672-326 Philosophy of Biology

Credit Points:	12.500
Level:	Undergraduate
Dates & Locations:	2008, This subject commences in the following study period/s: Semester 2, - Taught on campus.
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: A 1.5-hour lecture and a 1 hour tutorial per week Total Time Commitment: Not available
Prerequisites:	Usually 75 points of first year study across any discipline area.
Corequisites:	None
Recommended Background Knowledge:	None
Non Allowed Subjects:	None
Core Participation Requirements:	For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the Disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Student Support and Engagement Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Overview, Learning Outcomes, Assessment and Generic Skills sections of this entry. It is University policy to take all reasonable steps to minimise the impact of disability upon academic study, and reasonable adjustments will be made to enhance a student's participation in the University's programs. Students who feel their disability may impact on meeting the requirements of this subject are encouraged to discuss this matter with a Faculty Student Adviser and Student Equity and Disability Support: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability
Coordinator:	Assoc Prof Helen Verran
Subject Overview:	Is biology a unique and autonomous science? Or are biological issues and theories adequately dealt with by using the epistemological and ontological framework of the physical sciences? Do Kuhnian revolutions occur in the biological sciences? How are the functionalist biological sciences that study physiology and cellular processes linked to and/or distinct from the historical or evolutionary biological sciences? These are some of the questions considered in this subject. Discussion of such general issues is interspersed with case studies which might include study of the work of Robert Brown - an early 19th century taxonomist; consideration of the procedures adopted by the mid twentieth century metabolic biochemist, Hans Krebs; and the conditions that led to the rise of molecular biochemistry and genomics in the second half of the twentieth century.
Assessment:	A 2000 word essay 50% (due mid-semester) and a 2-hour exam 50% (in the examination period).
Prescribed Texts:	Prescribed Texts:Further readings will be available on-line through the subject LMS websiteWhat Makes Biology Unique? Considerations on the Autonomy of a Scientific Discipline (Enrst Mayr), Cambridge University Press 2004
Breadth Options:	This subject is a level 2 or level 3 subject and is not available to new generation degree students as a breadth option in 2008. This subject or an equivalent will be available as breadth in the future. Breadth subjects are currently being developed and these existing subject details can be used as guide to the type of options that might be available. 2009 subjects to be offered as breadth will be finalised before re-enrolment for 2009 starts in early October.
Fees Information:	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees
Generic Skills:	# Develop analytic and critical reading skills

	# Develop skills in making oral presentations and in analytic writing
Notes:	Students enrolled in the BSc (pre-2008 degree only), or a combined BSc course (except for the BA/BSc) will receive science credit for the completion of this subject.