

**Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences
 BETH504 Diversity, Culture, and Values
 Summer 2009**

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Class Meetings: July 6-24, 2009, 9:00 a.m.-noon

Course Description:

Catalog Description: This required course will examine the challenge of diverse cultural perspectives and their influence on bioethics. The course will focus on social differences—such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and class—and consider the role of complex social contexts in the formation of values. Students will explore social construction of identity, embodiment, and community in relating to bioethics and issues related to reproduction, disease, and normalcy.

Summer 2009 Focus: The summer 2009 course focuses on genetics, race, and gender. In particular, the Human Genome Project (and its Human Diversity Project), cloning, and stem cell research and therapies form the scientific backdrop for considering how social locations, such as gender, race, and religion, influence perspectives on bioethics and healing.

Course Teaching-Learning Objectives

1. Students will understand the origins of culturally diverse values.
2. Students will know the importance of empathetic, sensitive response to different ethical perspectives in relationships dedicated to healing/care-giving and medicine, science, and research, and public policy debate.
3. Students will be aware of power dynamics related to social location and social differences, which related to authority, control, and agency in decision-making.
4. Teaching and learning concentrate on central questions to focus course processes and outcomes:

- What is the social location or cultural context of the people about whom the author writes?
- What values are explicit or implicit in the author’s perspective? What does the author value?
- What claims does the author make about power, authority, and agency?
- What do we learn from the author about how to communicate and engage others about bioethics?

Required Texts

Prograis, Lawrence, Jr., and Edmund D. Pellegrino, ed. *African American Bioethics: Culture, Race, and Identity*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004.

Ruse, Michael, and Christopher A. Pynes. *The Stem Cell Controversy: Debating the Issues*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Press, 2006.

Wolf, Susan M. *Feminism and Bioethics: Beyond Reproduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Course Schedule: July 6-24, 2009

July 6, Monday

Introduction to the course and assignments

Human Genome Project, Human Diversity Project, African American Bioethics

July 7, Tuesday

Scavenger Hunt: Human Genome Project and the Human Genome Diversity Project

July 8, Wednesday

Reading: *African American Bioethics*, Introduction and Chapters 1-3

July 9, Thursday

Reading: *African American Bioethics*, Chapters 4-6

July 10, Friday

Reading: *African American Bioethics*, Chapters 7-8 and Afterword

Cloning and Feminist Bioethics

July 13, Monday

Scavenger Hunt: Reproductive and Therapeutic Cloning

July 14, Tuesday

Reading: *Feminism and Bioethics*, Introduction, Chapters 1-4 (Chapter 5 recommended)

July 15, Wednesday

Reading: *Feminism and Bioethics*, Chapters 6-9

July 16, Thursday

Reading: *Feminism and Bioethics*, Chapters 9-12

July 17, Friday—ONLINE

Threaded discussion: Women, Race, Class, and Cloning

Post: Perspectives Paper by midnight

Stem Cell Research and Religious Issues

July 20, Monday—ONLINE

Scavenger Hunt: Stem Cell Research and Cloning

Reading: *The Stem Cell Controversy*, Chapters Part 1 OR Part 2 (as assigned by group)

July 21, Tuesday

Reading: *The Stem Cell Controversy*, Selections from Part 3

July 22, Wednesday

Reading: *The Stem Cell Controversy*, Selections from Part 4

July 23, Thursday

Reading: *The Stem Cell Controversy*, Selections from Part 5

July 24, Friday--ONLINE

Post: Analytical Paper by midnight

Blackboard

The course is enhanced by use of course management software called Blackboard. Students will be able to use Blackboard:

- To find course information (syllabi, assignments, events, etc.),
- To post course assignments,
- To provide group feedback on assignments,
- To locate class plans prior to class, and
- To engage in threaded discussions.

Course Requirements

1. **Class participation** is expected of each student. Class participation means that each student must attend class (on campus and online) and engage in discussions, presentations, and projects. Serious students are required to attempt all reading assignments, and the instructor expects that advanced students are capable of completing all reading and written assignments. This does not mean that students fully understand all material, but that they are familiar with the texts and know which passages are puzzling. Class participation allows students to raise questions and to achieve some understanding of course content. Good class participation in a seminar course includes active listening to and support for other students. All group project and presentations, as well as online discussions and activities, affect the class participation grade. At the end of the semester, students assess the quality of their class participation and assign themselves a letter grade using a self-evaluation worksheet, which makes explicit the criteria for good class participation. The instructor also assigns a class participation grade. The **Class Participation Self-Evaluation Work Sheet** (attached to the syllabus) is **due no later than Thursday, July 23**.

2. **Scavenger Hunts** are in class or online group projects, which constitute part of the class participation grade. Scavenger hunts are designed to enhance student research skills in the sciences, and they function to provide a common body of knowledge to inform weekly discussions and projects. The scavenger hunts require both library and online research and entail the habit of discerning what constitutes reliable sources of information, as well as the ability to digest, organize, and communicate scientific and medical materials.
3. **Discussion Leadership** is part of class participation. In small groups, students are responsible for leading class discussion of reading assignments. The purpose of the assignment is to generate analytical discussions of shared readings from required texts. Leaders should refer to questions listed in the textbox under course learning objectives as a guide, but should generate specific questions and close readings to provide deep analysis. Discussion should include questions that puzzle the group, not merely questions that can be answered easily. [The class writing handout includes question forms that may be useful.]
4. The **Perspectives Paper** is a short paper of 5-7 pages (double-spaced, one-inch margins). Select the HGP Diversity Project, reproductive cloning, OR therapeutic cloning as the focus of the paper, and then discuss the scientific focus from the perspectives of one author in the *African American Bioethics* collection AND one author in the *Feminism and Bioethics* book (which means that you select just two articles as the perspectives for discussion). The paper must include four sections: (a) one section defining the HGP Diversity Project, (b) one section discussing the Diversity Project from a particular African American Perspective and naming the particular ethical issues, (c) one section discussing the Diversity Project from a particular feminist perspective and naming the particular ethical issues, and (d) a concluding section drawing conclusions about power, authority, and doctor-patient relationships. [Use the writing handout to develop and format the paper. Use footnotes or endnotes to document sources.] **The Perspectives Paper is due no later than midnight on Friday, July 17.**
5. The **Analytical Paper** is a paper of 8-12 pages (double-spaced, one-inch margins). Select one essay from chapters presented during the final week of class (from *The Stem Cell Controversy*) and write an analysis of the essay from the perspectives of gender, race, and religion (be selective about specific perspectives rather than writing generally). Keep in mind issues of social location, authority, and power in the analysis. Interpret the construction of values for each perspective. When are the values similar, but how are the values different? How do diverse values and perspectives generate particular bioethics issues? How does cultural diversity or social location affect the doctor-patient relationship? [Use the writing handout to develop and format the paper. Use footnotes or endnotes to document sources.] **The Analytical Paper is due no later than midnight on Friday, July 24.**

Inclusive Language

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons expresses values and impacts ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially constructed categories, and changing language is part of engaging and constructing ethics.

Grading

Students in consultation with the instructors determine how grading will be assessed. At the end of the term, students receive a letter grade in accordance with policies and description outlined in the current seminary catalog.

Class Participation		_____ %
Self-evaluation	_____ %	
Professor Evaluation	_____ %	
Written Assignments		_____ %
Analytical Paper	_____ %	

Submission of late papers, late postings on Blackboard, and tardiness on presentation days result in a grade no higher than C.

Tools for Online Learning

Netiquette

- Students should "listen" to others respectfully and demonstrate attention to the required content and direction of the online conversation.
- Because online learning is devoid of physical cues that often support communication, students should strive to utilize language that is thoughtful, respectful, and collegial when communicating with fellow students.
- Direct comments to fellow students rather than to the professor.
- Try to understand other people's behavior and perspectives rather than simply criticizing them. Critique and discussion depend on the effort to understand another's point well.
- Sometimes students may disagree with one another, which is perfectly acceptable and often enhances learning, but strive to criticize ideas in a respectful and constructive manner. Never criticize an individual.
- Avoid stereotypes and humor that are disparaging of others.
- Intervene politely if someone is being disrespectful or unfair to others.
- Use language, spelling and grammar that are appropriate to a graduate theological educational setting. Do not use slang or Internet shorthand, and remember to proofread work prior to posting it for the class to read.

Academic Quality

What are the characteristics of good online contributions? Most important is participation—remember that threaded discussions are part of “class meetings.” To miss a threaded discussion is the same as skipping a class. Below are listed four sets of characteristics. The first level represents excellent work and the fourth level represents poor quality.

Level 1

- Offers part of the discussion, but leaves room for others to provide information and insights.
- Provides concrete examples (including page numbers) from the readings to support postings
- Uses quotations correctly, but only when appropriate
- Integrates prior readings in postings
- Writes coherent and detailed postings ranging from a short paragraph to two paragraphs
- Integrates personal observations and knowledge (but not personal narratives or off-the-cuff opinions) in an accurate and highly insightful way
- Presents new observations
- Constructively responds to classmates postings
- Participates in all forum discussions
- Organizes postings to be very clear and presented in a logical sequence
- Employs word choice and sentence structure are suitable for graduate level work

Level 2

- Offers part of the discussion, but leaves room for others to provide information and insights
- Provides some examples from the readings to support postings
- Uses quotations correctly, but sometimes unnecessarily
- Integrates some personal observations and knowledge
- Writes relevant and generally knowledgeable postings ranging from a short paragraph to two paragraphs
- Presents new observations
- Constructively responds to classmates postings
- Participates in all forum discussions
- Organizes postings to be clear and presented in a logical sequence
- Employs word choice and sentence structure suitable for graduate level work

Level 3

- Forgets to be part of a discussion and either provides all or none of the answer to questions

- Alludes to the readings to support postings
- Uses quotations correctly, but far too frequently
- Integrates personal observations and knowledge in a cursory manner and sometimes resorts to personal narrative
- Writes postings on topic, but sometimes does not achieve demonstration of relevance or knowledge and sometimes lists ideas rather than discussing ideas
- Does not present new observations
- Constructively responds to classmates postings
- Participates in most module discussions
- Organizes postings to be unclear and not presented in a logical sequence
- Employs word choice and sentence structure are not suitable for graduate level work

Level 4

- Does not participate in threaded discussions or participates minimally
- Alludes to the readings to support postings
- Resorts to quotations rather than discussion
- Does not integrate personal observations or knowledge or resorts to personal narrative
- Writes postings that do not respond to the forum questions, lists ideas in incomplete sentences
- Does not present new observations
- Responds in a cursory manner to classmates postings
- Participates in fewer than half of the discussions
- Organizes posts to be unclear and not presented in a logical sequence
- Word choice and sentence structure are not suitable for undergraduate level work

Criteria for Evaluating Course Work

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, participate in an online discussion, or create an original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work:

1. ***Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of texts and resources.*** Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and/or from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.
2. ***Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions.*** Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that the evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Adherence to clear critical thinking, relevant and accurate evidence, and logical organization constitute sound arguments. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist readers in following the plot or main point.
3. ***Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas.*** Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly repeating what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.
4. ***Flawless grammar, spelling, and form.*** Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.

Student Responsibilities

Students must abide by policies established for students at Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences. Pay special attention to the policies on plagiarism and class attendance. The instructor reserves the option to fail a student for a single instance of plagiarism. The professor reserves the option to fail a student strictly for habitual failure to attend class or for habitual tardiness.

Students are invited to communicate with the instructor. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of illness, if you have emergency information to share with the instructor, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. Please see the instructor for any assistance with your learning and class attendance.

Professors' Responsibilities

My job is to teach with integrity the scholarship representative of my field, to see that students learn as much as possible, and to create a comfortable environment for learning. These goals cannot be accomplished without genuine attention to the unique strengths, experiences, and expectations that both the professor and students bring to the classroom. My goal is to provide encouragement and support for your learning. Sometimes flexible procedures and learning options are necessary to facilitate the kind of teaching and learning that should occur. I am anxious to hear what energizes you, what disappoints you, where you disagree, and what helps you learn. PLEASE SEE ME IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR SPECIFIC NEEDS.

Learning-Disabling Conditions

Students with diagnosed learning or physical disabilities that may affect learning are encouraged to take advantage of resources offered by KCUMB. Please follow procedures and policies outlined by KCUMB.

Class Participation Self-Evaluation Work Sheet
Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences
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Nancy R. Howell

Name: _____ **Course: BETH504 Diversity, Culture, and Bioethics**

Circle the number that best describes your class participation in each category if 1 is excellent, 2 is very good, 3 is average, 4 is satisfactory, and 5 is poor.

Preparation

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| I conscientiously attempted all reading assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I reflected seriously on reading assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I worked to bring depth to comments and questions by preparing more than superficially for class. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I prepared written and online assignments on time and when they syllabus required them. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I checked spelling, grammar, quotations, and footnotes/endnotes before submitting papers. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Class

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| I attended class weekly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I always attended class on time. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I contributed to class discussions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| When I talked in class, I remained focused on the topic of class discussion. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I listened respectfully to comments and questions raised by other students. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I brought my questions to class or to the professor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I expressed disagreement constructively. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I shared my responsibilities for successful class discussions. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I supported other students' efforts in class discussions or assignments. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I contributed to online discussions and commented constructively on other students' work. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Attitude

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| I remained involved and engaged in the course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I was constructive in relationships with others. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I put extra effort into the course—such as study groups/partners, library research, etc. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I contributed my share of the work in collaborative writing or projects. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I made appointments with the professor when I needed assistance or wanted to discuss the course. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| I took responsibility for my learning. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| My understanding of bioethics has grown. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

I assign myself the following letter grade: _____
(Enter A, B+, B, C, or F in the blank.)

Please submit any additional reflection on class participation that should affect your grade in writing on the back of this page. This work sheet is intended to assist you in thinking about the quality of your class participation. Any interpretations, additions, or connections of criteria should be included in your additional reflections.