

General Syllabus for BIO 117: *The Right and Wrong of Healthcare Science* Spring 2014, 3 credits

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Please address me as “Dr. Merriman”.
Office hours: Tue 1:00-2:00 pm and Thu 9:30-10:30 am.
Appointments: Sign up on sheet on my office door. If nothing listed works, [email me](#).

Class meetings: Tue & Thur, 11:30 am-1:00 pm. This is the lunch hour, so I suggest you bring a snack!

Class motto: The plural of “anecdote” is not “data”.



About This Course: The average American trusts that ethical scientific reasoning is faithfully applied during the cradle-to-grave, life-or-death decision making of health care. Yet critics complain that “Bad Science” (BS) all too often betrays that trust, wasting money and risking lives. It takes years for doctors to learn their craft, so what can the average American possibly do? This class helps students develop their own critical thinking “BS meters” when it comes to health. We’ll look at claims about dietary supplements, alternative medicine, human enhancement, and prescription drugs. We’ll explore healthcare communities ranging from doctor-patient, to surgical team, to global modern medicine. Along the way, we’ll discover some logical solutions to common ethical dilemmas. Just enough biology will be taught for understanding arguments and evidence.

This Quest II’s Signature Question is *How do people understand and engage in community life?* As such, it aims to enhance your “civic knowledge” and to begin your habit of “civic engagement”.

Civic knowledge consists of an awareness and understanding of the various political and social processes that impact the nature and quality of life in local, state, national, or global communities. It also encompasses the cultivation of skills which may be useful in public life, like effective communication and ethical reasoning.

Civic engagement means having an appreciation for and applying the values gained from civic knowledge in real world settings, directed at improving the quality of life in the communities of which one is a part.

This Quest II’s central theme is Ethical Reasoning, boiled down to “doing the best thing” in any given situation... not always a simple task!

As part of your Liberal Education, this Quest II will help to *liberate* you from “in a rut” thinking. This course will help you to *make important decisions in context and with more confidence*, even in situations of complexity, diversity, and change. Look for sub-themes of:

- the natural world as it pertains to medicine;
- the diverse motivations of and relationships between the multiple actors in modern medicine;
- the structures (good and bad) by which medical knowledge advances.

Required Textbooks (note APA style)

Goldacre, B. (2011). *Bad Science: Quacks, flacks, and big pharma hacks*. New York, NY: Faber & Faber/MacMillan.

Goldacre, B. (2012). *Big Pharma: How drug companies mislead doctors and harm patients*. New York, NY: Faber&Faber/MacMillan.

You will want actual physical books, not downloads!

Other required Readings will post on our D2L site under “Content”.

This course will use:

- Titan Email accounts (not reading email is not a valid excuse for late or missed work).
- D2L page for the course, including:
 - Course Home
 - News (postings from your Instructor)
 - Podcasts (recordings of classes for the RARE occasion when you miss)
 - Content (for course documents, additional readings, etc.)
 - Discussion Boards (for asking questions whenever you like)
 - Grades (all grades will post here and your grade “thus far” will always be visible)
 - Online quizzes (these will be timed)
 - ePortfolio (at least 2 items are required to be placed in this)
- Early Alert grading (if your performance in this class up through the 3rd-4th week of the semester merits an alert, you will receive an email in the 5th week of the term with extremely important instructions)
- Podcasts (your Instructor will podcast every class meeting, but is NOT responsible for the technical aspects of the podcast)

Campus Resources: In the University Studies Program, we want you to be successful. The resources most likely to benefit you in this course are the Polk Library, the Reading Study Center, and the Writing Center. Please visit this resource page to read about these three and ALL the campus services available to support your success. www.uwosh.edu/home/resources/

Academic Honesty: All students at UW Oshkosh are bound by the campus standards of academic conduct laid out in Section UWS 14.03 of the student handbook, which can be viewed at <http://www.uwosh.edu/deanofstudents/university-polices-procedures/documents/ChapterUWS14.pdf>.

Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to: cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas; stealing examinations or course materials; submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course; tampering with the laboratory experiment or computer program of another student; knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed. Penalties for infractions are severe and may include penalties on assignments, penalties on course grade, probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Attendance Policy: Perfect attendance contributes to success in this course. Missing class is on your own recognizance and should be a VERY RARE occurrence. The only help your Instructor provides for missed classes are podcasts. Don't ask for notes or extra time on assignments, *etc.*

See “Assignment Syllabus” for information on schedule, assignments, grading, *etc.*