

## Biology 830: Bioethics of HeLa Cells Summer 2017

**Instructor:** Dr. Kimberly A. Carlson  
Office: Bruner Hall of Science, Room 201D  
Phone: 308-865-1554 E-mail: [carlsonka1@unk.edu](mailto:carlsonka1@unk.edu)  
Contact: By email or M-F: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm central standard time (CST). I do not check email after 5:00 pm CST and rarely on weekends.

### Course Materials:

- Required Texts: *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- Announcements, quizzes, test, discussion boards, and position paper: All information for this class will be available on blackboard (<http://bb.unk.edu>).
- E-mail: All students must use their UNK email account so that I can reach them.

**Course Description:** HeLa cells are one of the oldest and most commonly used human cell line. Even though the utility of this cell line is vast and important, the history behind how the cells were isolated and used is a bioethical conundrum. Science, medicine, and technology have progressed significantly because of the use of HeLa cells and with this progress have come ethical questions. The intent of this course is to focus on the biological, medical, technological, and ethical issues surrounding HeLa cells.

### Course Objectives:

1. To understand HeLa cells and their uses.
2. To understand the ethical issues surrounding HeLa cells.
3. To be able to make an informed analysis of bioethical issues.
4. To critically discuss bioethical issues and scientific literature pertaining to HeLa cells in a group setting.

*Students will achieve these objectives through quizzes, discussion board, & a position paper.*

### Expectations:

Grades are based on participation and quality of discussion, weekly quizzes, and one writing assignment. There are no taped lectures for this course. Students must participate online for all discussion topics. The week runs from Monday through Sunday as listed in the syllabus.

### Grading Scheme:

	Points	Due Date
Discussion Board (16 @ 10 pts each)	160	Bi-weekly
Quizzes (7 @ 20 pts each)	140	Weekly
Position Paper (1 @ 100 pts each)	100	Monday, June 19 <sup>th</sup> by 8:00 am CST
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>400</b>	

**Grade assignment:** Grades will be assigned using the standard grading scale for the Department of Biology, as follows: A (93-100%), A- (90-92%), B+ (88-89%), B (83-87%), B- (80-82%), C+ (78-79%), C (73-77%), C- (70-72%), D+ (68-69%), D (63-67%), D- (60-62%), and F (below 60%). FYI, I do not round up grades. Therefore, if you have an 82.6%, you have earned a letter grade of a B-, not a B. Also, 1% = 4 points, not 1 point. Grade assignments are final unless there is a calculation error.

**Schedule:** This class is a graduate level class, therefore I assume that all of you have had a Biology course that covered introductory material at some point in your career. Each week we will be

discussing the information presented in several chapters of the Skloot book and a selected research article(s). This schedule is subject to change.

Week	Chapters & Discussion Boards	Quiz
#1 5/8-5/14	Skloot Book: Chapters 1-5 Research Article(s)	You should all introduce yourselves
#2 5/15-5/21	Skloot Book: Chapters 6-11 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #1 over Chapters 1-5 & Research Article
#3 5/22-5/28	Skloot Book: Chapters 12-17 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #2 over Chapters 6-11 & Research Article
#4 5/29-6/4	Skloot Book: Chapters 18-22 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #3 over Chapters 12-17 & Research Article
#5 6/5-6/11	Skloot Book: Chapters 23-27 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #4 over Chapters 18-22 & Research Article
#6 6/12-6/18	Skloot Book: Chapters 28-33 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #5 over Chapters 23-27 & Research Article
#7 6/19-6/25	Skloot Book: Chapters 34-38 Research Article(s)	<b>Position Paper due</b> Timed quiz #6 over Chapters 28-33 & Research Article
#8 6/26-6/30	Skloot Book: Where are they now? & Afterword Research Article(s) <b>FINALS WEEK!</b> Wrap up discussion and take final quiz. Class will officially end on 06/30/17 at 5 pm CST.	Timed quiz #7 over Chapters 34-38 & Research Article

**Discussion Board:** You are posting as part of a **discussion**, not just for points. Each Skloot Book discussion and Research Article(s) discussion will be scored out of 10 points (10 points for each discussion board). Therefore, every week will be worth 20 pts of discussion, for a total of 160 points. **The Discussion board will open at 8:00 am CST on the Monday of the week being discussed and close at 10:00 pm CST on the Friday of that week.** You will be graded not on the number of posts per week (two is the minimum to get a score of any type for **each** question), but on the **quality** of posts. **At least one post per question** must have a peer-reviewed **science or bioethics/ethics** reference attached to it. **NO WEBSITES OR BOOKS ARE ALLOWED.** This is a good practice in having an **informed** opinion. The score for your posts will be based upon critical thinking (a post rich in content and full of insight), connection with issue and real-life situations, uniqueness (new ideas and new connections), depth and detail of posts, respect for classmates, and **discussion with classmates** (if you wait until Friday and are discussing with yourself or one other person, you get 0 points). As you can tell, I do not want people simply agreeing with each other or posting for points. You should be prepared to discuss the questions! **The week for discussion runs from the Monday through the Friday listed in the syllabus.**

**Quizzes:** Throughout the semester, you will be given 7 timed quizzes worth 20 points each. The quizzes will cover the Skloot book material and the Research Article(s) being discussed. You will be allotted 10 minutes to answer 10 multiple choice or true/false questions. The questions will be given one at a time. You will have only one chance to answer the question and will not be allowed to go back and change answers. Therefore, make sure to answer carefully. If you run out of time while taking the quiz, you will not be given extra time. If you have a problem while taking your quiz, send me an email and I will deal with it as soon as possible. The computer displays a message that

tells me what kind of problem you had, whether you took too much time or there was a computer problem. Everyone is expected to take all of the quizzes. **The dates for the quizzes are listed on the schedule and will be made available at 8:00 am CST on Monday. You have until 11:55 pm CST on Sunday of the week listed to take the quiz.** For example, the first quiz will be put on blackboard at 8:00 am CST on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> and you have until 11:55 pm CST Sunday, May 24<sup>th</sup> to take the quiz. **THE DEADLINE IS FINAL!** The purpose of these quizzes is to make sure that you are keeping up with the course material. **The week for quizzes runs from the Monday through the Sunday listed in the syllabus.**

**Position Paper:** Students will have one formal writing assignment, which is a position paper on “Should HeLa cells be used in research”. Specific details on this writing assignment will be provided for you. The report is due on the date listed on the next page and should be submitted to Blackboard using the “Position Paper” link under “Assignments”. **The day and time the final report is due is not negotiable.** For every day the report is late, your grade will be dropped one letter grade. FYI, late day grading starts at 8:01 am on the date due (i.e., as of this time, your paper is already a day late, even though it is only one minute late). Yes, you can hand these in early. The Safe Assignment tool will be set up so that you can plagiarism check your paper before handing it in. **You must do this writing assignment to receive full credit or you automatically fail the course and receive a letter grade of an “F”.**

**Policy on incomplete:** To be considered for an incomplete in Biology 830:

1. You must submit the reasons you cannot complete the scheduled work. This must include a copy of your class schedule and description of your responsibilities outside the classroom. This should be done in writing and include confirmation from your doctor or employer when appropriate.
2. You must specify the assignments you have missed and a schedule of plans to complete them.
3. You must submit a copy of the above information to the Chair of the Department of Biology and the Dean of Natural and Social Sciences.
4. Upon completion of items 1-3, your request for an incomplete will be considered.

***I expect all students to progress through the requirements for Biology 830 in a timely fashion. Unless your circumstance is remarkable, do not consider an incomplete.***

**Bonus Points or Extra Credit:** I do not give Bonus Points or Extra Credit to Graduate Students, please don't ask.

**Plagiarism and cheating:** Neither will be tolerated! Anyone caught plagiarizing any exercise or cheating on any exercise will receive a 0 for that exercise; subsequent violations will result in referral to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for dismissal from the university.

### **Students with Disabilities**

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Academic Success Office, 163 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email [unkdso@unk.edu](mailto:unkdso@unk.edu)

### **Students Who are Pregnant**

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services due to pregnancy, students must contact Cindy Hayes in Student Health, 308-865-8218. The following link provides

information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-facts-college-and-graduate-students>

### **Reporting Student Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence or Sexual Assault**

Reporting allegations of rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking enables the University to promptly provide support to the impacted student(s), and to take appropriate action to prevent a recurrence of such sexual misconduct and protect the campus community. Confidentiality will be respected to the greatest degree possible. Any student who believes she or he may be the victim of sexual misconduct is encouraged to report to one or more of the following resources:

**Local Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault Advocacy Agency** 308-237-2599; **Campus Police (or Security)** 308-865-8911; **Title IX Coordinator** 308-865-8655

Retaliation against the student making the report, whether by students or University employees, will not be tolerated..