

# **BILD60: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Relation to Human Biology**

**Course Information (updated 30 March 2019)**

**Spring Quarter 2019**

**Lecture: TTh 9:30-10:50AM WLH 2207**

**Be sure to check TritonEd for any updates.**

**Section A01: Monday 5:00-5:50PM, HSS 2152**

**Section A02: Monday 6:00-6:50PM, HSS 2152**

Please note: information in this syllabus is subject to change. Any schedule changes will be announced in class and posted on TritonEd. Make sure to frequently check TritonEd to keep updated about the readings, assignments, and exam schedule.

*Professor*

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## **Course principles**

By its very nature, this course will include readings, presentations and discussions on difficult topics that affect human relations and feelings. Mutual respect and sensitivity are essential, as well as the strong consideration of privacy and tolerance. The classroom should be treated and experienced as a “safe zone”, where participation, conversation and discussion are encouraged and lead to learning and understanding, not to confrontation. We will discuss many topics where there is no ‘right’ answer, where people disagree on what a desirable endpoint might be, and where even people who agree on a desired goal may disagree on the best method to get there. You should consider these points of disagreement to be opportunities to learn from your peers and opportunities to hone your thinking and potentially, but not necessarily, to change your mind. Adherence to these Principles is a requirement.

## **Course overview**

In this course we will examine how biology has influenced and continues to influence society around the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion. The course integrates topics from biology, history, sociology, and anthropology, and the primary focus for this quarter will be on the intersection of biology and race. We will trace recurring themes about who we are and how we got here from the 1800s to the present day, and a major goal of the course is to analyze the role that biology plays in

questions of identity, race, and society in today's era of personal genomics compared to the role it has played at various key times in the past.

### **Readings**

There will be several readings to prepare for each class session along with some optional ones. *It is very important that you do the reading before class.* Our discussions will most useful if they are informed by both the readings and the material discussed in lecture.

### **Teams/Groups**

This is a discussion class and is meant to be highly interactive. Lectures will include questions for you to think about and plenty of time for discussion. Students will also work cooperatively in teams/groups on in-class exercises as well as on a final research proposal and oral presentation. Teams of 4-5 students will be formed during the first Discussion Section.

### **Research Proposal**

A key part of the course is the preparation by each team of a Research Proposal, which the team will present to the class in the last part of the course. Many questions and ideas will arise as we discuss various topics in class. Many of these questions have no easy answers, nor are there observations/data that would support specific answers. Your team's assignment will be to select and discuss one such question or idea, do a critical analysis of the relevant literature, and come up with an "experimental approach" (hopefully novel) for answering it. Your discussions and research will be the basis for creating a Research Proposal which your team will present and discuss in class. Each individual will also turn in a written version of the proposal

The concept of a Research Proposal is based on the process of conducting scientific research. It requires that a well-constructed proposal be submitted to a funding source in order to obtain the funds to support the performance of the work. A proposal has the following parts: (1) Question(s) to be addressed (hypothesis), (2) Relevant background and significance (why is the question important? what is already known?), (3) Research Plan (how will data be obtained?), (4) Discussion and future directions (in light of possible answers). Further details of this assignment will be discussed in the first discussion section.

### **Discussion Sections**

Attending a Discussion Section is required throughout the quarter. A principal goal of the Sections is to work together on your projects, and to get feedback from the instructional assistant on your ideas and your use of sources and references. Later in the quarter, the main objective will be to prepare your presentations: go over your materials and graphics, what to include or exclude, and how to organize your presentations.

### **Evaluation/Grading:**

***Class Participation: (15% of grade):*** NOTE: You only need to earn 85% of these participation points to get 100% the Class Participation. Participation points can be earned by answering clicker questions, doing in-class "quick writes", and attending/participating in section. Clicker questions will be asked each class period and will cover assigned readings and class discussions (clicker points will count starting lecture #2). Points will be awarded for participation, not for correctness (many questions will

not have a single correct answer). From time to time you will also be asked to spend a couple of minutes in class writing down your thoughts on the topic that day or responding to reading assignments (in-class quick writes).

***Weekly News Assignment: (10% of grade)*** Every week starting this week (week 1) each student must find a recent (within the previous 6 months) news article that is related to DEI and science/health/medicine. Students must write a brief report describing the news item and how it is related to some aspect of diversity, equity or inclusion. The source (or URL) of the news article must be cited in the report to receive credit. These news reports will be turned in through TritonEd and are due every SUNDAY by MIDNIGHT. They will be graded on a scale of 0 – 2 points and you can drop the lowest score. We will discuss news articles many times in class. These will be chosen at random and so you should always come prepared to give a brief, 2 – 3 minute presentation on your news item. A template for the reports and short presentations will be provided.

***Reading responses: (15% of grade)*** For each set of readings (starting with lecture 3) you will be asked to write a short 1-2 paragraph response answering a specific question. Often these responses will ask to you relate the readings to each other or to previous course material. These will be graded on a scale of 0-2 points and you can drop the lowest score. These will be due before class and will be turned in through TritonEd.

***Quizzes (9% each, 27% total)*** There will be 3 in-class quizzes each worth 9% of your grade. Quizzes will be on topics discussed in class as well as on readings. There is no final exam.

***Final Oral presentation (20% of grade)*** Every group will give a 20-25 minute oral presentation to the entire class on their Research Proposal. A PowerPoint File of the presentation must be turned in by 5 pm the day prior to the scheduled presentation.

***A one page written summary of the Research Proposal (10% of grade)*** must be turned in within 5 days of the presentation. This will be done individually.

***Reflection Essay (3% of grade)*** At the end of the class you will be asked to write a 1 – 2 page essay reflecting on your experience in the class.

***Missed classes and in-class quizzes.*** If you know you will miss a quiz, you must let Professor Rifkin know at least a week ahead of time. We can arrange alternative ways for you to take the quiz. If you are sick the day of the quiz, you will need to bring Professor Rifkin a doctor's note to reschedule the quiz. The 85% class participation policy covers instances where you have to miss a class or section for any reason.