

**Movie Night: *Gattaca* (1997)**  
<https://genomicssalon.wordpress.com>  
 Genomics Salon, Oct 26, 2016  
 Eliah Overbey and Bryce Taylor

**Next Event**  
 Salon VII: Science and science fiction  
 Thursday, November 10, 4:30pm (Foege S-110)

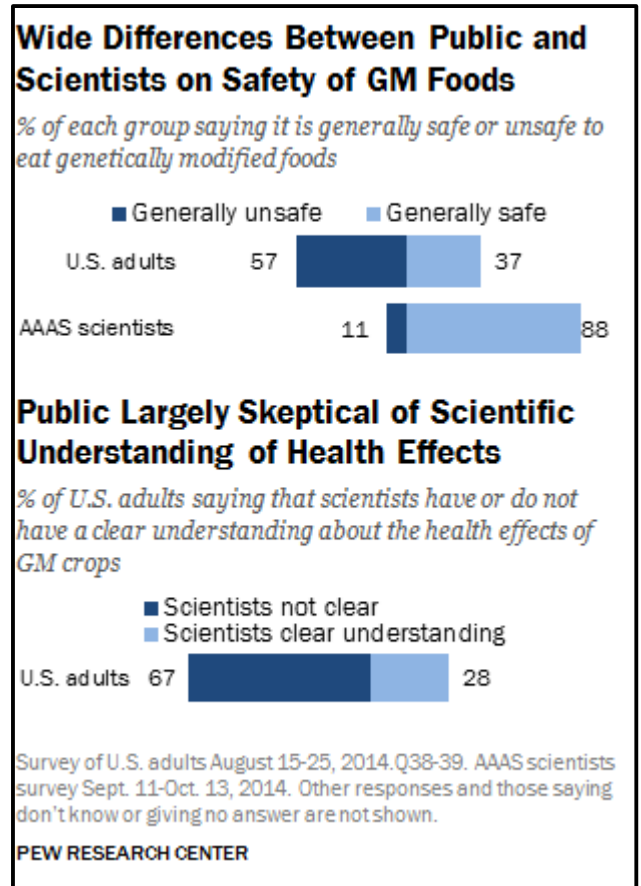
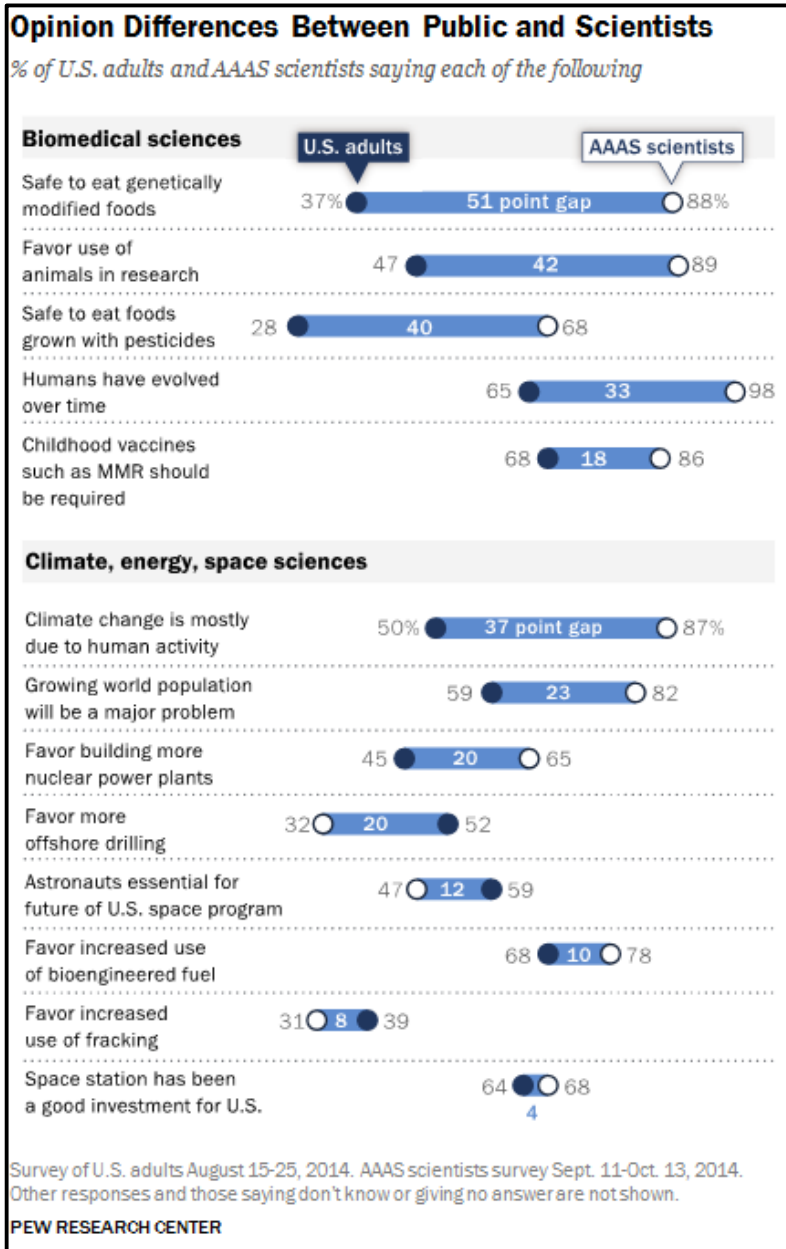
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To join, go to:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/uw-genomics-salon>

### Public and Scientists' Views on Science and Society

As scientists, our perspectives on science fiction likely differ from the perspectives held within the general public. Below are statistics collected by the PEW Research Center comparing how scientists view various topics in science compared to the general public.



## Key Theme in Gattaca: Genetic Discrimination

Throughout *Gattaca*, the protagonist faces institutional genetic discrimination and must circumvent this to achieve his goals. This begs the question, what can we do in our society to prevent genetic discrimination from occurring?

### Genetic Discrimination and United States Law

In 2008, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) was signed into law by President Bush. The bill passed in the Senate 95-0 and in the House 414-1 (the single dissenter was Congressman Ron Paul).

This law prohibits health insurance companies from denying coverage or charging increased rates based solely on a person's genetic information. Additionally, the legislation prohibits employers from using an individual's genetic information during hiring, firing, job placement, or promotion decisions.

GINA is seen as a step forward for personalized medicine. It has encouraged personalized medicine approaches by removing fear of patients being denied health insurance based upon genetic findings.

However, the law is not perfect. It only applies to health insurance. Not to life insurance, disability insurance, or long-term care insurance.

Senator Ted Kennedy called GINA the "first major new civil rights bill of the new century." GINA was the first anti-discrimination bill to be passed where there was no history of widespread pre-existing discrimination. Reported cases of genetic discrimination are quite low. In 2013, there were 333 filed out of over 90,000 total discrimination cases. These low numbers might be a positive effect of GINA, especially considering genetic testing has increased over the past decade, or they could be due to the fact that genetic discrimination has been rare to this point.

Many Americans are unaware that they are protected from genetic discrimination. An online survey of 1,479 individuals reported that 79 percent of respondents didn't know what GINA was or what protection it offered. Additionally, survey respondents reported that they became more fearful of genetic discrimination after becoming aware of GINA.

### Sources

#### Pew Research Center

Funk, C., & Rainie, L. (2015). Public and Scientists' Views on Science and Society. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/29/public-and-scientists-views-on-science-and-society/>

#### Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic\\_Information\\_Nondiscrimination\\_Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_Information_Nondiscrimination_Act)

#### The Verge

Duhaime-Ross, A. (Jan 2015). The US has laws against genetic discrimination, but people still fear it. Retrieved from <http://www.theverge.com/2015/1/29/7945031/genetic-discrimination-laws-us>

#### New England Journal of Medicine

Green, R. C., Lautenbach, D., & McGuire, A. L. (2015). GINA, Genetic Discrimination, and Genomic Medicine. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 372(5), 397-399. doi:10.1056/nejmp1404776

