Human Reproductive Technologies:
Science, Ethics, and Society
Demography 24

TIME: Wednesday, 4–5 pm
LOCATION: Unit 3 (residence hall), 2400 Durant Avenue, Room A10
PROFESSOR: John R. Wilmoth
OFFICE HOURS: Wednesday, 9-11 am; 2232 Piedmont Ave., Rm. 204
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READER: A reader is available for purchase at Copy Central, 2560 Bancroft Ave.

DESCRIPTION: Human reproductive technologies and practices have changed rapidly over the past 50 years, and further changes are anticipated in the 21st century. This seminar will examine such developments from both historical and futuristic perspectives. Topics will include birth control, in vitro fertilization, sperm banks, surrogate parenting, and cloning. The science of such techniques will be reviewed at a level appropriate for a general audience. The social and ethical implications of changing reproductive technologies will also be discussed.

GRADING: The course is graded on a P/NP basis. Your grade for the semester will depend entirely on attendance and class participation. In short, you must attend class regularly, and you must participate in class discussions in order to pass the course. More than one absence could lead to a grade of NP. Likewise, inadequate preparation (i.e., evidence that you have not done the readings) will be noted every week and will count as the functional equivalent of not attending class.

CALENDAR AND READINGS

January 21  Introduction (no readings)
January 28  History and technology of birth control

February 4  Overview of human fertility and reproductive technologies
Course notes on human reproduction, fertilization, and assisted reproductive technologies.
Paola S. Timiras, “Physiology of Human Growth and Development” (MCB 135E), Fall 2003.
(Source: http://mcb.berkeley.edu/courses/mcb135e)


February 11 Technology of assisted reproduction

American Society for Reproductive Medicine. Patient’s Fact Sheet. Topics: (1) In Vitro Fertilization, (2) Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection, (3) Risks of In Vitro Fertilization. (Source: http://www.asrm.org)


February 18 Historical opposition to birth control

February 25 Social consequences of modern birth control

March 3 Assisted reproduction as an industry

March 10 Ethical and policy issues involving sperm banks and egg donors

March 17  Ethical and policy issues involving in vitro fertilization


March 24  No class (Spring break)

March 31  No class, or possibly a film (TBA)

April 7  Social context of surrogate parenting

April 14  Ethical and policy issues in surrogate parenting


April 21  Science of cloning


April 28  Ethical and policy issues in human cloning


May 5  Visions of the future