### 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.wwu.edu>.

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

**Course Web Site:** [http://fire.biol.wwu.edu/trent/alles/350index.html](http://fire.biol.wwu.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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>GPA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>96-100%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-95%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>89-91%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-85%</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>79-81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D-</td>
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<td>F</td>
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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.

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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

(continued on next page)
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

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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