



# Biology Seminar

Speaker: Renae Brodie, Ph.D.

Mount Holyoke College | Professor | Department of Biological Science

<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/directory/faculty-staff/renae-brodie>

Can we talk about race in the biology classroom?  
Approaches to addressing human variation and helping students understand why race is not a biological trait

Tuesday Apr. 1, 2025 | 4:00PM PDT | LSB 110



Undergraduate students in the biological sciences are often preparing for careers in areas where racial inequalities loom large, like public health, the medical professions, and education. And yet, as educators in higher education, we are often reluctant to talk about race, deeming it irrelevant or possibly even inappropriate for courses in the biological sciences. I argue that biology educators have the

expertise and an obligation to help students understand why biological races with fixed differences have not evolved in humans. Introductory biology courses, in particular, are opportunities for students to discard old, unscientific ideas about race and replace them with an understanding of human diversity informed by our evolutionary history. I describe an upper-level seminar that addresses our current understanding of human diversity, the history of scientific racism, and the biological consequences of being racially categorized. I also explain how I've incorporated similar material into an introductory biology unit on organismal diversity. I seek to engage other biologists in a dialog about the opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities that arise when we bring race into the biology classroom.

Seminar Speaker Host: Jon Herron

