

## BIOLOGY, SOCIETY, AND VALUES

Class time and room: Tu Th, 9.30 am – 10.50 am, BS M149 (Biological Sciences)  
Instructor: Rob Wilson; more details under **G** below  
Office: Assiniboia Hall 3-71  
Office hours: Tu 11.00am – 12 noon, Th 12.00 -- 1.00pm, and by appointment  
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**Please read the whole of this course outline ASAP.**

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### A. GENERAL WELCOME TO THE COURSE

The focus of *Biology, Society, and Values* is on philosophical issues that arise in the biological sciences, including the medical and health sciences. Throughout the course we will discuss the social contexts and ethical values the biological sciences embody, but the course is better characterized as applied philosophy of science or science and technology studies than as practical or applied ethics. Since Phil 217 regularly draws students from the biological sciences and satisfies an elective option in the Faculty of Education, the content and character of the course are appropriate for students with these backgrounds and corresponding interests.

Phil 217 begins a sequence of courses offered by the Department of Philosophy at the interface of biology and philosophy: **Phil 317** (Philosophy of Biology) focuses on conceptual issues in biology, especially evolutionary biology and genetics; and **Phil 415** (Topics in the Philosophy of Biology) follows up the grounding in either 217 or 317 typically by pursuing one or more topics (e.g., the nature of species, evo-devo, levels of selection) in more detail. These courses are also electives for students taking a major or a minor in the interdisciplinary Program in Science, Technology, and Society, of which I was the founding director in 2005-06. Phil 217 also provides a good basis for other courses that the Department of Philosophy offers, such as those in general philosophy of science and in ethics or moral philosophy.

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### B. BACKGROUND FOR THE COURSE AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

Phil 217 has no formal pre-requisites. Students with backgrounds in either philosophy or a biological science are especially welcome in the course, but it should be accessible to those with backgrounds in neither. The “Thematic Overview” in **D** and the “Proposed Schedule” in **E** below provide detailed information about the content of the course. The course will not concentrate on technical matters, although students who are (or prove to be) uncomfortable with working at the interface of the humanities and the biological sciences will find the course a slog. If you have concerns about your preparedness for the course, please see me early on.

In the most general terms, my objectives in teaching the course are for you to learn a lot, to think harder and deeper about things you encounter, and to get excited about learning more. More specifically, amongst the objectives of the course are **for you to**:

- **acquire** some *substantial knowledge* about ways in which biological sciences embody social values and inform individual and societal decisions;
- **develop** *critical thinking skills* that allow you to probe beneath the surface of what you read and grapple with issues concerning biology, society, and values;
- **recognize** and identify *social dimensions* to biological theories, practices and technologies;
- **become** more reflective about *how science both reflects and impacts the societies we live in*.
- **integrate active learning strategies** into your course experience such that you become a more capable self-directed learner with respect to the general themes of the course.

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## C. COURSE MATERIALS AND PEDAGOGY

### In Lieu of a Course Packet

Despite all of my courses over the past 25 years having been taught using a course packet, this year for Phil 217 we will break this habit and see how it goes. In the first part of the course, *Science and Society*, we'll rely on material readily available online. As we turn to the second part to explore *Eugenics*, we will start to make more extensive use of the open resources developed by the Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada project that I directed from 2010 until 2015, as well as the first part of a book manuscript of mine on eugenics. Along the way there will be a handful of articles accessible to through the library.

### Films and Videos

Two documentary films feature in the course syllabus. The first is *Surviving Eugenics* (2015), a product of the Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada project; the film and project both focus on the history of eugenic sterilization in Alberta. The second is *The Science / Fiction of Human Enhancement* (2013). We will also make use of shorter videos as appropriate. Seeing and participating in discussion of these will be integral to participation in the course, and to my assessment of that participation.

### Eugenics Archives and Other Online Resources: Pedagogical Objectives

Along with producing the film *Surviving Eugenics*, The Living Archives project developed a range of educational resources relevant to many of the themes in the course that we will draw on. These resources are not only important to the content and structure of the course, but their use is also integral to the way in which our classroom time will be spent. I very much want to create an active learning environment in Phil 217, one in which you are encouraged to fashion your own pathways through the Eugenics Archives website.

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## D. THEMATIC OVERVIEW

The topics that we will cover are divided into three thematic sections covering (I) some general introductory material on race, primatology, implicit bias, and normalcy as sites for the interaction of science and social values; (II) the eugenic treatment of different kinds of people in the not-so-distant past and (III) the relevance of this history for thinking about contemporary technologies that aim to facilitate individual health, reproductive choice and bioenhancement. The Thematic Overview below should provide you with a quick way to eyeball the course content and get a sense of how it hangs together as a whole. There may be more here than we can cover, and we will scale back as necessary; in my experience, planning for 12 weeks in this course is sufficient to cover the full semester. For more specific details week-by-week, see section **E** below.

### I. Science and Society

1. Race on Display
2. Primates, Primatology, and Biopolitics
3. Science, Implicit Bias, and Social Values
4. Normalcy, Disability, and the Body

### II. Eugenics

5. Past and Present
6. Canada and Around the World
7. Western Canada
8. Eugenic Traits and Dehumanization

### III. Newgenics, Disability, and Biotechnology

9. Normal Bodies, Normalizing Minds
10. Disability and Prenatal and Genetic Testing
11. CRISPR and Germline Gene Editing
12. Bioenhancement and Transhumanism

## E. PROPOSED SCHEDULE

The following schedule will give you some idea of the week-by-week content of the course. Let me know if you have difficulty getting access to any of this material. Please cast your eyes over **D** above and the rest of **E** below and think about what you want out of the course. What you learn in this course, and just how much, will depend a lot *on you*. I will give you further directions regarding the readings for a particular class at the end of the preceding class. The brief comments for each section below should serve collectively to give you a more concrete idea of the contents of the course. Individually, they provide minimal guidance to the reading(s) for each section and should help to orient you on a weekly basis. *Please think about the **guiding questions** at the end of each of the weekly descriptions below as you prepare for that week's classes through reading and thought.*

### I. Science and Society

#### 1. Race on Display

- Sadiah Qureshi “Exhibit B Puts People on Display for Edinburgh International Festival”, *The Conversation* 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2014: <https://theconversation.com/exhibit-b-puts-people-on-display-for-edinburgh-international-festival-30344>
- Guido Abbattista, “Beyond the ‘Human Zoos’: Exoticism, Ethnic Exhibitions and the Power of the Gaze”. Text corresponding to the definitive version accepted for publication in “Esposizioni Universali in Europa. Attori, pubblici, memorie tra metropoli e colonie, 1851-1939” (a cura di Giovanni Luigi Fontana -Anna Pellegrino)”, in *Ricerche storiche*, XLV, 1-2, gennaio-agosto 2015, pp. 207-218.

Science never operates in a social vacuum, but the sciences that concern themselves with human affairs often clearly show the interaction between science and society. Here we take a look at practices that involve putting some people on display—at science fairs, in museums, in exhibitions—particularly those display practices with a racialized dimension to them. The biological and social sciences often blur the lines between research and public representation, and between pure and applied research, and by beginning with race on display we can raise questions about their various relationships, as well as that between science and politics.

**Guiding questions:** What is the significance of Exhibit B, according to Qureshi? What does Abbattista think about what he calls “human zoos” and their relationship to science?

#### 2. Primates, Primatology, and Biopolitics

- Donna Haraway “Primate Colonies and the Extraction of Value”, ch.2 of her *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. Routledge, 1990, pp.19-25.
- Donna Haraway “The Bio-politics of a Multicultural Field”, ch.10 of her *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. Routledge, 1990, pp.244-275.

The science of primatology has provided a meeting place for those reflecting on biology, culture, society, and science. Gender, race, and culture surface in the study of primates in a number of ways. For example, there

are distinct national traditions of primatology (e.g., Japanese vs American), and women have played key roles in Western primatology and in the public representations of primates and primatology. By exploring Donna Haraway's views of colonial aspects of primatology, we will open up a broader discussion of what is sometimes called the *biopolitics* of science. Non-human primates live naturally, for the most part, in developing countries, especially those in Africa, Asia, and South America. This fact, together with the colonial history of many of those countries, has influenced and constrained the development of primatology, as Haraway suggests.

**Guiding questions:** Why does primatology represent such an important site for interplay between scientists and science watchers? In what ways does primatology raise questions of race and gender?

### 3. Science, Implicit Bias, and Social Values

- Jennifer Eberhardt “Looking Deathworthy: Perceived Stereotypicality of Black Defendants Predicts Capital-Sentencing Outcomes”, *Psychological Science* 17(3, May 2006), pp.383-386. [Coauthors: Paul G. Davies, Valerie J. Purdie-Vaughns, and Sheri Lynn Johnson.]
- Sam Scott, “A Hard Look at How We See Race”, Stanford Alumni Magazine” [http://alumni.stanford.edu/get/page/magazine/article/?article\\_id=80755](http://alumni.stanford.edu/get/page/magazine/article/?article_id=80755)
- PBS Video: <http://web.stanford.edu/~eberhard/////videos-presentations.html> (8 minute video)
- Spirit of our Time “Have Mercy: Jennifer Eberhardt on Implicit Racial Bias @ PLMS”, <http://whatsortsofpeople.wordpress.com/2009/02/07/have-mercy-jennifer-eberhardt-on-implicit-racial-bias-plms> or simply search the What Sorts blog for “Jennifer Eberhardt”. (8-minute video)

Social psychologists study the cognitive processes that underlie our social interactions with one another. After discussing some general ways in which science, race, and social values are related, we will focus in on some recent work on *implicit cognition* and race done by the Stanford psychologist Jennifer Eberhardt. We will aim to understand what her studies tell us about how race is processed cognitively, and will step back to think more generally about science and race.

**Guiding questions:** In what sense does Eberhardt's data predict the “deathworthiness” of convicted criminals? Why do you think that Eberhardt herself claims “Have Mercy!” at one point in her talk? In what ways might science both reveal *and* express the kinds of implicit biases that Eberhardt's work researches?

### 4. Normalcy, Disability, and the Body

- Susan Wendell “The Flight from the Rejected Body”, ch.4 of her *The Rejected Body: Feminist Reflections on Disability*. Routledge, 1996, pp.85-113, esp. pp.85-93.
- Carl Elliott “Amputees by Choice”, chapter 9 of his *Better than Well: American Medicine meets the American Dream*. Norton, 2003, pp. 208-236.

Here we turn to two contexts in which the idea of normalcy plays a role in the biological and biomedical sciences and their cultural uptake. Susan Wendell focuses on disability from her standpoint as a person with myalgic encephalomyelitis (chronic fatigue syndrome), while Carl Elliott develops a discussion, first published in *Atlantic Monthly*, of what have been termed *amputee wannabees*: people who, like those seeking sex reassignment surgery, often feel that they have been “born into the wrong body”. In this case, the body they desire requires the amputation of one or more limb, or parts of limbs.



Starting searches: Our Stories: “Glenn Sinclair”; Players: “John MacEachran”; Institutions: “Institutionalization”

**Optional:** the following Wikipedia articles written by past 217 students: *Alberta Eugenics Board*, *Compulsory Sterilization [Alberta]*, *Sexual Sterilization Act*, *John MacEachran*, *Leilani Muir*, *Emily Murphy*, *Robert Charles Wallace*.

The Western Canadian chapter in the history of eugenics was the focus of the recently-concluded project *Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada*. As the province in which the vast majority of eugenic sterilizations in Canada were performed, Alberta occupies a particular place in this history, with the Sexual Sterilization Act of Alberta repealed only in 1972. Here we will focus on the basic facts that we know about eugenics in Western Canada, and explore questions that those facts raise about the uses of science and technology to influence future generations.

**Guiding questions:** Why was eugenic sterilization especially prevalent in Alberta amongst Canadian provinces? What roles did scientific knowledge and scientific ignorance play in the long history of eugenic sterilization in Alberta?

## 8. Eugenics Traits and Dehumanization

Wilson, Robert A. *The Eugenic Mind Project*, ch.3 “Specifying Eugenic Traits”, ch.4, “Dehumanizing the Targets of Eugenics”

Website: Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada, [www.eugenicsarchive.ca](http://www.eugenicsarchive.ca) . Focus on the following tools: Encyc, Interviews+

Starting searches: Encyc: “Feeble-mindedness”; Interviews+: Sandra Anderson

Certain traits, such as intelligence and mental deficiency, were the focus of eugenic research and propaganda. Three ideas about such traits—their variability, heritability, and un/desirability—fed the much more controversial eugenicist view that some traits make a person of “good stock”, while others reflect the fact that she comes from “inferior stock”. Here we will take a closer look at just which traits were considered eugenic, and at some of the ways in which the theory and practice of eugenics dehumanizes the people they target.

**Guiding questions:** In what ways did Alberta’s Sexual Sterilization Act differ from other eugenic legislation in North America? What, if anything, is intrinsically dehumanizing about eugenics?

## III. Newgenics, Disability, and Biotechnology

### 9. Normal Bodies, Normalizing Minds

Garland-Thompson, Rosemarie, “Becoming Disabled”, New York Times 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/21/opinion/sunday/becoming-disabled.html>

Anita Silvers “A Fatal Attraction to Normalizing”, in Erik Parens (editor), *Enhancing Human Traits: Ethical and Social Implications*. Georgetown University Press, 1998, pp.95-121.

Amanda Baggs “About Being Considered ‘Retarded’ ”,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qn70gPukdtY>

Website: Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada, [www.eugenicsarchive.ca](http://www.eugenicsarchive.ca) . Focus on the following tools: Our Stories, Interviews+

Starting searches: Our Stories: Candace; Interviews+: Gregor Wolbring, Part 1

There are many dimensions with respect to which human bodies (and human minds) vary. Science and medicine regulate both our ideas about this variation and what interventionist practices we consider acceptable. Here we will consider the role(s) that the concept of normalcy, and of normal bodies and minds in particular, play in the regulation of these ideas and practices. The focus of both articles this week will be on disability, science, and values.

**Guiding questions:** How does the concept of normalcy function in thinking about ourselves, our bodies, and our minds? When (and why and how) does difference make a difference to how people are viewed in the biological and psychological sciences?

## 10. Disability and Prenatal and Genetic Testing

- Erik Parens “Disability Rights Critique of Prenatal Genetic Testing: Reflections and Recommendations”, *Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Research Reviews* 9 (2003), pp.40-47. [Coauthor: Adrienne Asch]
- Bonnie Steinbock, “Disability, Prenatal Testing, and Selective Abortion”, in Erik Parens and Adrienne Asch (editors), *Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights*. Georgetown University Press, 2000, pp.108-123.
- Website: Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada, [www.eugenicsarchive.ca](http://www.eugenicsarchive.ca) . Focus on the following tools: Our Stories, Interviews+
- Starting searches: Our Stories: Barb Osemeemow; Interviews+: Gregor Wolbring, Part 2 (firs 8 mins)

Genetic testing has increased reproductive autonomy in obvious ways. In the 1990s, disability rights advocates offered a critique of some of the practices here that were (and still are) in widespread use. Here we will seek to understand this critique—the disability critique of selective abortion, sometimes called the “expressivist objection” to prenatal screening—and its significance for some of the broader questions considered in the course.

**Guiding questions:** What is the expressivist objection, and is it a good objection? In what ways is the idea of ableism useful or limiting in thinking about human-applied technologies?

## 11. CRISPR and Germline Gene Editing

- Center for Genetics and Society, “About Human Germline Gene Editing”, 2016: <http://www.geneticsandsociety.org/article.php?id=8711> . See especially the following articles linked there: Nathaniel Comfort, “[Can We Cure Genetic Diseases Without Slipping into Eugenics?](#)”, *The Nation* (16 July 2015); Francoise Baylis and Janet Rossant, “[This CRISPR Moment](#)”, *The Walrus* (12 February, 2016); John Harris and Marcy Darnovsky, “[Pro and Con: Should Gene Editing Be Performed on Human Embryos?](#)”, *National Geographic* (August 2016).
- Film: *Fixed: The Science/Fiction of Human Enhancement*. New Day Films, 2013.
- Website: Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada, [www.eugenicsarchive.ca](http://www.eugenicsarchive.ca) . Focus on the following tools: Interviews+, Pathways
- Starting searches: Interviews+: Gregor Wolbring, Part 2; Pathways: “Selecting for Disability”

Many contemporary concerns about putatively ongoing eugenic practices and ideas are reactions to advances in genetic techniques (cloning, DNA fingerprinting, sequencing, gene therapy) and knowledge. Some of the anxieties here are a function of the history of eugenics, while others relate to uncertainty about the impact of new technologies on both individual choice and social policy. Here we will focus on biotechnology that has

received much attention in the past few years involving germline gene editing, and continue our focus on its significance for disability and human variation.

**Guiding questions:** Is eugenics an inevitable part of our human situation, as some have argued? What is the relationship between biotechnological and biomedical advances, such as screening and sequencing technologies, and eugenics?

## 12. Bioenhancement and Transhumanism

Deborah Kent      “Somewhere a Mockingbird”, reprinted in Erik Parens and Adrienne Asch (eds.) *Prenatal Testing and Disability Rights*. Georgetown University Press, 2000, pp.57-63.

Website:            Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada, [www.eugenicsarchive.ca](http://www.eugenicsarchive.ca) . Focus on the following tools: Connections, Game

Starting searches:    Connections: “Human Enhancement”, “Transhumanism and Radical Enhancement”, Game: Newgenics

While some forms of bioenhancement are intergeneration, those that are most often considered as bioenhancements are cast as improvements to the lives of existing and future individuals. Human enhancement is not a new idea, but when combined with the increasing power of technologies to create new and modified sorts of people, it has the potential to be more radically transformative of society than in the past. The sorts of attitudes we adopt to technologies of biological enhancement and the eugenic possibilities they create should be informed by moral considerations, and we will look to reflect on these in light of other material covered in the course.

**Guiding questions:** How should we think about eugenics in changing cultural circumstances, and in light of technology’s contribution to our increased capacity to exercise reproductive and technological choice? Are there limits—ethical, social, technical—to human bioenhancement?

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## F. WORKLOAD AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The **reading load** for the course as assigned in **E** is light-moderate in quantity and in overall level. The writing load for the course is moderate. In general terms, I have scaled back the amount of reading material we will cover in the course, relative to its early incarnations, in part to allow some of you more space to pursue topics that you have or develop strong interests in; in part to provide the rest of you with more time to concentrate on what the course strictly requires; and in part to make some room for you all to engage in some more active learning strategies, such as keeping an assessable reading log (see below). So this load should also allow you some space to explore the additional resources that the course affords, as your interests dictate.

**Assessment** will be determined as follows by four **equally-weighted** components: **(a)** active participation, including class attendance and manifest preparation, apportioned equally over the whole course, including maintaining a reading log that records your summaries of and reflections on the assigned readings and other resources, covering weeks 1-11 of the course; **(b)** a short (4-5 page) paper on a set topic corresponding to material covered in Weeks 1-4 and due in class on *Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2016*; **(c)** a term paper of 2500-3000 words due *on the last day of classes*, and **(d)** a final examination covering the entire course. Thus, 25% of your final grade will be determined by each of these four components, and 50% of it before the end of semester, one-third by the course’s halfway mark. Since the most important of these as an indicator of your ability is (c), I shall use that as a way to resolve any strictly borderline grades.

Regarding **(a)**, your participation grade will be determined by your attendance at, preparation for, and active participation in class each week. This preparation can be demonstrated by participating in classroom discussions, by contributing to online discussions on the Eclass site for the course, by completing any minor



writing assignment not otherwise assessed, and most importantly by keeping a regular reading log. This log will be kept on Eclass, and while I have included it primarily as an active learning tool, it should also show the reading and thinking you have been doing for the course on a week-by-week basis. I will monitor these regularly, and provide feedback as seems appropriate.

The final examination (**d**) will likely be essay-based, and a common procedure that I have used in the past is to circulate a list of questions ahead of time and use a subset of questions on that list with limited choices on the examination itself. For the term paper (**c**), I will distribute a list of topics for it by Week 8, earlier if I can. I would be happy to discuss drafts of term papers in advance of their deadline.

**Late submission of papers is strongly discouraged**, and you should talk to me in advance about a paper that will not be submitted by the due date. Expect a grade reduction for a late paper that does not have an extension in writing from me; I penalize at a grade a day for late papers, and will set a date (on the list of paper topics) after which the paper will receive a grade of *zero*. To avoid disappointment, please take this general policy seriously.

Finally, what I hope is a reminder for most of you: that **plagiarism** is a seriously academic offense that is grounds for disciplinary action. The first item under “Inappropriate Academic Behaviour” in the University of Alberta’s Code of Student Behaviour reads:

*30.3.2(1) Plagiarism*

*No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.*

This document can be found at:

<http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour/303OffencesUndertheCode/3032InappropriateAcademicBehav.aspx>

I also draw attention to a later section of this same document:

*30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts*

*No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage*

since several students I have taught in the past have been investigated for this breach of the student code.

I would encourage you to consult these sites early in the course if you are unfamiliar with their contents and, more generally, **not to risk the consequences of plagiarizing** in this course, which could include not only *outright failure in the course*, but have more severe repercussions for your future at the University. As 30.3.6(4) above implies, plagiarism is not the only way to violate the Code of Academic Integrity that the University operates under, and other violations will also be treated seriously when detected. To sample from my recent experiences at Alberta, the following kinds of behaviours, should they occur in this course, will be viewed by me as reasonable grounds to think that the Code of Student Behaviour has been violated:

- lying to your instructor about personal illness or family misfortune in order to get an extension on a paper (e.g., you were not actually ill, the person you have claimed died is actually still alive)
- falsely claiming that your participation in the course has been limited because of another course you are taking (e.g., when the course does not even exist, when it exists but you are not taking it)
- throwing your paper at your instructor because you are disappointed in the grade you receive for it, and engaging in defamatory communications about your instructor on that basis.

What follows in the remainder of this section are notes required on all syllabi in the Faculty of Arts, many of which pertain to such matters.

Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.

## Academic Integrity

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/CodeofStudentBehaviour.aspx>) and avoid any behaviour that could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

## Learning and working environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice:

(<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>). Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at <https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110>.

## Academic Honesty:

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Student Conduct and Accountability](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

## Recording of Lectures:

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor.

## Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [23.3\(1\)](#) and [23.5.6](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

## Student Accessibility Services:

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Student Accessibility Services, contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email [ssdsrec@ualberta.ca](mailto:ssdsrec@ualberta.ca); Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB [www.ssds.ualberta.ca](http://www.ssds.ualberta.ca)).

## Grading:

Each piece of work completed for the course will be given one of the following letter grades, and these will be converted to a grade point in according with the following table, then added together and averaged to arrive at your final letter grade. There is no fixed percentage of students who can receive any particular grade for any particular assessment component, or overall in the course; there are also, in my view, no meaningful descriptors for any of the particular grades, except a larger number of smiley-face emoticons the higher your grade 😊 😊 😊 😊.

Letter	%	Pts	Descriptor
A+		4.0	
A		4.0	
A-		3.7	
B+		3.3	
B		3.0	
B-		2.7	
C+		2.3	
C		2.0	
C-		1.7	
D+		1.3	
D		1.0	
F		0.0	

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## G. ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

I came to Alberta in July 2000 as a Professor of Philosophy after teaching previously at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where I was a member of the Cognitive Science Group at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, and at Queen's University. I did a BA(Hons) in Philosophy at the University of Western Australia, and my MA and PhD in Philosophy at Cornell University, minoring in Cognitive Studies. I was the founding Director of Philosophy for Children Alberta (2008-2015) and the principal investigator for the *Living Archives on Eugenics in Western Canada* project (2010-2015, see [www.eugenicsarchive.ca](http://www.eugenicsarchive.ca)) a 5-year project funded by the Community-Research Alliance Program of SSHRC. I was also a Professor in Educational Policy Studies from 2013 to 2015.

My chief research and teaching expertise is in the philosophy of mind, cognitive science, and the philosophy of biology; I have also published on topics outside of these areas—disability, Locke on primary qualities, personal identity, constitution views in metaphysics, and kinship. In general, I am most interested in connections between philosophy and the various sciences. I am the author or editor of six books, including *Boundaries of the Mind* (Cambridge, 2004) and *Genes and the Agents of Life* (Cambridge, 2005), and have recently completed drafts of two others, *The Eugenic Mind Project* and *Relative Beings*, both of which I expect to be published during 2017. I am a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a long-standing member of the Luxuriant Flowing Hair Club for Scientists (see Gallery #2).

<http://www.improb.com/projects/bair/bair-club-top.html>

August 2016

22 September 2016

28 November 2016