

EEEBW4321
HUMAN NATURE: DNA, RACE & IDENTITY:
OUR BODIES, OUR SELVES?
Spring and Fall Semesters
Wednesdays, 2:10-4pm
Morningside Campus, Columbia University

Faculty:

Marya Pollack, MD MPH, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry
pollack@nyspi.columbia.edu

Robert Pollack, PhD, Professor of Biology
pollack@columbia.edu

Guest Faculty Lecturers:

Dean Marcia Sells, JD (School of the Arts)
Pilar Jennings, PhD (Union Theological Seminary)

Description of the course:

This 4 point seminar on Human Identity is taught from the perspective of four different disciplines; Law, Religion, Science, and Medicine. EEEB W4321 Human Nature fulfills requirements for majors in the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, Medicine, Literature, and Society (MLS) offered by the Institute in Comparative Literature and the major and concentration in Sustainable Development offered by the Earth Institute and cross-listed with the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race. In addition, it counts as an elective for students in Biology, Engineering, and Bioethics. Most recently it has been accepted as a four week elective for fourth year medical students during the months of February and October.

The course focuses on human identity, beginning with the individual over the lifespan and progressing to communal and global viewpoints using a framework of perspectives from biology, genetics, medicine, public health, psychiatry, religion and the law. W4321 evolved from a Columbia College Core Capstone course INSM4321 in 2009 which developed initially from a Ford Foundation grant to the Center for the Study of Science and Religion for “A Difficult Dialogues Course: ‘Human Nature.’”

As a graduate level course, it is open to interested undergraduates and graduate students including those from the Medical Center campus.

Columbia University is dedicated to facilitating equal access for students with disabilities. Please let one of the instructors know in advance through the Office of Disability Services if you need special accommodations because of a disability.

Format:

Each class will usually be a presentation by students of the readings, and a discussion led by the instructors, with ample opportunity for the whole class to participate in an open and non-judgmental discourse of the topic at hand. Laptops are to be kept closed during class unless prior arrangements are made for a special accommodation. Please keep all cell phones on vibrate. A 5-10 minute break will be held after the first hour. Please notify the instructors in advance if you must miss a class.

Grading will be based on class participation (20%); grades from two short 5 page response papers during the semester based on assigned readings (20% each, 40% total); and a final paper of 8-10 pages due at the end of the term (40%). All papers are expected to be handed in **on time**.

Format for Response Papers:

Students will be asked to write two short papers (double spaced, 12 point font) during the course of the semester. Each paper should respond to a specific article, or set of articles relating to one subject, that appears on the reading list. References should be made within the paper; eg. (Johnson, 45). Papers should begin with a thesis statement which the rest of the paper will illustrate, develop, or demonstrate on the basis of the texts.

Example of a thesis statement: **People who suffer physical and/or mental disabilities are due the same respect, consideration, and civil rights as fully abled individuals.**

Format for Final Papers:

Final papers of the semester should reflect a more in depth perspective of the topics covered in class. For this paper we ask you to describe how the class has changed you. **No late papers please.**

Please note recommended books on reserve are located in Butler Library, and that additional web sites and optional multidisciplinary events are found on the **New Courseworks** website.

Fourth Year Medical Students:

Please refer to the Columbia University's School of Physicians and Surgeons' Elective Catalog at <http://vesta.cumc.columbia.edu/ps/electives/>. The course is currently listed under NYPH: MDN28P, with a link to the course description and format. Please also refer to the Courseworks site for further information or email the Director, Dr. Marya Pollack at pollack@nyspi.columbia.edu.