



Evolution and the human family

Can Darwin's theory of evolution be applied to cultural institutions like the family? If so, how can it help us to understand how family structures have evolved? If not, what are the limitations of a Darwinian approach? In this album, Ruth Mace, Professor of Evolutionary Biology at UCL in London, reveals how she uses a Darwinian approach to study diverse human populations. In particular, she focuses her discussion on family size, exploring how Darwinian concepts such as evolutionary trade-offs can help explain why modern families are getting smaller and smaller. The tracks on this album were produced by the Open University in collaboration with the British Council. They form part of Darwin Now, a global initiative celebrating the life and work of Charles Darwin and the impact his ideas about evolution continue to have on today's world. © The British Council 2009.