

Biotechnology and Society

Code: 100970
 ECTS Credits: 3

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500253 Biotechnology	OB	3	1

Contact

Name: Josep Espluga Trenc
 Email: JosepLluis.Espluga@uab.cat

Use of languages

Principal working language: catalan (cat)
 Some groups entirely in English: No
 Some groups entirely in Catalan: No
 Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites to follow the course successfully.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The main objective of this course is to systematically reflect on some of the main social debates generated by the new biotechnologies and their applications. More specifically, it is intended to learn:

- Basic sociological concepts.
- Theorizing the type of society in which the biotechnologies appear and develop.
- Learning theoretical knowledge to interpret social responses to biotechnology.
- Analyzing the political, economic, social or cultural constraints that influence the development of biotechnologies.
- Reflecting on the relationship between science, technology and society.
- Basics of bioethics.

Other objectives of the course are:

- Sociological reasoning, discussion and exposition of ideas about social reality in a clear and precise way.
- Developing team work skills.

Content

Lesson 1: Basics of sociology: Nature and society. Person and society. Social structure, rules and values. Social and power inequality. The question of the human nature.

Lesson 2: Characterization of contemporary society: From the industrial society to the post-industrial society. The risk society and the information society. Ideological paradigms and political systems. Globalization and emergence of the new biotechnologies.

Lesson 3: Concept of risk: Social risk perception. Risk communication. Risk assessment and the question of the caution principle. Science and politics in risk management.

Lesson 4: Social conflicts around biotechnology: Agribusiness applications and GMOs. Healthcare related applications. Human reproduction associated applications. The question about eugenics and social inequity. Biotechnology applied to other fields (environmental and others).

Lesson 5: Proposals from bioethics: Principles of bioethics. Bioethics institutions. Ideologies and mechanisms of legitimacy. Theoretical currents of bioethics.