



AK2008 Ethics of Biotechnology

7.5 credits

Bioteknologins etik

This is a translation of the Swedish, legally binding, course syllabus.

Establishment

Course syllabus for AK2008 valid from Autumn 2010

Grading scale

A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Education cycle

Second cycle

Main field of study

Specific prerequisites

120 credits in technology or natural science, as well as Swedish B and English B (from Swedish **gymnasium**) or equivalent.

Language of instruction

The language of instruction is specified in the course offering information in the course catalogue.

Intended learning outcomes

After completed course the student should be able to

- outline the basic theories and concepts of moral philosophy, and apply those theories and concepts on problems in the field of biotechnology,
- identify and discuss in a critical manner, orally as well as in written form, ethical problems in the field of biotechnology,
- assess the quality of arguments put forth in the field of biotechnology and argue, in an independent and structured way, for or against possible positions held on central issues,
- analyse, independently and in written form, a philosophical problem or area of inquiry related to biotechnology.

Course contents

The course falls in two parts. The first part gives a background in moral philosophy, introducing normative theories like utilitarianism, duty ethics and virtue ethics, etc. The second part departs from practical ethical questions in the field of biotechnology. Questions to be discussed include: Is there an ethical difference between therapeutic and reproductive cloning? Should research on stem cells be legal? Are we the owners of our bodies and if so, should we be allowed to sell our bodily organs? How does gene technology affect the possibilities of giving everyone fair chances in life? How should we cope with risks associated with gene technology? The practical problems dealt with in the course will have influence on discussions of concepts such as rights, justice, ownership, naturalness, integrity, autonomy, and risk.

Disposition

Lectures, seminars, and individual essay writing (under supervision).

The course starts only if a sufficient number of students have applied for it.

Course literature

To be announced on the course homepage no later than four weeks before the course starts.

Examination

- ÖVN1 - Homework, 3.0 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F
- DEL1 - Attendance, 1.5 credits, grading scale: P, F
- TEN1 - Examination, 3.0 credits, grading scale: A, B, C, D, E, FX, F

Based on recommendation from KTH's coordinator for disabilities, the examiner will decide how to adapt an examination for students with documented disability.

The examiner may apply another examination format when re-examining individual students.

If the course is discontinued, students may request to be examined during the following two academic years.

Other requirements for final grade

- Attendance (DEL1; 1,5 cr)
- Exam (TEN1; 3 cr)
- Essay (ÖVN1; 3 cr)

Ethical approach

- All members of a group are responsible for the group's work.
- In any assessment, every student shall honestly disclose any help received and sources used.
- In an oral assessment, every student shall be able to present and answer questions about the entire assignment and solution.