

# Course Syllabus

## Design of the Fittest

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## Course Information

### Course Description

Design of the Fittest examines the pseudoscience of eugenics from a multidisciplinary perspective, including, but not limited to, issues of ethics, power & justice and the real science of genetics. Students will learn about the impact of historical eugenics, both in the United States and the world, and select an aspect of personal interest to explore. Particular attention is paid to the theory of unintended consequences. Students will produce a final product: paper, audiovisual product or other, to be negotiated.

### Course Learning Goals

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Summarize the theory of unintended consequences
- Personally identify a case of an unintended consequence, other than eugenics
- Discuss a contemporary example of an unintended consequences based on current social issues
- Apply the theory of unintended consequences into reflections on chapter readings
- Apply the theory of unintended consequences into your Final Project and discussion of others' projects
- Apply principles of medical ethics to your own beliefs
- Anchor those principles in your own experiences
- Apply ethical frameworks to reflections on chapter readings
- Apply ethical frameworks to your Final Projects and discussion of others' projects
- Explain what people believed about heredity before DNA was understood
- Describe DNA structure and how DNA is copied
- Discuss the pre-genetics ideas that led to a societal ideation of "unfit," incorporating the previously developed understanding of Unintended Consequences, ethical principles and personal framework
- Discuss the post-genetics ideas that led to the societal solution to the "unfit," incorporating the previously developed understanding of Unintended Consequences and ethical principles and personal framework
- Demonstrate appreciation of the impact of eugenics on actual persons
- Summarize key eugenics issues introduced in the seminar and learned independently
- Identify a contemporary phenomenon, problem or event related to eugenics and discuss its relationship to key eugenics issues.

### Course Resources

#### TEXT

Carlson, E. A. (2001). *The Unfit: A History of a Bad Idea*. Cold Spring Harbor, NY: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press.

#### E-RESERVES

Gillon, S.M. (2000). *That's Not What We Meant to Do*. New York: W.W.Norton & Co., pp. 17-41

Tenner, E. (1996). Ever Since Frankenstein. In: *Why Things Bite Back*. New York: Vintage Books, pp. 3-32

Pence, G. (2003). Moral Reasoning and Ethical Theories in Medical Ethics. In: *Classic Cases in Medical Ethics*. New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 1-28

Pence, G. (2003). Human Subjects: The Tuskegee Syphilis Study. In: *Classic Cases in Medical Ethics*. New York: McGraw-Hill, pp. 270-300.

#### WEB SITES

DNAi Interactive®. <http://www.dnai.org/index.htm>. Dolan DNA Learning Center at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. ©2003.

University of Minnesota Informed Consent®. <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent/>. ©1998.

Image Archive on the American Eugenics Movement<sup>®</sup>,

<http://www.eugenicsarchive.org/eugenics/list3.pl>. Dolan DNA Learning Center at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. ©2003.

## Course Competences

In this course, you will develop the following competences:

Competence	Competence Statement and Facets
E1	Can describe and explain the historical Eugenics Movement in terms of ethics, power and justice and the science of genetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates conceptual understanding of the theory of unintended consequences and its relationship to both decision makers and privileged information</li> <li>• Applies two ethical frameworks to describe and explain the Eugenics Movement</li> <li>• Demonstrates conceptual understanding of genetics, comparing and contrasting it with Eugenics</li> </ul>
E2	Can apply the cautionary lessons of the Eugenics Movement in analyzing and interpreting a contemporary phenomenon, problem or event

## How the Competences will be Demonstrated in this Course

In keeping with SNL's Lifelong Learning and Liberal Learning framework, you will engage in College Writing, Critical Thinking, Collaborative Learning and Inquiry/Research, incorporating concepts from Arts and Ideas (ethics), Human Community (history, power and justice) and Scientific World (genetics/eugenics) domains.

Competence-based assignments in this course are of four types:

- Discussion of your own and others' work
- Cross-referencing of theories, and application to real-world and historical examples
- Completion of Web-based modules and
- Development and presentation of your Final Project

## Course Structure

This course consists of 7 modules. The estimated time to complete each module is 1 to 2 weeks, as indicated. The Course Schedule outlines the course and the following Gantt chart guides you as to the minimum time you should allow for preparing each assignment.

To view the course schedule, click on the [Schedule](#) link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.

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## Assessment

Percentages are messy and, to many students, don't seem as accurate as point distribution, which is how this course is assessed. In general, there are more points for those assignments in which you do more work. Of course, that places an undue weight on a couple of assignments, so in figuring the score, those two (Assignments 9 and 13) are adjusted mathematically. Please contact the author if you want details on the methodology! Otherwise:

- For every assignment that requires college writing, points are awarded based on spelling, grammar and, in the case of the Final Project, adherence to APA format (see [http://www.lib.depaul.edu/eresource/infotype\\_subject\\_search.asp?MaterialID=8](http://www.lib.depaul.edu/eresource/infotype_subject_search.asp?MaterialID=8) or <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/> for style guides)
- For every assignment with multiple questions, points are awarded for each. If you don't answer 2 out of 7 questions, you lose 5 points per question. That can add up quickly, so carefully check your work against the assignment.
- For every assignment that calls for a particular format (e.g. list, essay, couple of paragraphs), points are awarded for following the format.
- For every discussion, points are awarded for responses to fellow students that contain an original thought and fewer points are awarded for "me, too" responses without elaboration. This course is heavy on discussion, so the points add up.
- For assignments that impact the progress of the course (e.g. 6 and 7), you are awarded points for being on time and **risk being assigned a chapter or topic if you do not respond on time**. The class will not be held up.
- For the Final Project, points are awarded for each element you address, the clarity of your logic and the thoroughness with which you address each element.
- **NOTE: Every written assignment that you submit is evaluated using TurnItIn<sup>®</sup> plagiarism detection software and will be checked manually, as well.** Documentation of any inappropriate use of material will result in the assignment being returned for corrections ONCE, for ONE assignment. A second case of inappropriate use of material will result in a failing grade for the course and, as required by DePaul's Dean of Academic Affairs, reporting of the incident to Academic Affairs. Having completed both College Writing and Research Seminar, prerequisites for this course, there should be no misunderstanding of plagiarism.

#	Title	Points	#	Title	Points
1	Introduce Yourself	10	12	Chapter 9	30
2	Center Yourself	20	13	Code	85
3	Unintended Consequences	30	14	Applications	30
4	Life Experience	40	15	Final Project Draft 1	30
5	Faculty-Identified Issue	30	16	Carlson Chapters	70
6	Identify Final Project Topic	10	17	Final Project Draft 2	45
7	Chapter Preferences	10	18	Embracing Eugenics	50

8	University of Minnesota	20	19	Chronicle	30
9	Delimiting Moral Issues	43	20	Abandoning Eugenics	45
10	Transiting Bases	60	21	Final Project	170
11	Chapter 8	30		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>888</b>

This course is comprised of 888 points, in the distribution above. Below is how those points compare to the standard DePaul University grading scale:

A = 844-888	A- = 808-843	B+ = 781-807
B = 755-780	B- = 719-754	C+ = 684-718
C = 648-683	C- = 613-647	D+ = 577-612
D = 542-576	F = below 576	INC

In addition to those elements bulleted above, there is one practice of that you should know about.

The author firmly believes in what the assessment literature calls authentic, cumulative assessment. Simply put, what that means is that the assessments you complete in this course are built in to your learning activities, which, of course, are directly related to what you are learning. In addition, it means that whenever possible, you can recapture lost points—with no penalty—if you demonstrate that your understanding has improved. In an online course, recapturing points doesn't work well with discussion assessment and it doesn't work well with final projects, even in an on-campus classroom. However, every other written assignment—including drafts of your assignment postings—is open to cumulative assessment, as long as you submit directly to your instructor a revised assignment, *clearly indicating what you've changed*. This can be a lot of extra work for the instructor, so you must indicate the change *AND you must submit revisions by the Friday of Week 10*, simply because of the academic calendar.

### Assessment Criteria and Guidelines for Online Discussion Participation

Believe it or not, serious, well-known and well-regarded researchers study nothing but discussion, and assessment in this course incorporates that research. Simply put, there are two components to discussion assessment—content and delivery. In addition, not all discussion is the same.

In online learning, those types of discussion are easily distinguished. An assignment posting is one in which your discussion is centered on submission of your assignment. Each assignment posting is graded, so you must read the discussion assignment, draft your submission (to be certain that you address each component of the assignment), post your submission, and respond to questions/discussion. Your submissions should clearly indicate that you have read and thought about the related material, as well as any discussion already ongoing, as appropriate. College Writing standards apply, although contractions are acceptable, as they make conversation easier.

For example:

#### Unacceptable

I liked what the author said about ethical issues, because I feel the same way.

#### Better

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand.

#### Still Better

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand. I'm not certain that I would have understood what he meant by a "delimiting" issue if he hadn't talked about the examples.

#### Best

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand. I'm not certain that I would have understood what he meant by a "delimiting" issue if he hadn't talked about the examples. However, I don't understand the way he uses the word "delimiting;" can someone help me with that? I thought I understood it after reading Mary's comments, which helped a lot with the whole history of euthanasia, but not quite.

However, that does not mean that every posting must be formally written or include repetition of substantial detail. In subsequent postings, whether you are responding to another student's assignment posting or discussing your own or others', conversational discussion is fine. For example:

#### Assignment Posting

I liked the way that Pence integrated theory and real ethical issues, such as euthanasia, because it makes the theory easier to understand. I'm not certain that I would have understood what he meant by a "delimiting" issue if he hadn't talked about the examples. However, I don't understand the way he uses the word "delimiting;" can someone help me with that? I thought I understood it after reading Mary's comments, which helped a lot with the whole history of euthanasia, but not quite.

#### Conversational Response

Me, too. When I think "delimiting," I guess I think about making something narrow, but I don't understand how that applies to how we're using it.

As long as you distinguish between an assignment posting, in which detail is required, and conversational discussion, you'll be fine.

What if someone has already said what you planned to say? Well, if it's an assignment posting, you start a new thread, then go ahead and repeat the content, although you can certainly preface your posting with a transitional comment, such as, "Mary and I are on the same page with this assignment," if you like. If it's a conversational discussion, again say something such as, "I agree with Mary," then explain how you arrived at that thought. Chances are that you took different paths to the same conclusion, and those paths are just as important.

Delivery is much simpler to assess, because inappropriate delivery is obvious. In addition, inappropriate delivery is not acceptable in any type of posting.

- Be courteous—don't criticize people and don't belittle what they say. You can critically examine content without being personally offensive.
- NO SHOUTING, THANKS—observe email etiquette.
- Again, College Writing standards apply. Use appropriate capitalization and punctuation; avoid abbreviations and acronyms (nix on the IMHO and LOL).
- Allow time for discussion—post when assigned so that others have adequate time to read and think about your material before responding.

To summarize, assessment of discussion postings depends on 1) the type of posting and 2) appropriate delivery. For assignment postings, you must address each aspect of the assignment and observe College Writing and appropriate delivery standards. For subsequent discussion, you may write more conversationally, but still must observe delivery standards. You are required to respond to discussion threads.

If you do not address each aspect of the assignment in an assignment posting, you will lose points. If you do not participate in conversational follow-up discussion, you will lose points. If you do not follow appropriate delivery standards, you will lose points. If discourteous behavior is involved, your post will be deleted and you will receive NO POINTS FOR THE ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT.

## Course Grading Scale

A = 95 to 100	A- = 91 to 94	B+ = 88 to 90
B = 85 to 87	B- = 81 to 84	C+ = 77 to 80
C = 73 to 76	C- = 69 to 72	D+ = 65 to 68
D = 61 to 64	F = 60 or below	INC

For SNL courses taken for Pass/Fail, a "Pass" represents a grade of "A" for purposes of financial aid and employer reimbursement.

Students wishing to declare a Pass/Fail option must do so before the end of the 2nd week of the quarter.

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## Policies

### Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If an instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

### Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

### Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily

completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

If you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

## Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>.

Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve "interactions"—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as "research" with "human subjects" and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning's Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no "harm"—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
  - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an "informed consent" document. For information on creating an "informed consent document" see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

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## Course Expectations

### Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

This course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

### Your Instructor's Role

Your instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

### Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

## Credits

*This course was designed and produced by Dr. Jennifer K. Holtz and staff at the Center for Distance Education of the School for New Learning of DePaul University.*

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