



The Ethics of the Old and New Biosocial Science
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This summer, my colleague Denise and I were blessed with the opportunity to work as PURM research assistants for one of *Penn's Integrates Knowledge University Professors*, Dr. Dorothy Roberts. Being an interdisciplinary scholar, Dr. Roberts teaches and conducts research with Penn's Law School, Penn's Graduate Department of Sociology, and Penn's Africana Studies Department. Dr. Roberts is a world-renowned professor, and was therefore asked to present at the 2016 Tanner Lecture on Human Values at Harvard University this upcoming November. She chose to focus her two lectures on the ethics of the old and new biosocial science. Denise and I helped Dr. Roberts research for her lectures, with the goal of examining the ethical relationship between biology, society, and justice. As I reflect back on the summer, I not only feel well equipped to conduct bioethical research, but I also gained invaluable learning experience.

Denise and I worked closely through the duration of our project to collect a bibliography of over 100 articles, books, and studies relating to the ethics of biosocial science. Biosocial science is a discipline that has been around for decades: it combines science and sociology in attempt to address social issues. While the old biosocial science has proven to be problematic in its biased methodologies and discriminatory policy outcomes, new biosocial scientists claim that their disciplines are rid of these problems. Denise and I were tasked with comparing and contrasting the theories, methodologies, and conclusions of the new biosocial science from the old biosocial science. Although there are many examples of fields that are considered "the new biosocial science," I spent most of my summer focusing on two: neurocriminology and genoconomics.

At the beginning of my research, I sought to answer a few questions such as "What kind of questions are scientists asking? What are the underlying assumptions they are making? What are the policy implications of some of the new biosocial sciences?" As a rising sophomore, I was intimidated at first by the scientific details incorporated in the sources I came across. There were

equations that I didn't understand, variables that I didn't know the definition of, and complex research methodologies that I had never studied. But during our meetings, Dr. Roberts taught me useful tips about how to read 30 page long scientific studies, and analyze its ethical implications. She also showed Denise and I how to determine which scientific studies were truly cutting edge by reading bibliographies, and using Google Scholar to look at how many times a study was cited. By the end of the summer, Denise and I presented Dr. Roberts our combined bibliography of sources, and our collective notes on some of the most modern, innovating biosocial studies.

While one memorable aspect of my PURM summer experience was learning how to conduct research, I found Dr. Robert's mentorship and wisdom extremely inspiring. As an aspiring Health and Societies major, I not only thoroughly enjoyed the content of the research, but weekly meetings with Dr. Roberts allowed me to ask her questions about her own career, and learn about the plethora of career paths my interest in bioethics could take me. Not only was Dr. Robert's mentorship helpful in giving me direction, but she also introduced Denise and I to an entire network of other professors and scholars conducting research in biosocial science. The highlight of my experience this summer was accompanying Dr. Roberts to a Biosocial Network meeting hosted at NYU. In the picture above, you can see Dr. Roberts speaking at the Biosocial Network meeting, which she helped coordinate. Panelist and speakers who came to give their opinions about the field, and present their own research followed her.

Participating in PURM granted me so many opportunities I could have never predicted I would have so early on in my academic career. This includes, but is not limited to, working for one of Penn's most distinguished professors, learning how to conduct bioethical research, and networking with professors and scholars who participate in the research I am interested in. This summer, I developed a passion for bioethical research, and was given both direction and clarity as to what I would like to do in the future.