



Yale-New Haven  
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
2001 Volume I: Medicine, Ethics, and Law

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## **The Genome: Controversy For All Times**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 01.01.02  
by Jimmy-Lee Moore

One topic that seems to garner visceral reactions from scientists to everyday people is the notion of science being in possession of the ability to understand and manipulate genes. Since humans are deemed fallible creatures, how will knowledge so germane to the crux of our very existence, escape the ravishes of ego, greed, domination, power, control, politics, and corruption.

“The Genome: Controversy for All Times” seeks to tackle some of the debate around gene identification. The discourse is centered in two schools of thought: ethics and morality. During the last twenty years, we have seen a thirty-percent increase in the number of centenarians. Clearly our bio-technical advances are working. We are spawning new scientific fields of study like “proteomics,” the study of the production of proteins. We are correcting past wrongs, freeing those who have been incarcerated unjustly, thanks to our continuing breakthroughs with DNA. We have sequenced 3.1 billion letters of DNA, and proven that humans are made up of 30,000 to 40,000 genes, only two times more than fruit flies. Historical denials, like the Thomas Jefferson debauchery, once vehemently denied, now pierces the veneer of American piety; courtesy of the genome factor by proving he fathered several of Sally Hemings’ children.

(Recommended for Critical Thinking, Science, English, and Debate, grades 8-12.)

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