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David Smith has been a Biology professor at UD since 1975 and has taught in the MALS program since 1993. In addition to conventional Biology teaching and research, he has been active in campus governance, both in the Faculty Senate and the Faculty Union. He has also consulted outside the University with Delaware's Department of Education and as an advisor to a Governor's panel which recommends policies concerning the genetic testing of newborns.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

MALS619 (core course): The Scientist in Society

Scientific research has always been strongly influenced by societal and political pressures and is not an isolated activity cut off from the community at large. This class explores these Relationships from the perspective of individual scientists and how their work was received, both positively and negatively. Examples span the entire scientific era, beginning with the work of Copernicus and Galileo in the 16th century and culminating with nuclear physicists in the 20th century. Scientific background is not needed for this course as the focus is on the individuals, not on the details of their work.

MALS620: The Use of Science in Public Discourse

An increasing number of legislative and legal decisions involve questions with a significant scientific component. The role of science in these decisions must be balanced against economic, ethical and other social concerns and an informed citizenry role is an important factor in the process. This class will explore real situations, both historical and current, that depend on the interplay of these many factors with the goal of developing an appreciation for the scientific process in the student. Detailed knowledge of technical topics is less important and students who do not have scientific backgrounds should have no trouble with the concepts that are presented.

MALS667: Bioethics: Hard Decisions in a Just Society

This course will consider the ethical implications of biomedical procedures, such as abortion, organ transplants, and experiments using human beings as subjects. There will also be a consideration of some of the broader interactions between science and society that may not have direct relationship to specific medical procedure. The course will begin with a detailed examination of basic principles of ethics and the various methods that exist for making the difficult decisions that arise in ethical questions.