

HUMAN BIOLOGY B300 – Human Dilemmas

Spring 2012

TR 11:15 – 12:30

Ballantine Hall 103



HUMAN BIOLOGY PROGRAM OFFICE:

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INSTRUCTORS:		
Dr. Sarah D. Phillips Student Building 162 855-0216 sadphill@indiana.edu Office hours: Monday 1:30-3:30 and by appointment	Dr. Phillip L. Quirk Sycamore Hall 043 855-8554 pquirk@indiana.edu Office Hours: Open door policy (appointments are encouraged)	Sara Minard Sycamore Hall 039 sminard@indiana.edu Office hours: TBA

This course introduces the social and ethical dimensions of human biology, multidisciplinary perspectives on human biological experience, and the construction of scientific knowledge through in-depth consideration of human death and disability. Building on the approach of the first-year core course in Human Biology, we will use a collaborative, case-based method to explore the operationalization of scientific concepts, the effective communication of evidence, interpretation, and claims, and the logic of scientific argumentation. We will also work together to build and nurture our Human Biology community and deepen our commitment to civic engagement.

Learning goals

- To evaluate the operationalization of scientific concepts and to analyze the implications of operational definitions for scientific knowledge
- To improve skills in the communication of scientific information
- To recognize, explain, and construct models of human biological experience that integrate the knowledge and concepts of multiple scientific fields
- To evaluate competing positions in scientific debates about the nature, causes, and consequences of death and disability, to recognize the role of politics in those debates, and to use evidence-based arguments to develop and defend your own position
- To develop a meaningful understanding of how civic engagement enhances learning

Texts:

There is no text for this course. Readings and other materials for this course will be distributed in class or will be made available via Oncourse.

Computers:

One goal of the Human Biology program is to foster scientific literacy. Toward that end, we will utilize the internet in class to access information and engage in general research activities. To facilitate this, laptop computers will occasionally be used in class. Students are encouraged to bring their own computers to class if they can. While this is not required, it may make some of the team exercises more efficient by allowing simultaneous internet use by more than one team member. So that you do not need to bring your computer to every class period, we will alert you ahead of time on days where computers will be used.

Misuse: The use of laptop computers in class is encouraged; their misuse is not. If you bring a laptop or smartphone to class with you please refrain from surfing, “facebooking,” or engaging in any other computing activities that are not consistent with approved uses of computers in class. While some students view it as their “right” to use computers in any way they see fit, the fact is surfing in a classroom environment is distracting to other students. Students who do not abide by this policy may be asked to leave the classroom. Our policy is consistent with policy outlined in the *IU Code of student, rights, responsibilities, and conduct*.

<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/personal/index.shtml>

Understand through engagement:

You will attach meaning to your learning by engaging the community you live in to gain a deeper understanding of course content in an applied setting. This experience will help contextualize your work and provide a rich backdrop against which to begin the process of intentionally assessing your core values and beliefs. All students will complete an assigned community engagement experience. Failure to complete this activity will adversely affect your course grade.

Grading

All assignments and exams must be completed to receive a grade in this course. Late assignments will be accepted only with **advance** permission. In that event, for each day an assignment is late, 10% of the total points will be deducted from the score. Your final grade in the course will be assigned based upon the total number of points earned on a variety of activities including collaborative writing assignments, exams, readiness assessment checks, in-class exercises, your e-portfolio, and your overall level of participation in the class. The anticipated point breakdown is provided below.

Collaborative writing assignments	120 points
Exams (2)	200 points
Readiness assessment checks	300 points
In-class exercises	150 points
E-Portfolio	100 points
Community engagement	100 points
Attendance and participation	50 points
Total	1020 points

Collaborative writing assignments

You will work with your team on three writing assignments during the semester: one in Module 1, one in Module 2, and a third one that will be submitted as part of your final exam. You will have an opportunity to complete some of the work on each assignment during class, but it is expected that you will complete most of each assignment with your team as homework outside of the classroom environment. You will work with your team to assign roles for contributing to the assignment (e.g., writing initial draft, editing, preparing graphics); each team member's contributions will be evaluated by the other team members and the evaluation will contribute to your grade on the assignment.

Exams

There will be two exams, the first of which covers Module 1 and the second of which covers Module 2. The contents of each exam will be based on the assigned readings, RACs, and homework assignments. Each exam will be completed twice; once on your own and once with your team. Your final grade on each exam will be a composite of your individual and team scores. The final exam will include an additional written component to be turned at the time of the final exam.

Readiness assessment checks (RACs)

Throughout the semester you will be assigned homework and readings that should be completed **prior** to the class session specified on the module schedules. It is essential that everyone completes these assignments so that they can effectively participate in team activities and class discussions. To encourage this, we will regularly assess your understanding of those materials using RACs. The RACs will take the form of multiple-choice quizzes that are completed individually and in teams. Your grade on each RAC will be a composite of your individual and team scores.

In-class exercises

Your teams will complete brief exercises and assignments in class on a regular basis. Many of the assignments will require that your team make a decision related to a case, others will require that your team work together to debate an issue or develop a written or visual description of a biological process or social model. Please note that team members who are absent on the day an in-class exercise is submitted will receive a 0 for that exercise.

E-portfolio

This semester you will use your e-portfolio as a platform to highlight your investigations of multidisciplinary perspectives on human biological experience and community engagement. You will reflect on the value of applying different perspectives to the same problem and on how those perspectives relate to your area of concentration. You will document your ability to argue respectfully for a specific position on a contentious issue. You will also investigate connections between the material you are learning in your courses and issues of concern to the local or global community. The best e-portfolios will be purposeful, focused, and original.

Attendance and participation

To achieve the course learning goals, we will use a team-based approach in which you will collaborate extensively in (and occasionally out) of class to complete assignments and activities that will enhance your interest and understanding of significant human dilemmas facing our population. Because of the collaborative nature of the course, attendance and participation in class are mandatory and we have attached stiff penalties to course absences. If you miss more than two classes without a documented,

University-sanctioned excuse, we will deduct 10 points for each additional absence. In addition, as noted above, you will not receive any points associated with in-class team assignments if you are not in class the day they are submitted. Please be aware that, although many team assignments will be completed during class sessions, your team may have to meet outside of class to complete some activities or assignments. Students who are unwilling to arrange for participation in team activities outside of class will be subject to administrative actions as deemed necessary by the instructors. Meaningful participation in team activities requires active participation. Teams are NOT required to include names of non-participating team members on assignments.

Plagiarism and academic misconduct

Students who present another writer's words as their own or who neglect to cite proper bibliographic information when referring to material published on-line, in reference books, or in a journal or book of any kind are subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined by Indiana University's *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct* (<http://www.iu.edu/~code/code/responsibilities/academic/index.shtml>).

With the availability of information on the Internet, plagiarism is becoming increasingly problematic on college campuses. Part of the issue seems to arise from a lack of clear understanding about what constitutes plagiarism. If you are at all unclear about what plagiarism is or how it is defined in the context of academic work, please consult with your instructors prior to turning in work that may violate plagiarism guidelines. IU also offers online tutorials designed to help you understand plagiarism and how to avoid it: <http://www.indiana.edu/~libinstr/Tutorial/Citing/citing1.html>.

Schedule

Human dilemmas are complex by nature. Thus, flexibility is required to provide a rich learning experience that allows for in-depth exploration of each topic. We will follow the general schedule of topic modules outlined below. More detailed schedules will be distributed for each module. Some specific activities and deadlines may change as the semester progresses. However, we appreciate that students have a variety of academic and personal commitments so the exam dates and collaborative writing due dates will not change.

Dates	Module	Due dates	Exam dates
Jan 10 – Mar 6	Disease and disability	Team Assignment 1 Tuesday, February 21 st	Exam 1, Tuesday Mar 6
Mar 8 – Apr 26	Death and Dying	Team Assignment 2 Thursday, Apr 12 th Team Assignment 3 Thursday, May 3 rd at the final exam	Exam 2 Thurs., May 3 2:45 p.m.-4:45 p.m.
Mar 10-18	Spring break		
	E-portfolio	Monday, April 23 th by 11:55pm.	