

GATTACA – The Future of Genetic Technology?

I. Summary – What is this activity about?

Many films released over the past several years have dealt with genetic technology in one way or another. In the movie Jurassic Park, dinosaurs were brought back from extinction using genetic technology that spliced genes from frogs into DNA that was extracted from mosquitoes in amber. More recently, movies such as Mission to Mars and Spiderman have had cameo appearances by DNA. This activity is designed to familiarize you with one such movie that was based solely on the possibilities of genetic technology, GATTACA.

II. Goal – What will I learn?

This is an opportunity for you to take a look at film in a different light than you may normally. We often watch films purely for enjoyment and glance over the technical aspects, assuming the playwrights have done the necessary research on the topic. You should spend some time thinking about the possibilities of the technology presenting in the film GATTACA. Many of the technologies presented are possible and would have significant impacts on society should they be incorporated.

III. Objectives – What will I be able to do?

You will be able to look at film and other media sources in a more critical light. This will allow you to evaluate the possibility and consequences of the technology presented.

IV. Connection – How does this activity fit into the course and how does it connect to what I already know

The film portrays many of the issues you have already talked about in class. In an age of complete genetic screening from birth and no choice in an individual's role in society, the use of genetic engineering of offspring, routine sperm and egg selection, and in vitro fertilization are the norm. Knowing some of the real-world impacts of genetic screening and gamete selection, you should be able to critically analyze the film for the impacts of genetic technology on society.

V. Resources needed – What material do I need?

You will need a copy of the movie GATTACA. It can be found at most stores that rent movies or you can purchase the movie if you so desire from many of the media stores such as Best Buy, Circuit City or Media Play.

VI. Procedure – What will I be doing?

You will watch the movie. Hopefully you will take the opportunity to watch the movie with a group of individuals from class or with friends and family. It would be useful to be able to discuss your thoughts about the movie with others after watching the film.

VII. Requirements – What is due and when?

Write a minimum of two pages, and a maximum of three pages responding to the following points

1. Pick two specific examples of genetic technology used in the movie. Summarize in about a paragraph how the technology was used and for what it was used.

2. Write a reflection of how you feel about the use of such a technology. Answer the following questions in your discussion.
 1. What are some of the positive and negative applications of the technology?
 2. How does the technology affect the fictional society in the film?
 3. What are some other possible uses the technology has other than what is portrayed in the movie?
 4. How do you think the technology would affect our society if we decided to implement it immediately?
 5. Do you feel the technology should be used, why or why not?

VIII. Evaluation – How will I be evaluated?

This assignment will be worth 25 points, distributed as follows on the items stated in the requirements:

1. 10 points
2. 15 points