

Syllabus for Honors Seminar: Biology and Society

HNRS 350, CRN 40281, Fall Quarter 2005

Instructor: David L. Alles

If you wish to contact me, please do so by e-mail at < alles@biol.wvu.edu >.

Lecture / Discussion: Biology Room 151, Tuesday and Thursday 3:00 pm to 4:20 pm

Course Web Site: <http://fire.biol.wvu.edu/trent/alles/350index.html>

Grades: Your grade for the course will be based on what you earn out of a total of 325 possible points. The points are divided as follows:

Class Discussions—225 points (9 discussions at 25 points each)

Final Exam—100 points

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following percentages of points earned.

A+	96-100%	(4.0)	
A	92-95%	(4.0)	A range 89-100%
A-	89-91%	(3.7)	
B+	86-88%	(3.3)	
B	82-85%	(3.0)	B range 79-88%
B-	79-81%	(2.7)	
C+	76-78%	(2.3)	
C	72-75%	(2.0)	C range 69-78%
C-	69-71%	(1.7)	
D+	66-68%	(1.3)	
D	63-65%	(1.0)	D range 60-68%
D-	60-62%	(0.7)	
F	0-59 %	(0.0)	Failing

Course Policies:

- Makeups assignments will only be accepted if arrangements are made prior to the assignment due date *and* approved by me.
- This applies as well if you are sick. If, however, your reason for missing a class discussion is sickness, you must, in addition to making prior arrangements, obtain a doctor's or health services' excuse.
- **Leaving a telephone message or sending an e-mail *does not* give you prior approval for missing a class discussion.**
- All makeup work or other assignments must be turned in *before* the last week of lectures to receive credit.
- The final test is cumulative. Test questions will come predominately from the material presented in lecture.
- **A note about electronic devices:** Manners and rules of decorum have not changed. Rude behavior is still just rude behavior. Therefore, do not use any electronic devices in the classroom, cell phones for instance, that may interrupt lectures or discussions.

Lecture/Discussion Schedule for Honors 350: Biology and Society
Fall Quarter 2005

- Week 1** Class 1) 9/22 Thursday—Lecture: The Nature of Science
- Week 2** Class 2) 9/27 Tuesday—Lecture: The Relationship between Science and Society
Class 3) 9/29 Thursday—Discussion 1) Is science a religion?
Reading Assignment: *Worldviews, Religions, and Naturalism* by David L. Alles
- Week 3** Class 4) 10/4 Tuesday—Lecture: Public Ethics in a Pluralistic Society
Class 5) 10/6 Thursday—Discussion 2) Corporate Science
Reading Assignment: *The Weaknesses of Science for Profit* by Harold Varmus
- Week 4** Class 6) 10/11 Tuesday—Lecture: A Primer on Genetics
Class 7) 10/13 Thursday—Discussion 3) Secular Ethics
Reading Assignment: *The Secular Sphinx: The Riddle of Ethics Without Religion* by Michael Shermer
- Week 5** Class 8) 10/18 Tuesday—Lecture: Genetics, Medicine and Society
Class 9) 10/20 Thursday—Discussion 4) Science and Medicine
Reading Assignment: To be announced
- Week 6** Class 10) 10/25 Tuesday—Lecture: Human Longevity
Class 11) 10/27 Thursday—Discussion 5) Is “race” a scientific concept?
Reading Assignment: *Do Races Differ? Not Really, DNA Shows* by Natalie Angier
- Week 7** Class 12) 11/1 Tuesday—Lecture: The History of Human Population Growth
Class 13) 11/3 Thursday—Discussion 6) To be announced

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Week 8 Class 14) 11/8 Tuesday—Lecture: How many people can the Earth support?

Class 15) 11/10 Thursday—Discussion 7) The Human Impact
Reading Assignment: *Anthropocene* by Paul J. Crutzen

Week 9 Class 16) 11/15 Tuesday—Lecture: The Human Impact on Biodiversity

Class 17) 11/17 Thursday—Discussion 8) Biodiversity
Reading Assignment: *Can We Defy Nature's End?* by Stuart Pimm, et al.

Week 10 Class 18) 11/22 Tuesday—Lecture: The Human Impact on the Earth's Ecosystems

11/24 Thursday—Thanksgiving—no class

Week 11 Class 19) 11/29 Tuesday—Lecture: Ethics and Equity in the 21st Century

Class 20) 12/1 Thursday—Discussion 9) The Human Impact
Reading Assignment: *Integrated Science and the Coming Century of the Environment*
by E.O. Wilson

Finals Week — Final Test to be announced

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