

Biology 819: Bioethics of HeLa Cells Summer 2023

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Contact: By email or M-F: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm central standard time (CST). I do not check email after 4:00 pm CST and rarely on weekends.

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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 Canvas
- 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 for quizzes, and Monday through Friday for Discussion Boards.**

Grading Scheme:

	Points	Due Date
Discussion Board (16 @ 10 pts each)	160	Daily
Quizzes (7 @ 20 pts each)	140	Weekly
Position Paper (1 @ 100 pts each)	100	Monday, July 3 rd by 8:00 am CST
Total Points	400	

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.

Notice on use of Copyright material: The materials on the course Canvas site and given in lecture are only for the use of students enrolled in this course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated. The materials on the course Canvas site and in class may be protected by copyright, and any further use or dissemination of this material may be in violation of Federal copyright law and University sanctions including failure in the course.

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 5/22-5/28	Skloot Book: Chapters 1-5 Research Article(s)	You should all introduce yourselves
#2 5/29-6/4	Skloot Book: Chapters 6-11 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #1 over Chapters 1-5 & Research Article(s)
#3 6/5-6/11	Skloot Book: Chapters 12-17 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #2 over Chapters 6-11 & Research Article(s)
#4 6/12-6/18	Skloot Book: Chapters 18-22 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #3 over Chapters 12-17 & Research Article(s)
#5 6/19-6/25	Skloot Book: Chapters 23-27 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #4 over Chapters 18-22 & Research Article(s)
#6 6/26-7/2	Skloot Book: Chapters 28-33 Research Article(s)	Timed quiz #5 over Chapters 23-27 & Research Article(s)
#7 7/3-7/9	Skloot Book: Chapters 34-38 Research Article(s)	Position Paper due Timed quiz #6 over Chapters 28-33 & Research Article(s)
#8 7/10-7/14	Skloot Book: Where are they now? & Afterword Research Article(s) FINALS WEEK! Wrap up discussion and take final quiz. Class will officially end on 07/14/23 at 5 pm CST.	Timed quiz #7 over Chapters 34-38 & Research Article(s)

Discussion Boards: 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 per discussion board per week or 4 total 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. In addition, your minimum two posts must be on two different days, at least 24 hours apart. 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). 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 Monday, 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! Now, do I expect you to spend 5 hours a week in Discussion Board? I would love that but realize this is unrealistic. What I do expect is that given the criteria given for grading, you will post **every day M-F**. I am not asking you to be in there for an hour, nor am I going to count the minutes, because it takes time to read everything! You should be **wanting** to post every day. Do you need a peer-reviewed reference with every post, no, but if you are stating an opinion, you need to back it up with data. This is a discussion, not just posting to answer the question. Unless you are the first person answering the question posted, you should **not** be starting a new thread. You should be replying to someone else. I am not so concerned that everyone answers the posted question. The questions in the discussion board are simply a prompt for us to begin discussion. When you simply post your answer, you are "posting to post". I want discussion, not simply posting for points. I have additional information

on posting listed on Canvas. **The week for discussion runs from the Monday through the Friday listed in the syllabus. The reason for this is that I like to take part in the discussions, therefore, they are done during the week.** There is a document on Canvas that gives you the prompts for every week. You can use the weekend to prepare for Discussion Board for the next week. If you miss the Discussion Board for ANY reason, there is no way to make it up. It is a discussion, not simply posting to post your opinions.

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 Canvas at 8:00 am CST on Monday, May 29th and you have until 11:55 pm CST Sunday, June 4th 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 Monday, July 3rd by 8:00 am CST and should be submitted to Canvas. **The day and time the final report is due is not negotiable. I do NOT accept late papers. There is NO late grading offered. Yes, you can hand these in early. You must do this writing assignment to receive full credit or you automatically fail the course and receive a letter grade of an “F”. Therefore, if you hand the paper in late, you will automatically fail the course.**

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

Attendance Policy

Your instructor may have indicated on their syllabus an attendance policy specific to their class. If so, that is the policy with which you must comply. If no other policy is stated, the University-wide attendance policy will apply. You can find the [Student Attendance Policy Statement online](#).

Academic Honesty Policy

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an institution of higher education. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. To further serve this end, the University of Nebraska at Kearney has a policy relating to academic integrity. **Plagiarism and cheating:** Neither will be tolerated! I have a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY** for both. Do either of them and you will automatically fail the assignment and possibly BIOL 819: Bioethics of HeLa Cells.

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 the UNK Disabilities Services for Students (DSS) office, 175 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email unkdso@unk.edu

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 they 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.

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 the Student Health office at 308.865.8218. The following links provide information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. <https://thepregnantscholar.org/title-ix-basics/>
<https://nwlc.org/resource/faq-pregnant-and-parenting-college-graduate-students-rights/>

UNK Statement of Diversity & Inclusion

UNK stands in solidarity and unity with our students of color, our Latinx and international students, our LGBTQIA+ students and students from other marginalized groups in opposition to racism and prejudice in any form, wherever it may exist. It is the job of institutions of higher education, indeed their duty, to provide a haven for the safe and meaningful exchange of ideas and to support peaceful disagreement and discussion. In our classes, we strive to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication and mutual respect. UNK does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability or political affiliation. Respect for the diversity of our backgrounds and varied life experiences is essential to learning from our similarities as well as our differences. The following link provides resources and other information regarding D&I: <https://www.unk.edu/about/equity-access-diversity.php>