

Priscilla Wald
WST 360
Wed. 2:50-5:20
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Mon. 2-4 & by appointment
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The Genome Age

The Human Genome Project came with high hopes, huge promises, and considerable trepidation. The information yielded by the mapping of the human genome has already begun to transform the theory and practice of medicine, narratives of human history, and individual and collective identity. There is considerable talk of the ethical dilemmas that have surfaced with the new technologies that have accompanied the genome sciences: what are the implications of the changing definition of human being? Where is the boundary between property and human life, and what should be eligible for patenting? How should we interpret the information yielded by research in the genome sciences, and who should have access to that information? What are the contexts in which we can think about the consequences of this research? There is no question that important changes have followed from this research, and they will be among the issues we discuss in this class. But at least as important are the unresolved questions that are at the basis of our social, economic and political existence that have resurfaced with a new urgency because of this research.

In this course, we will explore a variety of issues, from property and medicine to kinship and citizenship, in which genomics has brought unresolved questions and tensions into focus. The course begins with the premises that these issues are central to Women's Studies and that feminist theory offers an important analytic frame through which to view them. We will explore both the insight that feminist theory affords into genomics and the relevance of genomics to the central concerns of Women's Studies.

Recommended reading on the Human Genome Project: Robert Cook-Deegan, *The Gene Wars* (available at the Duke University textbook store, Bryan Center)

Introduction

Aug. 31 Introduction

Sept. 7 Michel Foucault, "The Birth of Biopolitics," "On the Government of the Living," and "Governmentality"; Lisa Weasel, "Feminist Intersections in Science"
Recommended: Haraway, Harding, Keller (see e-reserves)

I. Property

In the first section of this course, we will consider how issues stemming from genomic research have brought to light some of the fundamental inconsistencies of the idea of property. We will also consider its centrality to the articulation of personhood and the social and political concept of belonging. There is more than a rhetorical relationship between trait and ownership, and genomic research can help us to understand both the nature of that relationship and the importance of recognizing it.

Sept. 14 Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property" (available through lexis nexis); Kaushik Sunder Rajan, "Genomic Capital"; Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, "The Body as Property"
Recommended: Stuart Hall, "Race, Articulation, and Societies Structured in Dominance"

Sept. 21 *Moore v. Regents of the University of California* (excerpts at <http://www.richmond.edu/~wolf/moore.htm>); Hannah Landecker, "Between Beneficence and Chattel: The Human Biological in Law and Science"; selections from journalism; Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonialism (web site at <http://www.ipcb.org/>)

Sept. 28 Robert Cook-Deegan, Director of the Institute for Genome Science and Policy's Center for Genome Ethics, Law and Policy: Genomics and Intellectual Property

II. Reproductive Politics, Kinship and Citizenship

In this section of the course we will explore the impact of genomics--and the insights it offers--into reproductive politics and models of filiation and affiliation. We will consider the relationship of science and medicine to our deepest conceptualization of belonging and attend to how science and medicine inform, determine and are articulated through the structures of social existence.

Oct. 5 Lauren Berlant, "America, 'Fat,' the Fetus"; Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas, "Biological Citizenship"; the State Child Health Insurance Program
Recommended: Alys Eve Weinbaum, Introduction to *Wayward Reproductions*

Oct. 12 Sarah Franklin, "Biologization Revisited": Rayna Rapp, Deborah Heath, and Karen-Sue Taussig, "Genealogical Dis-Ease"; Deborah Heath, Rayna Rapp, and Karen-Sue Taussig, "Genetic Citizenship"

Oct. 19 Fatimah L.C. Jackson, Professor of Biological Anthropology, University of Maryland; biology and cultural difference: the implications of the human genome project for the study of human difference

III. How Genomics is Rewriting Medicine, Race and Human History

While the first two sections of the course focus on the insights that genomics can yield into some of the most basic concepts of human existence and interactions, in the final section of the course, we will turn our focus back onto the most exuberant claims of genomics, which are in the areas of medicine and human history, and into their relationship to the concepts of indigeneity and diaspora. In some cases, we will revisit some of the issues we have already discussed but will reverse our focus. The penultimate class will consider Octavia Butler's prescient novel *Dawn* for the insights that it offers into science and colonization and into the history of that relationship in the formation of the culture in which the Human Genome Project came into existence.

Oct. 26 Selected essays on race and genomic medicine

Nov. 2 Genomics and global health document at <http://www.unesco.org/wfeo/genomics.pdf>; Paul Farmer, selections from *Pathologies of Power*

Nov. 9 Jenny Reardon, *Race to the Finish*

Nov. 16 Octavia Butler, *Dawn*

NOV. 28 PLEASE ATTEND THE GENES AND SCREENS SCREENING OF SPENCER WELLS'S DOCUMENTARY, *THE JOURNEY OF MAN* AND THE PANEL DISCUSSION THAT WILL FOLLOW. 7 PM, Griffith Theater, Bryan Center.

Nov. 30 *The Journey of Man; The Genographic Project*
(www.nationalgeographic.com/genographic)

Requirements: Please plan to attend class prepared to discuss the readings for the week. All readings are available on e-reserves or as handouts (or, in the case of the books, in the Duke University textbook store in the Bryan Center) unless otherwise specified. For those of you taking this course for credit and needing a grade, I will work with you to tailor writing assignments to your particular needs.