Syllabus
Introduction to Science and Technology Studies
ANTH 455 - Spring 2008

Mondays 2-5, Sewall Hall 560
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office hours: Tuesday 10-12 or by appointment

January 2008 revised version

Science and technology studies (STS) is an interdisciplinary field that draws from anthropology, sociology, history, cultural studies and more to investigate the mutual permeation of technoscience and society. The focus of this course will be on illustrating some of the key questions of STS through analysis of particular concrete examples of scientific practices and objects.

This course has three units. The first unit introduces key concepts in STS, and has two ethnographies as central texts: one on brain imaging and the other on nuclear weapons science. Topics in this unit include the experimental method, objectivity, and subjectivity.

The second and third units are arranged topically around particular objects. We will introduce cyborg theory, and then look at three categories of boundary-blurring technoscientific organisms – transgenic, unborn, and undead. We will attend to the wide range of questions that can be addressed around four categories of technological objects – pharmaceuticals, bombs, computers, and home appliances. The final class will be devoted to student presentations.

Requirements of the course:

Attendance and Class Participation (25%): Students are expected to come to class having done the reading and to be ready to engage in discussion.

Weekly Assignments (50%): Early in the semester each student will choose one technoscientific practice, object, or organism to analyze for the semester. Some initial more structured assignments will help open the topics and objects, with less structured assignments for the rest of the semester. Each week, students will write a concise (roughly 500 word) response paper using the readings to reflect on their particular object. These are to be submitted 24 hours before class (Sunday at 2pm). The response paper might consider ways that the object is topically related to the readings, but more often should engage more creatively—for example, by imagining how one or more of the authors might analyze the object, or suggesting aspects of the object that the approach in question might miss. Connections can be creative and tangential, but should demonstrate comprehension of the reading. There are no extensions on response papers, but each student may skip one over the course of the semester without penalty.
Final Presentation (25%): The final day of class will have all students presenting a cumulative analysis of their object or practice. Emphasis is on analysis rather than outside research. There is no final paper or exam.

Required books, available at the bookstore and on reserve in the library:


All other readings are available on Owlspace.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wk 1</td>
<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>Intro to the Course</td>
<td>No Readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 21</td>
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<td><em>MLK Day – No Class</em></td>
<td>No readings, but mapping assignment is due Sunday 1/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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Dumit *Picturing Personhood* Chapter 4 (“Ways of Seeing Brains as Expert Images”), 110-133. |
Gusterson *Nuclear Rites* Chapters 3-4 (“Becoming a Weapons Scientist” and “Secrecy”), pp. 38-100.  
Dumit, *Picturing Personhood* Chapters 5-6 (“Traveling Images, Popularizing Brains” and “Conclusion: Here is a PET image of a Person that Shows Depression”), pp. 140-185. |
Gusterson *Nuclear Rites* Chapter 5 (“Bodies and Machines”), pp. 101-130.  
| Wk 7  | Transgenic Organisms           | Haraway *Modest Witness* Chapter 2  
(“FemaleMan©_Meets_OncomouseTM: Mice into Wormholes” pp. 49-118)  
| Mar 3 | Break – No Class               |                                                                                   |

**UNIT THREE: TECHNOSCIENTIFIC OBJECTS**

Gusterson, Nuclear Rites, Chapters 8-9 (“A Different Reality” and “Conclusion”), pp. 191-231.  
| Wk 14  | Wrap up and Presentations |  |
| Apr 21 |                 |  |