

BIO/ENG/PSY/GOV/HUM 314

Technology and Society: Redefining Human Life

Spring Semester, 2004

Th 6:30-9:20 PM, JGM 119

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Objectives - To arrive at first at a class consensus for a definition of human life. Then to investigate past, present, and future technological and scientific issues by studying various works of literature as a means of redefining human life. Finally to revise or reaffirm our previous definition(s) of human life.

Grading - Grades will be determined by the following:

- A. Weekly reading quizzes (= 20% of grade). Each class period will begin with a short reading quiz.
- B. Weekly discussion questions (= 10% of grade). For each reading assignment, you will submit five thoughtful questions that can be used effectively as prompts in class discussion.
- C. Attendance and active participation in class discussions (= 10% of grade). You should participate frequently and conspicuously in class discussions. You can miss only two class meeting during the semester. After that, 5% of your overall grade will be lost for each miss.
- D. Class presentations (= 10% of grade). Students will select an article related to one of the course topics. They will summarize the article in written and oral fashion and lead a class discussion.
- E. Five essays (= 50% of grade). You will write five essays in the course of the semester. Three will concern the three major topics of the course: human evolution, generations, and chimerism. A final essay, written in class during the final exam period, will address the question of redefining human life. Each essay must be at least 5 double-spaced pages in 12 point font. You should send a copy by email to the class discussion list (multi@griffon.mwsc.edu) before the due date and submit a hard copy to the instructors at the beginning of class.

Grading Scale

90% - 100% = A

80% - 90% = B

70% - 80% = C

60% - 70% = D

60% = F

Attendance - Please attend all class periods. You should arrive on time and stay the entire class period. Quizzes cannot be made up for any reason; however, you will be able to drop one quiz score at the end of the semester. If you must miss a class period, please submit your reading questions by email to the instructors; as long as the questions can be used for class discussion, you will receive credit for them.

Late Work - Late essays will be accepted, but they will receive lower grades (10% for each day after the due date). No credit will be given for late discussions questions. You are encouraged to complete these assignments at least a few days in advance of the deadline. If you wait until the last minute, you must accept full responsibility for delays caused by computer problems and other catastrophes.

Cheating - Cheating will not be tolerated, will be reported to the Dean of Student Development and may result in failure of the course. This includes plagiarism in conducting the writing assignments.

Definition and Examples of Plagiarism

Schedule of Activities

Jan. 22: Introduction

Course Introduction

I. Human Evolution

Jan. 29: Evolutionary Theory

The Descent of Man (Final Chapter, "General Summary and Conclusion"), Charles Darwin [[backup link](#)]

The Great Human Diasporas, Chapter 2, "Portraits from the Past," Cavalli-Sforza and Cavalli-Sforza

The Journey of Man, Chapter 2, "E Pluribus Unum," Spencer Wells

Feb. 5: Evolution and Society

Inherit the Wind, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee

The Scopes Trial Web Site

Missouri House Bill 911 - Standard Science Instruction

Feb. 12: Eugenics

Genome, Chapter 21, Matt Ridley

Galton on Hereditary Character and Talent

"A Practical Woman," Thomas Hardy (poem)

"Heredity," Thomas Hardy (poem)

II. Generations

Feb. 19: Overpopulation

Due: Essay #1

An Essay on the Principle of Population (Preface and Chapter 1), Thomas Malthus

"Welcome to the Monkey House," Kurt Vonnegut

"The Law of Life," Jack London

Feb. 26: Assisted Reproductive Technology and Gene Therapy

Designing Babies, R Gosden, pp 95-125 and pp 159-197

The Double Helix, James Watson

Mar. 4: Cloning

Journal Article from Nature:

"Viable Offspring Derived from Fetal and Adult Mammalian Cells," I Willmut, et al.

The Second Creation: Dolly and the Age of Biological Control, I Wilmut and K Campbell, pp 243-298.

Clips from "The Sixth Day"

III. Socioeconomics and Human Life

Mar. 11: Technology and Society

Due: Essay #3

Karl Marx, Das Kapital

Andrew Fienberg, Critical Theory of Technology

Shoshana Zuboff, The Age of the Smart Machine

Mar 25: Printing Communication Technologies

Walter Ong, Reality and Literacy

Apr. 1: The Internet

Apr. 8: Biological and Nuclear Warfare

Readings from Time and Newsweek

Guest - Dr. Jason Baker

IV. Chimerism

Apr. 15: Replacement organs

Due: Essay #4

Chimera: The Origins of the Myth, Ugo Bardi

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley

A Planet Named Shayol, by Cordwainer Smith

Apr. 22: Cyborgs

"Enter the Cyborgs," by N Boyce, U.S. News & World Report; 5/13/2002, Vol. 132 Issue 16, p56, 3p, 2 diagrams, 2c

Bladerunner, Screenplay by Hampton Fancher and David Peoples

USA Today Article, "25 Years of Cyborg Life"

Wired Article, "Cyborg 101"

Apr. 29: Artificial intelligence

"Computers, Games and the Real World," by Mathew L. Ginsberg, Scientific American (November 1998)

"Artificial Intelligence 101," by Denis Susac

"Artificial Intelligentsia," by Gary Stix Scientific American (October 2000)

Matrix: The Forbidden Knowledge, Screenplay

Date of Final Exam: May 6

Note: Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of his abilities should contact us as soon as possible so that we can discuss class requirements.