

COMPARATIVE STUDIES 204: SCIENCE AND LITERATURE

GENOMIC NARRATIVES

Winter 2006 | MW 1:30 – 3:18 p.m.

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Office hours: M/W 12 – 1, and by appointment
* Email me to schedule phone or IM meetings
during or outside of office hours

In this class, we will consider a selection of texts that are concerned with the genomic sciences. We will analyze the representation of genetic and genomic scientific projects in popular fiction, science fiction, film, legal texts, and essays. As we locate these texts in specific historical, national, political, and cultural contexts, we will consider how these texts have shaped public perceptions of genetic and genomic research practices. Throughout the course, we will ask what claims we make through genomic narratives, and what claims these narratives make on us. We will also examine the ways in which emergent genomic research practices have the potential to both affirm and disrupt narratives about heritage and collective identity.

What I expect of class members:

- ★ Engaged participation (speaking *and* listening) in class discussion
- ★ Employment of critical thinking skills and a willingness to interrogate familiar ideas, terms, and practices. We will develop these skills in reading, writing and discussion.
- ★ Thoughtful reading and consideration of course texts and authors' arguments
- ★ Collegial attitude
- ★ Presence in class (with cellphones, personal videogame & mp3 players turned off, newspapers set aside).

What I do not expect of class members:

- ★ Certainty before speaking
- ★ Mastery of texts
- ★ Competitive attitude
- ★ Passive consumption of others' contributions
- ★ Agreement with ideas or positions represented in course texts and discussions

Course Requirements

Participation (includes attendance and participation in class discussion): 20%

For the purpose of this class, **participation is defined as the practice of making productive, relevant contributions to class discussion while also listening to and respecting the contributions of others.** Talking a lot without engaging with the readings will not raise your participation grade; demonstrating your engagement with course texts and issues, with your fellow classmates, and practicing attentive listening to others will result in a strong participation grade.

In order to participate meaningfully in class discussion, you will need to **complete the reading(s) for each class before coming to class**. Expect the readings to challenge you. Many of the essays and books we will read are written for academic audiences, and will use terminology with which you may be unfamiliar. I expect you to notify me or raise questions in class if there are aspects of the reading that you do not understand. I will evaluate your engagement with the course texts through your participation in discussion and your in-class writing responses.

Because participation is integral to the success of our class, attendance is mandatory. For the purpose of this class, **“attendance” means coming to class on time and remaining in class for the duration of the class meeting**. You are allowed two unexcused absences (no questions asked). After that, each unexcused absence will result in the deduction of 5 points from your final participation grade.

In-class exercises: 15%

We will do exercises in class for credit on a weekly basis. These exercises (in-class writings, pop quizzes, small group activities) will help me assess how you are engaging the readings and the course topics.

Group facilitation of discussion: 15%

Once during the quarter, you will work with a small group to facilitate discussion about the readings assigned for the day. Your group will be responsible for presenting a brief oral synthesis of the assigned text(s). You will also be responsible for developing discussion questions to pose to the class, or for developing a collaborative learning activity for the class. Your group will be evaluated based upon the following criteria: your preparedness; evidence of your collaboration; the significance of your discussion to the course; the evaluation of your presentation by your peers; and a (brief) self-evaluation.

Midterm Take-Home Essay Exam: 20%

Two questions, essay format; you will be given an extensive list of questions from which you will choose two to answer.

Final essay & Proposal: Essay (8 pages): 25 % & Proposal: 5% = 30%

The essay will engage course texts (in other words, this is not a research paper) and will function as your final examination.

Accommodations

If you need accommodations based on the impact of an impairment or disability, please contact me privately as soon as possible. I will be happy to work with the office of Disability Services to coordinate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you want to contact the office of Disability Services, you can visit 150 Pomerene Hall or call 292-3307.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own, and/or the undocumented, unacknowledged use of quoted or paraphrased work by another person. In accordance with university policy, all cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Course Texts

This course has **five required texts** and a **course packet**. The texts are available at SBX. You may also want to look for the books online (used or new), or request them via OSU Libraries, OhioLINK, or the Columbus Metropolitan Library system.

- * H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*
- * Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*
- * Jenny Reardon, *Race to the Finish: Identity and Governance in the Age of Genomics*
- * Robin Cook, *Chromosome 6*
- * Octavia E. Butler, *Dawn*

Daily Schedule

Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and on Carmen.

Situating the course: topics, terms, and themes

- 1.4 W Introduction to the course
- 1.9 M Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*: 1-69
- 1.11 W Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*: 70-131
- 1.16 M Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: Class Cancelled

Eugenic Archives

- 1.18 W Online archives: Eugenics Archive [<http://www.eugenicsarchive.org>]
The Disability History Museum [<http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/>]
View clips from *Homo Sapiens 1900* in class
- 1.23 M Class cancelled – please use this time to meet with your facilitation group

Writing Back

- 1.25 W Group 1 Facilitates
Hopkins, *Of One Blood*: v – 86
- 1.30 M Group 2 Facilitates
Hopkins, *Of One Blood*: 87 - 193

Identity in the Genomic Age

- 2.1 W Group 3 Facilitates
Reardon, *Race to the Finish*: Chapters 1-3
- 2.6 M Group 4 Facilitates
Reardon, *Race to the Finish*: Chapters 5-7
- 2.8 W * Articles on genetic ancestry tracing from *Developing World Bioethics*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2003:
* Baylis, “Black as Me: Narrative Identity”
* Rotimi, “Genetic Ancestry Testing and the African Identity: A Double-Edged Sword?”
* Optional: Dula, et al. “The Ethical and Social Implications of Exploring

African American Genealogies”

[Access these articles via the Academic Search Premier electronic database, provided by OSU Libraries]

2.13 M **Take-home midterm due in my mailbox (Hagerty 451) by 4 p.m.**

Spectres of ‘bioslavery’: Anxieties about genes, personhood, and property

2.15 W * Mitchell, “\$ell: Body Wastes, Information, and Commodification” [Chapter available via OSU Libraries electronic reserve system]

2.20 M *X-Men* (film)
[Start reading *Chromosome 6* for Wed.]

2.22 W Group 5 Facilitates
Discuss *X-Men* and *Chromosome 6*: Through ch. 12

2.27 M Group 6 Facilitates
Cook, *Chromosome 6*: Ch. 13 – end.

3.1 W Group 7 Facilitates
Butler, *Dawn*: Parts I & II

3.6 M Group 8 Facilitates
Butler, *Dawn*: Parts III & IV

3.8 W Last day of class

3.13 M Final essay due in my mailbox (Hagerty 451) by 5 p.m.