First Year Seminar:
Do Genes Fit our Values?

Seminar Description:
In this first year seminar class, we explored various topics of the science and ethics behind genetics, in a small group setting. We explored a lot of controversial topics relating to real life scenarios. Most of these topics are very current in modern news both on a national and international scale.

Who We Are:
We are a group of first year students from a variety of disciplines:
Arts and Sciences & Biological Sciences
Bio Diversity & Bio Med & Philosophy & Hotel and Food Administration

What We Do:
- Assigned a new case each week
- Dissect each scenario and categorize the information into What We Know and What We Don’t Know
- Based on what we don’t know, we identify Learning Issues
- Individually research the assigned Learning Issue
- Discuss our research and draw conclusions

Example Case:
From Stem to Sperm

Case:
This sample case below was inspired by the movie, The Baby Formula, and the science behind stem cells:
You are working at the Apomixis Family Planning and Fertility Clinic in New York. You have been allocated the case of Gaia and Chaos, two healthy women in their early thirties. They wish to begin a family and want to acquaint themselves with all the options that are available. In particular, they are members of a collective of like-minded women who reject interaction with men. Indeed the group would prefer not to permit a single cell from the male to contaminate them.

Example Learning Issues:
- Artificial Insemination by a Donor
- In Vitro Fertilization using a Sperm Donor
- Stem Cell Production of a Conceptus
- Genetic Recombination In Vitro

Conclusions We Made:
At this time, it is impossible for these women to have a child without male involvement. Researchers are actively researching other options, and being in a same sex relationship does not inhibit the couple’s options for a child.

Where we’ve been:
By: Tal Feldman, Josephine Gaupholm, Victoria Giampaolo, Shawnna Hampson, Jessica Helwig, Annemarie Mantione, Ruth Nathaniel, Sydney Willemse and Kendall Wilson

What we’ve gained:
- Improved group skills and teamwork
- Analyzing information from different perspectives
- Presentation skills
- Multi-tasking skills
- Identifying core issues and problems
- Group processing
- Researching out of your field
- Critical thinking
- Giving and receiving criticism