

## **BIOL 4801: Bioethics Advanced Reading Course**

Fall 2013

1 credit hour

Pre-requisite: BIOL 4650 Bioethics must be taken prior to or concurrent with Bioethics Advanced Reading Course.

Time/Location: TBA

Instructors: Dr. Chrissy Spencer  
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**Course summary:** Students of Bioethics will read a nonfiction 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 to understand the ethical implications of the assigned reading, examine multiple ethical positions, and frame 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:** Skloot, R. 2010. The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks. Crown Publishing, New York.

### **Assessment:**

Discussion – participation	25%
Discussion – leading	15%
Pre-class writings	10%
Research Paper – Literature Review	10%
Research Paper – Draft	15%
Research Paper – Final	25%

**Discussions** in class will be student-led and all students are expected to contribute to each discussion. Readings must be carefully reviewed before class, and students will complete a short reading-related writing assignment each week before class. Students will be assigned to lead discussion at least once during the semester. Discussion leaders will seek instructor approval for their class plan at least 36 hours before class. Various discussion-leading styles will be modeled by the instructors early in the semester.

**Pre-class writing** prompts and assignments will be available on the Friday before each class as an Assignment on t2, and the assignment is due by 11:55 pm the day before each class meeting.

**Annotated Bibliography:** Each student will complete a search of the Bioethics and scientific literature to compile sources appropriate for their proposed research topic. For each article, the annotated bibliography 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.

**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. Guidelines and rubric will be provided.

**Class participation** will be judged by the extent to which each student participates in class discussions (by asking questions, answering questions, offering ideas, opinions, and critiques of student presentations). We expect to hear you ask a question or offer a comment at least once every class.

**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 ADAPTS office (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>).

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

Week	Date	What's due	Discussion Leader	Topic
1	8/23	Read Syllabus Bioethics Review.pdf	CS and SK	Course overview How to prepare for a discussion How to lead a discussion
2	8/30	A few words about this book; Prologue; Deborah's voice; Chapters 1-2	CS	
3	9/6	Chapters 3-5		
4	9/13	Chapters 6-8		
5	9/20	Chapters 9-11		
6	9/27	Chapters 12–15		
7	10/4	Chapters 16–19		
8	10/11	Chapters 20–22		
9	10/18	Chapters 23–25 <b>Annotated Bibliography due</b>		
10	10/25	Chapters 26–28		
11	11/1	Chapters 29–31		
12	11/8	Chapters 31–34		
13	11/13	<b>Draft Research Paper due</b>		Peer-review in class
14	11/22	Chapters 35–38; Where are they now; Afterward		
15	11/29	<i>Thanksgiving Holiday</i>		
16	12/6	<b>Research Paper due</b>		The Big Picture