

## Biology 830P: Genetics in Popular Culture Summer 2018, 3 credits

**Instructor:** Dr. Kimberly A. Carlson  
Phone: 308-865-1554  
Contact: By email or M-F: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm central standard time (CST)

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### Course Materials:

- Required Materials: Papers, articles, and background material available through Canvas. Announcements, assignments, discussion boards, and term paper: All information for this class will be available on Canvas.
- E-mail: All students must use their UNK email account so that I can reach them.

**Course Description:** Genetics is a field of study that is always changing. In addition, the findings from Genetic analyses are altering how the society views science. In the news and in TV infomercials, we are inundated with "Science has found the gene for this ailment!" or "Use this product to control your genes!" Films like 1997's *Gattaca*, or art and popular culture influence how we think of Genetics, each other, and ourselves. There are also new genetic technologies being rapidly developed. All of these events will influence how we think of society and likely shape future policy decisions. In this course, the basics of genetics, as well as the societal implications of genetics and genetic technologies will be discussed. The impact of film, literature, television, the news, and other sources of information, both fact and fiction will be discussed.

### Course Objectives:

1. To understand Genetics, it's uses and impacts in research and medicine, as well as society.
2. To be able to make an informed analysis of film, literature, television, the news, and other sources of information, both fact and fiction.
3. To critically discuss these issues and how they affect society today and in the future.  
*Students will achieve these objectives through discussion board & a term paper.*

### Expectations:

Grades are based on participation and quality of discussion, assignments, and one writing assignment. **There are no taped lectures for this course.** Students must participate online for all discussion topics. **The week runs Monday-Friday for Discussion Board, and Friday-Sunday for grading.** This is a 3 hour summer course lasting 8 weeks. You are expected to do the work in 8 weeks that you would normally do in 16.

### Grading Scheme:

	Points	Due Date
Introduction with a video	10	Friday, May 11 <sup>th</sup> 5:00 pm CST
Discussion Board (8 @ 40 pts each)	320	Weekly
DB Grading (8 @ 10 pts each)	80	Weekly
Term Paper (1 @ 100 pts )	100	Friday, June 29 <sup>th</sup> noon CST
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>510</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% = 5.3 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. The topics are divided into weeks. Each week, I will present an article or item to discuss. This schedule is subject to change.

Week	Discussion Boards	Assignment
#1 5/7-5/11	Background of Genetics	Video introduction due 5/11/18 at 5:00pm CST Grading due 5/13/18 at 10:00pm CST
#2 5/14-5/18	Genetics in the Headlines Part I	Grading due 5/20/18 at 10:00pm CST
#3 5/21-5/25	Genetics in Art	Grading due 5/27/18 at 10:00pm CST
#4 5/28-6/1	Genetics in Literature - Fiction	Grading due 6/3/18 at 10:00pm CST
#5 6/4-6/8	Genetics on TV	Grading due 6/10/18 at 10:00pm CST
#6 6/11-6/15	Genetics in the Movies – We will be discussing <i>GATTACA</i> . Watch before this week.	Grading due 6/17/18 at 10:00pm CST
#7 6/18-6/22	Genetics & Society	Grading due 6/24/18 at 10:00pm CST
#8 6/25-6/29	Genetics in the Headlines Part II <b>FINALS WEEK! Wrap up class discussion. Term Paper due on 6/29/18 by noon CST.</b> Class will officially end on 6/29/18 at noon CST.	<b>Term Paper due on 6/29/18 by noon CST</b> <b>Grading due 6/29/18 at 3:00pm CST</b>

**Discussion Board:** You are posting as part of a **discussion**, not just for points. Each discussion board topic will be scored out of 40 points for a total of 320 points of your final grade. **The Discussion board will open at 8:00 am CST on the Monday of the week being discussed and close at 5:00 pm CST on the Friday of that week.** You will be graded not on the number of posts per week, but on the **quality** of posts. At minimum, you must post four times from M-F of the discussion week on two different days to earn a score (i.e., minimum of once on Monday and once on Wednesday). **At least one post per question on Discussion Board** must have a peer-reviewed **science** reference attached to it. **NO WEBSITES, NEWSPAPERS, OR BOOKS ARE ALLOWED.** This is a good practice in having an **informed** opinion. **DISCLAIMER**--Just because you post four times on two different days with one day having a peer-reviewed reference does **NOT GUARANTEE** that you will earn all the points for the week! 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**. This is a discussion-based class with discussion worth most of your total grade (320 of 510 points). In addition, you are earning three hours of credit for this class, which entails more work than a class you take during the Fall or Spring semester. I expect you will constantly be discussing the topic starting early in the week, Tuesday at the latest, all the way through Friday. The more you are engaged in discussion with your classmates, you will earn a better grade. 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 discussing actively! You should be prepared to discuss the questions!

**Discussion Board (DB) Grading:** If you look at the schedule, you can see that the topics are divided into week sections. For each topic, I will present an article or an item (picture, story, clip, etc) that will be discussed on Canvas in one thread for that week. At the end of the discussion, after 5 pm CST on the Friday of the week, you will need to grade yourself and your fellow classmates in your group on their discussion for that week. You will be given a grading rubric to use. You must provide me feedback as to why you scored each person what you did for each category. If you simply hand in numbers with no explanation, you will receive a 0 out of 10 on grading. Also, you need to justify these more than "He/she did a great job." What was so great? What was so bad? Poor justification will lead to lost points on your grading. Your final grade for that week will come from my score of you (1/2 your grade) and your classmates score of you (the average is the other half). I will use the score you give me of yourself to help me make the determination of my score for you. Any time from Friday at 5:01 pm CST to Sunday at 10:00 pm CST, you will send me an email at [carlsonka1@unk.edu](mailto:carlsonka1@unk.edu) with your grades for Discussion Board for the week. **Late grades will not be accepted!** There are 8 of these worth 10 points each. On Sunday by 8 am CST, I will open the next Discussion Board with a thread for the item I picked. Please check the schedule!

**Term Paper:** Students will have one formal writing assignment, which is a term paper on "How is Genetics Portrayed in Popular Culture". 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 Canvas using the "Term 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 12:01 pm 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 Turnitin 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".**

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

**Students with Disabilities or Those Who are Pregnant:** Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities or those who are pregnant. 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). For those needing accommodation due to pregnancy, you need to visit with Student Health.

**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)** 308-627-4811; **Title IX Coordinator** 308-865-8655