8	Mar. 29/30/31/Apr. 2	
9	Apr. 5/6/7/9	
10	Apr. 12/13/14/16	

Zoom Links

Mondays, 6-7pm (Central time): <https://smu.zoom.us/j/99555734156>

Tuesdays, 6-7pm (Central time): <https://smu.zoom.us/j/92155812947>

Wednesdays, 6-7pm (Central time): <https://smu.zoom.us/j/96538299180>

Fridays, 11am-noon (Central time): <https://smu.zoom.us/j/99567863593>

Reading List

Books that will be provided:

Robert Frank, *The Darwin Economy: Liberty, Competition, and the Common Good* (2012)

Bjorn Lomborg, *False Alarm: How Climate Change Panic Costs Us Trillions, Hurts the Poor, and Fails to Fix the Planet* (2020)

Matt Ridley, *The Evolution of Everything: How New Ideas Emerge* (2016)

Paul Sabin, *The Bet: Paul Ehrlich, Julian Simon, and Our Gamble over Earth's Future* (2014)

Gernot Wagner and Martin Weitzman, *Climate Shock: The Economic Consequences of a Hotter Planet* (2016)

*Note: Readings marked with asterisks are available in the DropBox link below. All others are found in the books that you will be given or at the weblink listed with the reading.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/b72fkzrf7zmtq0z/AACmnku6-HYOFo1YwhwYq8rYa?dl=0>

Session 1 – The Evolution of Everything I (63 pages)

Ridley, *Evolution of Everything*

- Prologue: The General Theory of Evolution (5 pages)
- Ch. 2: The Evolution of Morality (15 pages)
- Selection from Ch. 3: The Evolution of Life, pp. 37-39 (3 pages)
- Ch. 5: The Evolution of Culture (19 pages)
- Ch. 6: The Evolution of the Economy (21 pages)

Session 2 – The Evolution of Everything II & Introduction to Public Goods (58 pages)

Ch. 2 (The Evolution of Morality) - 15 pages
Ch. 3 (The Evolution of Life) - 3 pages
Ch. 4 (The Evolution of Culture) - 19 pages
Ch. 5 (The Evolution of the Economy) - 21 pages

Session 5 – Dealing with Climate Change II (72 pages)

Lomborg, *False Alarm*

- Ch. 11: Carbon Tax: The Market-Based Solution (15 pages)
- Ch. 12: Innovation: What Is Needed Most (15 pages)
- Ch. 13: Adaptation: Simple But Effective (12 pages)

*William Nordhaus, “Climate Clubs: Overcoming Free Riding in International Climate Policy,” *American Economic Review* (30 pages)

Session 6 – The Darwin Economy I (60 pages)

Frank, *The Darwin Economy*

- Ch. 1: Paralysis (14 pages)
- Ch. 2: Darwin’s Wedge (14 pages)
- Ch. 3: No Cash on the Table (15 pages)
- Ch. 4: Starve the Beast—But Which One? (17 pages)

Session 7 – The Darwin Economy II (57 pages)

Frank, *The Darwin Economy*

- Ch. 5: Putting the Positional Consumption Beast on a Diet (20 pages)
- Ch. 6: Perpetrators and Victims (15 pages)
- Ch. 11: Taxing Harmful Activities (22 pages)

Session 8 – The Bet I (83 pages)

Sabin, *The Bet* (85 pages, but with pictures and an easier read)

- Ch. 3: Listening to Cassandra (34 pages)
- Ch. 4: The Triumph of Optimism (49 pages)

Session 9 – The Bet II (63 pages)

Sabin, *The Bet* (45 pages)

- Introduction (8 pages)
- Ch 5: Polarizing Politics (35 pages)

Ridley, *Evolution of Everything* (20 pages)

- Ch. 11: The Evolution of Population (21 pages)

Ridley, *Evolution of Everything* (20 pages)