

## Genomics & Society Freshman Seminar

Instructor: Celeste Condit

Spring 2001

**Course Purpose:** This course is designed as a component of the “Genomics an Society” core course cluster. Focusing on contemporary knowledge about Genomics, I seeks to explore basic communication concepts as they relate to public communication about science and some facets of communication within science. We will explore basic principles of effective communication and students will make oral presentations based on their work in the core cluster.

**Readings:** The readings for each week can be purchased in a packet at BelJeans.

**Week I:** BASIC PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNICATION  
Communication Model, Feedback, Efficiency/Effectiveness, Abstraction

**Week II:** PUBLIC COMMUNICATION ABOUT SCIENCE  
Technical Knowledge and Values, Media Values, Audience Heterogeneity, Etc.

**Read:** Alan G. Gross, “Public Debates as Failed Social Dramas: The Recombinant DNA Controversy”, Quarterly Journal of Speech 70(1984), 397-409.

**Week III:** WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC KNOW ABOUT GENETICS?  
The Deficit Model: Objectivist Approach

**Read:** Excerpts from he Office of Technology Assessment’s Report on Public Attitudes toward Biotechnology.

Henderson, B.J. and Maguire, B.T. (2000). Three lay mental models of disease inheritance. Social Science ad Medicine (50), 293-301.

**Week IV:** WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC KNOW ABOUT GENETICS?  
The Deficit Model: The Critical Approach

**Read:** Selections from Nelkin, Dorothy and Susan Lindee. The DNA Mystique:

The Gene as Cultural Icon. New York: W. H. Freeman, 1995.

Rosner, Mary and T.R. Johnson. Telling Stories: Metaphors of the Human Genome Project.” Hypatia 10 (1995): 104-129.

Week V: WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC KNOW ABOUT GENETICS?  
The Critical/Common Sense Model

Read: Kerr, a., Cunningham-burley, and Amos, A. (1998). Drawing the line: an analysis of lay people's discussions about the new genetics. Public Understandings of Science, 7 (1998), 113-133.

Condit, C.M. How the Public Understands Genetics: Non-deterministic and Non-discriminatory Interpretations of the "Blue print" Metaphor. Public Understandings of Science, 8, No. 3 (July 1999), 169-180.

Week VI: Lecture: ORAL PRESENTATIONS  
Invention, Organization

Week VII: Lecture: ORAL PRESENTATIONS  
Style, Delivery, Memory

Week VIII: SCIENCE AS ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION  
Structuration and Communication, Networks, Communication Flow

Week IX-XV and Final Exam Period  
ORAL PRESENTATIONS (30 students: 5 presentations per day = 6 days  
These can be based on work for the science, philosophy, or English portions of the course.