

**Fall 2009**

## Honors Seminar in Ecology (HONS. 1990H)

### STEPHEN JAY GOULD: AN ECOLOGIST?

Stephen Jay Gould was arguably the most influential scientist this century. From major insights about the history of life to understanding developmental biology or statistical patterns in baseball to controversial opinions about religion, Gould was (and is) profoundly important in how we study life.

This seminar will critique and discuss essays by Gould to probe whether and how he viewed life in an ecological context. Grades will be based on participation in class, including leading discussion and bringing new material and ideas to seminar. There will also be an in-class final essay.

Instructor: Dr. John L. Gittleman, Dean and Professor of Ecology

Meeting time: Tuesday, 9:30-10:45am

Location: Ecology Conference Room

### Syllabus

Date (Tuesday) Topic (reading pages)

18 Aug. Course introduction, Gould interview with Charlie Rose

25 Aug. Gould (Portrait 2, Youtube), Pandas, snails and study of life

1 Sept. Organic wisdom, or why should a fly eat its mother (91-96)

- 8 Sept. An unsung single-cell hero...and Ecology (119-125)
- 15 Sept. The great dying (134-138)
- 22 Sept. Human intelligence (179-185)
- 29 Sept. Evolution as Fact and Theory (253-262)
- 6 Oct. Size decrease in Hershey bars (313-319)
- 13 Oct. Baseball and extinction (343-352)
- 20 Oct. The panda's thumb (19-26)
- 27 Oct. Biological homage to Mickey Mouse (95-107)
- 3 Nov. Our allotted lifetimes (299-305)
- 10 Nov. Progress? Life's little joke (23-44)
- 17 Nov. Replaying the history of life...would it turn out the same? (44-52)
- 1 Dec. A personal story: Gould solves cancer (45-56)
- 8 Dec. Was Stephen Jay Gould an Ecologist? (147-170)
- 15 Dec. Final Exam (8-11am)