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NURS 582a
Spring 2014



PHG521/NURS582/ANTH574
Culture, Society and Genomic
Spring 2014

Day and Time: Monday 1:30 - 4:20 pm

Time:

Location: SOCC 350

Instructor: Barbara Bums McGrath, RN, PhD
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Office Hours: By appt.

Prerequisites: none

Credits: 3

Course Description

The results of dramatic advances in human genetics research are making their way from the laboratory through the media and the clinic into the lives of everyday people. Debate about the implications for society and for public health policy is taking place among researchers, clinicians, ethicists, and concerned citizens. This course will bring a social science perspective to the dialogue by exploring the ways social and behavior research is used to frame science and biotechnology and thus contributes to the creation of meaning. Topics include: the place of science in our society; the post modern body in a genomic era; stigma; genetic testing and prenatal diagnosis; medicalization of the family; quality of life and disability; and the role of the media in science discourse. Readings for each topic will cover both the concept and accompanying research studies that are used to examine it.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- explain the historical, cultural and social context of science in society as it relates to the application of modern biotechnology in the provision of health care
- demonstrate understanding of key social science concepts used in the study of science and apply them in analysis of the social implications of the "new genetics"
- identify political and social forces that influence illness definition, behavior, and treatment
- analyze social response toward genetic research and genetic testing by utilizing historical and cross-cultural examples as case studies
- analyze the role of media in influencing attitudes toward science generally and genetics specifically

Course requirements

This course is designed as a graduate seminar, which requires active participation by everyone. It is expected that students will read and be prepared to discuss the material before each class. In addition to class discussions, there are a several specific assignments:

1. Each week collect and bring to class an example of a popular press representation of anything having to do with genes. This can be a cartoon about cloning, an editorial about prenatal testing, a report on a medical break-thru resulting from genetic research, and so forth. Anything published is okay, except material from peer reviewed scientific journals. You will briefly describe how the media is framing the issue and what message you believe is being conveyed (directly or indirectly) to the public. **Total 7 media examples, starting week 2.**

2. There is one written paper. The Einsiedel article we read the second week (*The challenges of translating genomic knowledge*) suggests it is useful to look to three sets of actors and institutions when examining the translation of genomic knowledge. These are: science, the media, and the publics. Each of these include institutions and people within them (stakeholders). Use either the film, "Rare" as your text to illustrate this process of translation, or choose another example of science entering the popular realm for you analysis. You may wish to include examples of the use of metaphor to convey complex meaning. Your paper should be 4-5 pages in length, double spaced, in current APA format. **Due date: May 5.**

3. We will do several "free writes" throughout the quarter based on readings and discussions. These will not be graded, but are required as an aspect of participation.

4. As part of a small group, each of you will have an opportunity to lead a class discussion on an agreed upon topic. There is a written and oral component to this assignment. More details will be coming. The dates for these classes are **May 12, May 19, June 2.**

Grading and due dates

Assignment	Due Dates	Grading
Popular media	Weekly x 7	25%
Seminar leader	Weeks 7, 8, 10	50%
Written paper	Week 6	25%
Participation	Weekly	Required, but not graded



Date Day Details

Other **Final papers (<https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/894077/assignments/2435738>)**