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## Reimagining Bioethics Curricula: Centering Antiracism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR  
**BIOETHICS + HUMANITIES**

# **Reimagining Bioethics Curricula: Centering Antiracism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

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# Definitions

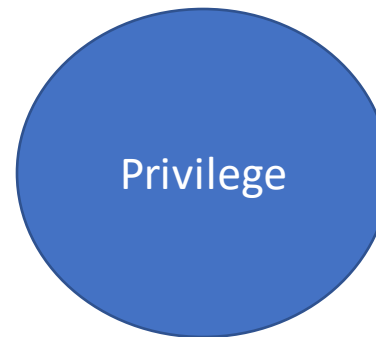
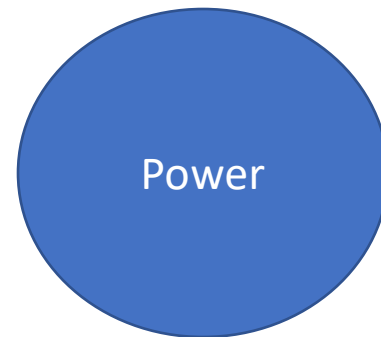
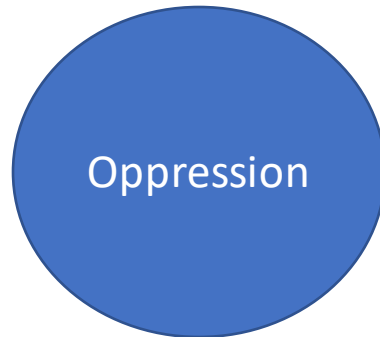
- **Whiteness:** as described by Anita Ho, is not about “skin color” but about “**dominant cultural norms and ideologies** that have come to **determine** how bioethics is practiced, and what principles and contexts are considered relevant in the inquiry” (Ho 2016, 24).
- **Intersectionality:** the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as **race, class, and gender** as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

# Background

- Four women of color
  - Students in an MBE program
  - Academic experiences
  - Audit of course offerings
  - Publicly accessible information
- Goal: We aim to encourage institutions to review and reform curricula to better reflect our priorities as a field related to justice and non-dominant narratives

# Introduction

- Bioethicists and power
- Ought to understand the operation of:



- Create a bioethics curriculum that reflects these issues as core concerns as **action against historical injustice that informs** health disparities in the care, outcomes, and experiences of the most marginalized

# Critical Time for Academia

- (1) Continue to treat these subjects as peripheral
- (2) Restructure curricula in order to center an inclusive understanding and approach for the next generation of bioethicists to avoid past exclusions of the field and reject performative solidarity

Similar calls to action in the past “were largely **ignored** by the bioethics ‘mainstream’ and thus have been (almost) lost to contemporary narratives about the history of the field” (Galarneau 2021, 34).

Implicit  
Bias

Disability

Historical  
Context

LGBTQI+  
Ethics

Whiteness

Intersectio  
-nality

Racism

# Methods

1

- Literature Review
- Non-Dominant Group Considerations → 39 Key Words

2

- 3 “MBE” Programs
- Course Descriptions as a proxy for course content

3

- Point System → Independent review
- Core vs. Non-Core



# Limitations

- Course Content unknown
- Depth of discourse
  - A course description may mention a topic, but may not engage a student with this topic in a meaningful way
- Pilot project to encourage further investigation within institutions



# Results

- Between schools X, Y, & Z: **89.5-92%** of points came from non-core or optional courses

## School X:

25 points scored, only 2 of them were from core courses

“History” vague and does not always include privilege, power, and oppression

## School Y:

3 non-core courses scored over 50% of School Y’s points

Students may freely decide to not take these courses and still become masters of bioethics

## School Z:

Only school that failed to mention “race/racism/racial”

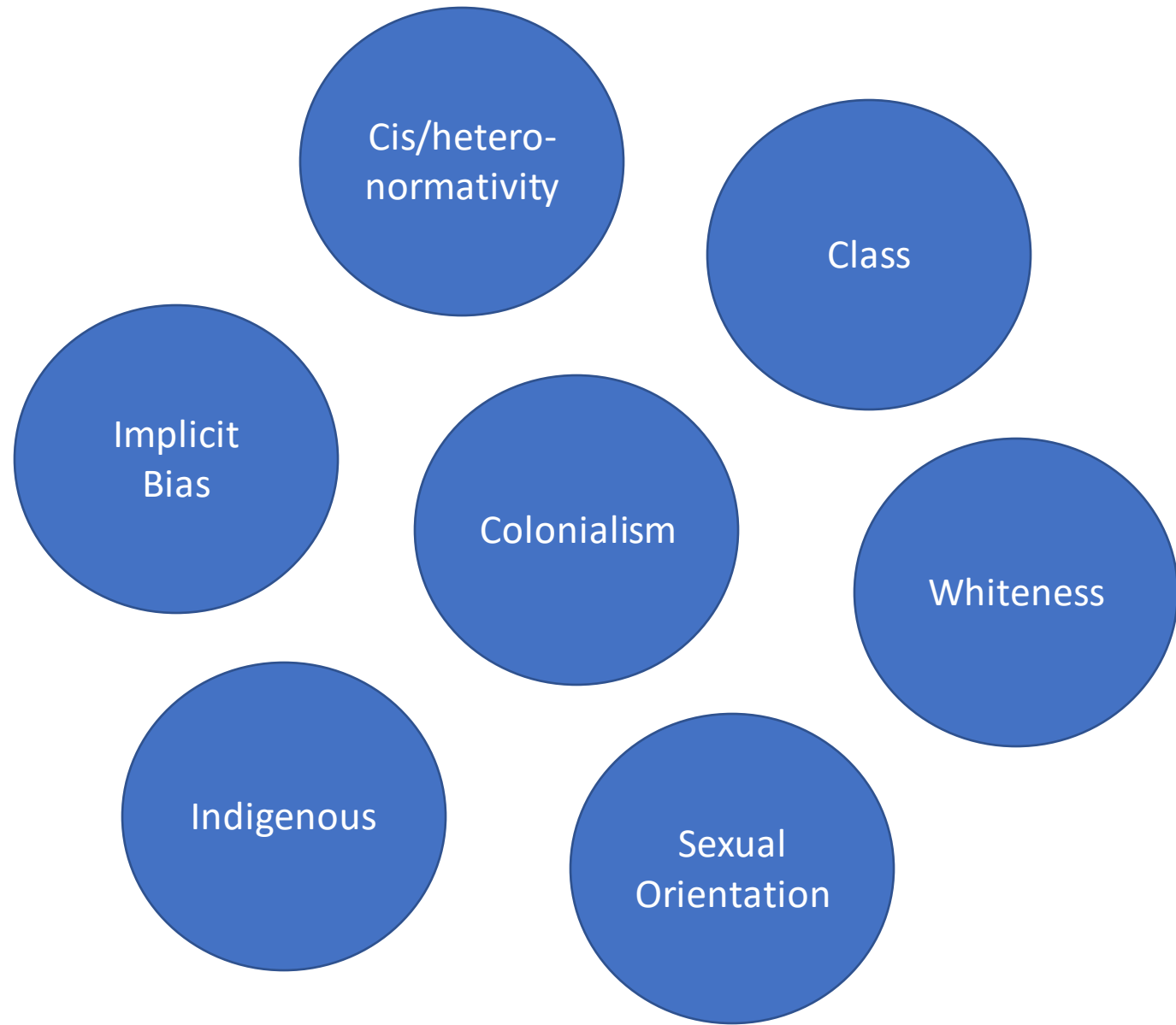
This program claims to address issues that their future graduates will face as bioethicists

# Results

	Number of Courses	Avg. Points Per Class	Number of Core Courses	Avg. Points Per Core Class	Number of Non-Core Courses	Avg. Points Per Non-Core Class
School X	16	1.56	3	0.66	13	1.77
School Y	21	1.81	5	0.80	16	2.13
School Z	12	2.00	5	0.40	7	3.14

# Results

- No schools mentioned:



# Conclusion

- Based on the course descriptions, there are very few non-dominant issues addressed in core courses
- Prevalence of key words in non-core courses
- These issues reside in the periphery which reflects our experience as students
- A future study should closely examine the syllabi and observe how these courses are taught to better understand whether these topics are discussed in class

# Recommendations

- Professors and Administrators:
  - Does our curriculum uphold whiteness?
  - What courses do we weigh more heavily than others and **why**?
- Include a **lens** of anti-racism, equity, and inclusion deliberately
  - For example: utilize cases that bring about these issues and include readings from authors of diverse backgrounds

These are preliminary suggestions as this is a pilot project. It is not meant to be used as a final list of recommendations but to begin the conversation regarding improvement within bioethics curricula and potentially within other disciplines

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