

Biology 324 - Spring 2008

Human Genetics

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Although the instructors do not have set office hours, all will be happy to meet with students as needed. To set up a meeting, contact instructors by email.

Text: Thompson and Thompson, Genetics in Medicine, 7th edition. R. L. Nussbaum, R. R. McInnes, and H. F. Willard.

Website: All course handouts, PowerPoint presentations, and other materials will be available on the course website (<http://www.nslc.wustl.edu/courses/Bio324/bio324.html>). The username for this site is bio324; the password will be announced in lecture.

Homework: Problem sets will be handed out in lecture every week or so. These will not be graded, but will serve as important preparation for the exams.

Short writing assignments: You will be responsible for four brief reports. Three of these will be one-page summaries of individual papers assigned during lecture. These three reports should summarize the main points of the papers selected and include some logical extension of your own beyond the contents of the paper. For example you could describe future work suggested by the results in the paper, or critique some aspect of the paper. These three assignments are due in class February 18, March 31, and April 23. A fourth short assignment will be to attend a seminar on some aspect of human genetics and write a one-page summary as above. The seminar report is due April 23. Together, these four short reports will count for 10% of the final grade.

All seminars offered in the Division of Biology are listed at <http://dbbs.wustl.edu/dbbs/website.nsf/SDN?OpenView>. Those

held in the Department of Genetics are listed at http://www.genetics.wustl.edu/seminar_sp08.php. These websites include seminars on all aspects of biology - please be sure that your report is for a seminar that is in some way related to human genetics.

Examinations: There will be two midterm exams. These will be held in class on February 13 and March 26. The final exam will be held from 10:30-12:30 PM on May 5. The lowest grade from these three exams will be dropped, and the remaining two grades will each count 20% toward the course grade. The low grade is dropped to accommodate those who have to miss an exam because of illness, athletic events, family problems, or whatever other reason. **THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUP EXAMS.**

Regrades: Regrades will be accepted for two weeks following the return of each exam. Regrade requests should be made to the instructor who graded the question.

Term paper: A term paper will count for 50% of the course grade. Students are free to write about a broad range of topics in human genetics. Many students will likely focus on a specific genetic condition or disease and summarize what is known about its inheritance, molecular basis, treatment, population genetics, ethical issues, etc. Others will choose to focus on specific processes (e.g. imprinting, trinucleotide repeat instabilities, etc.) or issues (e.g. specific ethical concerns). You will be required to hand in by midterm break (March 5) a one paragraph description and summary of the goals of your paper along with citations for 10 key references for your paper. For each reference you will need to include a one-paragraph summary and a statement of why it is important for the paper you have planned. This midterm report will count 7% toward the final grade. The term paper itself will be due on April 28, and will count 43% toward the final grade. This paper should be 15 pages double-spaced. Useful online resources for the term paper are listed on the course website.