PHIL 4555: Philosophy of Biology

Professor Rory Smead (r.smead@northeastern.edu)
Sequence: M/R 11:45-1:25pm

Explores the conceptual foundations of evolution, ecology, and genetics, with special attention to outstanding philosophical questions. Surveys central philosophical and theoretical issues on topics such as the units of selection, the concept and nature of evolutionary fitness, biological functions, causation, biological individuality, the concept of a species, the biology of social behavior, and the explanatory role of natural selection. Also examines the relationship between biology, the physical sciences, and the social sciences. Requires prior completion of three philosophy and/or biology courses.

NU Attributes:
(CE) Capstone Experience
(WI) Writing Intensive

This course can be used to satisfy one of the major/ minor requirements:
• Philosophy Major elective
• Philosophy Minor elective