

Biology 1210 – Ethical Issues Project

Assignment overview

The purpose of this assignment is to connect what you will be learning about in BIO 1210 with issues that are socially relevant. You may not currently be aware of just how much the biological sciences impact our everyday lives. By the end of this assignment, through your own research and by listening to the research of your peers, you will become more aware of these issues.

This will be a group assignment (2-3 members per group). The project is divided into 3 components: 1) a project summary and literature cited, 25 points, 2) a research paper, 50 points, and 3) a presentation to and discussion with your peers, 25 points. All group members will receive the same grade on all three aspects of the project.

Information to be included in the project

At each stage of the assignment, you must be cognizant of the information that should be included in the paper and presentation. The topics that must be included are:

- Introduction to the ethical issue
- Scientific background of the issue
- Explanations of the various arguments on the topic
- Group's viewpoint or opinions on the topic
- Conclusion

Please note that this assignment is an INFORMATIVE presentation of a controversial topic. You are expected to present both sides (or all sides if there are more than two) fully! Also, because one of the basic assumptions of science is that phenomena have natural sources that can be observed, tested, and understood (no supernatural causes), you may not use statements involving the will or wants of God or Gods, or accusations that a group or individual is “playing God” to support your position in this course. The claim that proponents of an issue are or would be “playing God” has been made throughout human history, and represents an easy but lazy method to avoid critically thinking about an issue. Your arguments must be based upon critical analysis.

NOTE ON GROUP PARTICIPATION: All group members are expected to contribute the same amount of work to this project. If there is a complaint about any group member's LACK of participation, I will issue that group member a warning. If participation as reported by other group members does not improve, I will remove that member from the group and he/she WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY POINTS for all subsequent components of the assignment.

Topic Selection

TOTAL POINTS: 0 points

DUE DATE: Tuesday, January 31 in class

Each group member will come up with a topic that deals with an ethical issue regarding some aspect of cell biology. As a group, you will then select ONE of the topics for your project. All topics will be

handed in and the chosen topic for the project will be specified. Failure to turn in a topic by the due date will result in a 15% reduction in the overall ethical issues assignment grade (all components included).

Summary and Literature Cited

TOTAL POINTS: 25 points

DUE DATE: Thursday, February 23 in class

Finding sources for your Topic

As a group, you will read and analyze 10 **primary sources** related to your pre-approved topic. Each source must be an objective source (refer to your “Reference Guidelines” for what constitutes an academic source), and your 10 sources should include the following:

- at least 6 scholarly articles
- no more than 2 books
- no more than 2 authoritative websites

NOTE on websites as sources: Web pages are in general unacceptable sources, unless they are from a trustworthy site (a major newspaper, journal, discussion forum, or government website). If you have any questions about the validity of a source, please send me the link via e-mail and I will let you know if it is acceptable or not. As a rule of thumb, if it is an organization or business that has an interest in one side of a topic versus another, consider that source a biased source that should not be used. In addition, unregulated sites (where anyone can post any information they want to post) such as Wikipedia or blogs are **NOT ACCEPTABLE SOURCES**.

1. *Individual Assignment – Summary (12½ points)*

Each individual in the group will select a **DIFFERENT** paper that he or she considers the group’s “best” source. That individual will then summarize that source in a 500 word paper. The summary paper, with an accompanying photocopy of the **original source**, will allow the instructor to check for student comprehension and to make suggestions before completion of the major paper.

2. *Group Assignment – literature cited (12½ points)*

As a group, you will turn in **ONE** literature cited that lists **all 10** of the sources that you have found. Following each properly formatted citation (you must use the formatted presented in the “Lab Report Guidelines” on Moodle). All 10 of the literature cited sources should be important to your topic and therefore must be used in the final paper. Points will be lost for each citation in the literature cited that is not in your final research paper.

The literature cited must be a compilation of all of the sources for the entire group – I will not accept separate assignments from separate individuals – they must be put together into one document. Also, citations should be presented in alphabetical order by first author’s last name (not by type of source). If there is no author, the first word of the title should be used. Assignments that do not conform to these guidelines will not be graded.

Research Paper

TOTAL POINTS: 50 points

DUE DATE: Thursday, March 29 in class

You will write a paper detailing the controversial issue regarding your pre-approved topic. This paper will be an informative and critical paper, which means that you will equally discuss all sides of the issue objectively. Please follow these guidelines:

- Writing projects must utilize Standard English. The quality of the writing, including correct spelling, syntax, and grammar will be reflected in the grade.
- Papers must comply with the regulations provided in the syllabus; failure to meet these criteria will result in your manuscript being rejected and returned ungraded.
- A cover page with a title, names of the group members, date, and course must be present.
- The paper will be a minimum of 5 pages in length (not including literature cited or cover page) and will summarize the various viewpoints and state your position on the topic.

The major topics that you must cover in the paper are an introduction to the issue, scientific background of the topic, explanations of the various arguments of the topic, the group's viewpoint on the topic, and a conclusion (this is explained at the top of this assignment). You must include a **MINIMUM of TEN CITATIONS** within a literature cited section that are also cited within the text of the paper. The same guidelines for types of citations that were outlined for the literature cited apply to the paper assignment. All citations listed within the literature cited must be cited within the text of the paper. In-text citations must be included for all outside information, and should follow the format presented in the "Lab Report Guidelines". Avoid using direct quotations in the paper unless absolutely necessary.

In addition to the paper, **EACH GROUP MEMBER** must fill out and turn in an evaluation of their group (see the end of this assignment) on the day that the paper is due. Individuals will not receive a grade for the paper until this evaluation is received!

Presentation

TOTAL POINTS: 25 points

DUE DATE: Groups will present their topic to the class during LAB on either April 19 or April 26. The week of presentation will be determined by random draw.

Presentation material should follow the same organization and content of the paper – but you are **NOT TO READ YOUR PAPER!** Writing format and speaking format are very different.

Details of the presentation:

- Each group should plan on their presentation lasting 10–12 minutes with 5–10 minutes for questions by the audience and for discussion. The presentation should describe your topic thoroughly, and the group is responsible for leading discussion about the topic. (you should think about some questions for discussion before you give the presentation)
- Every member of your group will contribute equally to the presentation. Failure to do so will result in the group's score decreasing
- You should practice your talk extensively and deliver it as smoothly as possible to the audience.

Make sure the presentation falls within the allotted time limit. Presentations that fall below 10 minutes or over 12 minutes will be penalized appropriately.

- You will be penalized if you read your presentation from sheets of paper, note cards, the powerpoint, etc. You may still use these resources, just do not rely on them completely.
- You will be allowed to use Powerpoint (this is not a requirement, but may help the flow of presentation). Use it mostly to show pictures or diagrams that will enhance your presentation. Short outlines are allowed but you should not be reading from them – they are there to keep you and your audience focused, not to be read from. Superfluous use of non-relevant images (i.e. ones that do not enhance your presentation) will result in a reduction of your score.

NOTE to audience members: Audience members are expected to participate in these sessions by being attentive, taking notes, and asking questions if time permits.

Group Research Project Team Evaluation Form

Your Name: _____

Please use the space below to describe your responsibilities for the research project. What did you do? What did you organize? What did you write? etc. If you need more room, please use the back of the page.

Write the names of everyone in your group on the lines below (including yourself). For each member of the group (again, including yourself), estimate how much he/she contributed to the completion of the project. Express this estimate as a percentage for each group member (these should add up to 100%, or total project completion).

NAME

CONTRIBUTION
