

## **BIOL 4801: Bioethics Advanced Reading Course (BARC)**

Fall 2015 (1 credit)

**Pre-requisite:** BARC, the companion course to BIOL 4650 Bioethics, may be taken either **concurrent with or after** BIOL 4650.

**Time/Location:** Mondays 3:05–3:55 pm / L1205 ES&T

### **Instructor:**

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Office Hours: By appointment

**Course summary:** Students will read a text with bioethical implications and use the fundamentals of ethics to discuss and come to a deeper appreciation of bioethical decision-making. Students will practice concepts learned in BIOL 4650 (Bioethics) to explore relevant scientific and ethics literature with the aim of understanding the ethical implications of the assigned reading, examining multiple ethical positions, and framing an ethical argument in both speech and writing. This course will be structured in the format of a humanities seminar, where effective participation and the ability to provide constructive and educated criticism of ideas are essential. During this course, students will

- develop oral discussion skills
- practice expressing a point of view and backing that point of view with evidence
- make connections between scientific knowledge and the ethics surrounding that knowledge
- write about science and ethics from multiple perspectives.

**Format:** Because this is a discussion-based course, attendance and active participation are required. Students must provide appropriate documentation for any absence to be excused. Examples of excusable absences include documented illness, death in the family, or accident. If a student knows that he or she will be absent from a class, he or she must let the instructor know ahead of time and provide documentation. Each unexcused absence will lower the final grade by 10%.

**Text:** Medical Apartheid by Harriet A. Washington, Anchor Books (ISBN 978-0-7679-1547-2)  
This book was written in 2006 and won numerous awards, including the National book critic circle award.

### **Assessment:**

Discussion – participation	20%
Discussion – facilitation	15%
Presentation of the related topic	25%
Research Paper – Formulation a Research Question	5%
Research Paper – Annotated Bibliography	5%
Research Paper – Draft	5%
Research Paper – Final	25%

**Discussion Facilitation** Students will co-facilitate peer discussion with another student at least once during the semester. Discussion facilitators are responsible for organizing 40-45 minutes of class time around the assigned reading for that day. Facilitators should seek instructor approval for their class plan by the Thursday before they lead class. Various discussion-leading styles will be modeled by the

instructors early in the semester, and facilitators are encouraged to bring creative but effective approaches to class, with the goal of allowing all class members to participate substantively during each class meeting. After facilitating discussion, facilitators will evaluate their own and their co-facilitators' contribution to and effective leadership of the class discussion time, and these peer-evaluations may be used to adjust discussion facilitation grades.

For each discussion that you lead, you'll evaluate your own and your co-facilitators' contributions to the discussion. Reflect on things well done and things that could use improvement, including but not limited to: idea generation, focus on ethics, organizational abilities/efforts, attention to ideas and references from the reading, outside research, ability to collaborate, ability to meet deadlines, depth of thought, etc. On t2, complete Reflection on Discussion Facilitation within 1 week of leading discussion. All responses are anonymous to classmates and it is a violation of the Georgia Tech honor code to discuss your reflections on your peers with others.

**Discussion Participation** is an integral part of this course. All students are expected to contribute verbally and substantively to each discussion, by asking questions, answering questions, offering ideas, opinions, and critiques of student presentation—backing their points with evidence from the reading or from outside sources. Readings must be carefully reviewed before class, and students will complete a short reading-related writing assignment before class.

**Presentation of the related topics in front of the class** is anticipated to be a broad perspective on an ethical question found in the book. This is a 15-20 minute presentation, preferably with power-point slides, where each student has a chance to find a parallel story in some other segment of our society and/or world and make a reflection on the topic. Presentation guidelines will be discussed in the class. These presentations will be also scored by the peers.

**Annotated Bibliography:** Each student will complete a search of the Bioethics and scientific literature to compile sources appropriate for their proposed research topic. The research topic must be related to the ethics and science of one or more aspects of the reading. For each article, the literature review should include the full citation and a short summary of how the article applies to the student's proposed research topic. Instructors will provide feedback that should be taken into account to develop the Research Paper. A Research Guide with links to ethics research resources is linked from t2. Further resources are available at <http://libguides.gatech.edu/biol4801ethics/biol4801ethicsintro>.

**Research Paper:** Each student will prepare a research paper that critically reviews the science and ethics of one or more aspects of the reading and include appropriate citations from both scientific and ethics sources. Students may use ideas discussed in class but the paper is a single-authored assignment. Instructor feedback from the draft version should be incorporated into the final paper. Rubric is at the end of this syllabus.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes cheating, lying about course matters, plagiarism, or helping others commit a violation of the Honor Code. Students are reminded of the obligations and expectations associated with the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct, available online at [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu). While students will collaborate in discussion of ideas, each student is expected to write his or her own pre-class assignments and research paper. Plagiarism includes reprinting the words of others without both the use of quotation marks and citation, or reproducing the published ideas of others without appropriate rephrasing, citation and attribution. If this is unclear, please ask your instructor for help.

**Learning Accommodations:** If needed, we will make classroom accommodations for students with disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>

**Schedule – Subject to revision and discussion leader sign-up.**

Week	Date	What's due	Discussion Leader	Topic
1	8/17	Read Syllabus Bioethics Review.pdf	MB	Course overview BioEthics Overview How to prepare for a discussion How to lead a discussion
2	8/24	Ch 1		Medical exploitation
3	8/31	Ch 2-3		Medical experimentation
4	9/7	<i>Labor Day Holiday-No Class</i>	NA	NA
5	9/14	Ch 4-5		Emancipation?
6	9/21	Ch 6-7		Tuskegee trial and beyond
7	9/28	Ch 8-9		Eugenics and race
8	10/5	<b>Literature Review due</b>	Presentation	
9	10/12	<i>Fall recess-No class</i>	NA	NA
10	10/19	Ch 10-11		Treatment of prisoners
11	10/26	Ch 12-13		Genetic perdition
12	11/2	Ch 14		Age of technology
13	11/9	<b>Draft Research Paper due</b>		Peer-review in class
14	11/16	Ch 15		Bioterrorism
15	11/23	Epilogue	Presentation	
16	11/30	<b>Research Paper due</b>		The Big Picture