

At more colleges, classes on genetics get personal

February 27 2013, by Ryan J. Foley



In this Oct. 29, 2012 photo University of Iowa professor Jeff Murray talks about his genetic profile during his honors seminar on personal genetics in which students had the option of sending saliva samples so a testing company could use DNA to unlock some of their most personal health and family secrets. The class, taught at Iowa for the first time, is part of a growing movement in higher education to tackle the rapidly advancing field of personal genetics, which is revolutionizing medicine and raising difficult ethical and privacy questions. (AP Photo/Brian Ray)

(AP)—University of Iowa student Bakir Hajdarevic (BOCK-heer hye-dar-vich) didn't have to study for the most important test in his genetics class. He just had to spit.

The 19-year-old took an honors seminar in which students could choose to send [saliva samples](#) for testing to learn about personal health secrets such as whether they are at risk for cancer or carriers for genetic disease.

Taught at Iowa for the first time, the class is part of a growing movement in higher education to tackle the field of personal genetics, which is revolutionizing medicine. Several other universities have recently added similar classes.



In this Oct. 29, 2012 photo professor Jeff Murray talks to University of Iowa students in his personal genetics class in which students had the option of sending saliva samples so a testing company could use DNA to unlock some of their most personal health and family secrets. The class, taught at Iowa for the

first time, is part of a growing movement in higher education to tackle the rapidly advancing field of personal genetics, which is revolutionizing medicine and raising difficult ethical and privacy questions. (AP Photo/Brian Ray)

They're forcing students to decide whether it is better to be ignorant or informed about possible health problems—a decision more Americans will confront as [genetic testing](#) becomes cheaper.

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