Instructor

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Office hours: by appointment

Seminar Time and Location

1600 - 1830, Tuesdays, Stong College 211

Aim of the Course

This is the single required course for MA students in our graduate program. It is designed to introduce to you some of the most important strands in STS. Science and Technology Studies is a very broad and diverse area of research. From disciplinary perspectives, it spans history, philosophy, political science, economics, sociology and anthropology. As an interdisciplinary field, its purview includes feminist analysis, legal and political aspects of science and technology, science policy, culture and communications amongst others. Anything about science and technology and any of the links between those and society are fair game for STS scholars. This makes STS exciting and vibrant but, for someone just entering the field, the sheer breadth of what is to be studied and the intellectual tools available are daunting to say the least. Let me assure you that those of us who have been “in the business” for decades still are on a learning curve!

We know from experience that each of you has some acquaintance with parts of STS but most of you will not share the same knowledge. Therefore, we will listen in, briefly, on the important contemporary scholarly conversations. Whilst we cannot pursue any of these areas in depth, our hope is that you will all come away with a common vocabulary and will feel much more comfortable in your other courses, at departmental seminars and in discussions with your fellow students.
Course Structure

We will meet each week for approximately 2 ½ hours (sometimes longer if we get animated and agitated, shorter if we run out of intellectual steam). Each week’s discussion will focus on a particular theme or approach in STS.

Assignments

1) Reflection journal

The journal will be a record of your notes on each reading and questions they raise in your mind or thoughts you may have that link the reading to other material. You can use whatever method that works comfortably for you. It is best to have these notes with you in class so you can refer to them as we discuss the readings. Our discussions will also trigger further notes and thoughts. I will want to see the journal (paper or electronic) on week 11.

2) Seminar presentations

Each of you will lead the class discussion twice during the term. I will assign one of the week’s readings to you. Please provide a succinct summary of the article, identifying the key point(s). Where you can, link the reading to others that we have encountered. Be prepared to ask seminar members three or four questions drawn from the reading. These questions are not to test their comprehension (!) but to stimulate further thoughts on the subject.

3) Poster presentation

At conferences posters have increased enormously as participant numbers burgeon but space for oral papers remains limited. Graduate students often use posters as a first trial of ideas at conferences. We will have a brief workshop on poster presentations. Each of you will choose an article in a recent issue (last three years) of an STS journal and dialogue with it based upon what you have learned in the course. This is a chance to undertake analysis outside the strictures of the essay and to use your creativity to capture the reader’s imagination. Our final session will be a poster session. Each of you will give a brief overview of your poster to the “conference attendees” and be prepared to answer their questions.

Marking Scheme

Class participation 15%
Seminar presentations 30%
Reflection journal 20%
Final poster 35%

Readings

Everyone should purchase Sergio Sismondo’s An Introduction to Science and Technology Studies [2nd ed.], which will be available in the York bookstore. This will provide scaffolding for our
discussions. It might be worthwhile to purchase E. Hackett, O. Amsterdamska, M. Lynch and J. Wajcman, eds., *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies* [3rd ed.], although a pdf version of the book will be available on Moodle.

For each week, in addition to Sismondo, there are several required readings. These will be available to you on the Moodle site. Other resources are available: check these out at the end of the syllabus.

### CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

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<th>Class Meeting</th>
<th>Topic &amp; Readings</th>
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| 1. Tuesday, 11 September | **Introduction to the Course**  
Presentation: An Aerial View of STS |
| 2. Tuesday, 18 September | **The Groundwork**  
Readings:  
| 3. Tuesday, 25 September | **Social Construction of Science and Technology**  
Readings:  
- Sismondo, *Introduction*, chaps 5-6  
4. Tuesday, 2 October

**Feminist STS**

**Readings:**


5. Tuesday, 9 October

**Actors, Networks, Boundary Objects and Trading Zones**

**Readings:**

6. Tuesday, 16 October

**Thinking about Technology**

**Readings:**

- Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology”

7. Tuesday, 23 October

**Agencies, Ontologies and Embodiments**

**Readings:**

8. Tuesday, 30 October

**Studying Laboratories**

Readings:


9. Tuesday, 6 November

**Controversies and Co-Production of Knowledge**

Readings:


*Presentation: putting together a poster*
10. Tuesday, 13 November

Science and Technology in the Public Realm

Readings:

- Sismondo, *Introduction*, chaps 15-16

11. Tuesday, 20 November

Political Economies of Knowledge and Postcolonial Technoscience

Readings:


12. Tuesday, 27 November

Wrap-up Discussion and Poster Session
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a wide variety of journals associated with STS. A selection would include: 
*Social Studies of Science; Science, Technology and Human Values; Public Understanding of Science; Isis* (based at York); *History of Science; Osiris; Science as Culture; Science as Context; Technology and Culture; Science Communications; Science and Public Policy; Body and Society; Configurations; Science Education; Science and Education.*

There are also a number of professional societies associated with STS. These include; Society for Social Studies of Science (4S); History of Science Society (HSS); Society for History of Technology (SHOT); Philosophy of Science Association (PSA); Society for Science, Literature and the Arts (SLSA); National Association for Science Education (NARST).

CBC Radio recently released a 24-part series on STS entitled “How To Think About Science”. The series is available at:

Other associated STS online communities and resources include:

STS Grad Googlegroups: http://groups.google.com/group/STSGRAD
H-SCI-MED-TECH: http://www.h-net.org/~smt/
STS Wiki: www.stswiki.org/
Bibliography compiled by RPI: http://www.sts.rpi.edu/pl/science-studies-reading-list
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