
Seminar in the History and Sociology of Science
HSSC 505
Monday 12-3pm
Cohen Hall, Room 493

Professor Beth Linker
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Course Description: This course is an introduction to the history and sociology of science, medicine, and technology. We will read a broad range of articles and books selected for different reasons: to explore the varied assumptions, methods, and problems in this field; to gain familiarity with canonical texts and central problems and developments; and to learn about the research interests of our faculty.

Course Objectives:

- To understand how history of science, technology, and medicine each developed as fields of inquiry
- To become better aware of the theoretical underpinnings of each field and how they interrelate
- To become familiar with foundational texts and historical questions that define the history of science, technology, and medicine

Course Assignments and Grading:

1. Each student will choose **two** days of the semester to become an “expert” for the day, drawing on the assigned reading and other supporting materials, such as book reviews and related literatures. The student will conduct an in-class presentation and turn in a 5-page book review at the beginning of the assigned class. (15% each)
2. A final 15-20 page paper that explores an historical and/or historiographic theme across three reading assignments from the semester. **Due Dec. 19th at 5pm.** (40%)
3. Each student should come prepared to participate and contribute to all seminar discussions. Participation is worth 30% of the final grade.

Class Etiquette:

In order to facilitate a lively and respectful conversation during seminar, we ask that you refrain from using electronic devices (laptops, phones, etc) during class. Please print off any handouts, articles, or notes before arriving to class.

Schedule of Readings:

All Books are available for purchase at the Penn Book Center, 130 S 34th Street.

Independent booksellers are vital to our community and to keeping academic publishers (and their authors, which will be YOU one day) afloat, so please consider purchasing your books here.

Week 1: Sept. 5th — Labor Day: NO CLASS

Week 2: Sept. 12th

Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

- Also read Lorraine Daston & Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity" *Representations* (Autumn 1992): 81-182.

Week 3: Sept. 19th

Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

- Also read selections from Steven Shapin & Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). Ch. 1 ("Understanding Experiment"), Ch. 2 ("Seeing and Believing"), and Ch. 6 ("Replication and Its Troubles").

Week 4: Sept. 26th — NO CLASS

Week 5: Oct. 3rd

James Secord, *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

Week 6: Oct. 10th

Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

Week 7: Oct. 17th

Frank Huisman and John Harley Warner, eds., *Locating Medical History: The Stories and Their Meanings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

Week 8: Oct. 24th

Katherine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (New York: Zone Books, 2006)

Week 9: Oct. 31st

Nancy Tomes, *Remaking the American Patient: How Madison Avenue and Modern Medicine Turned Patients into Consumers* (University of North Carolina Press, 2016).

Week 10: Nov. 7th

Julie Livingston, *Debility and Moral Imagination in Botswana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

- Also read Beth Linker, "On the Borderland of Medical and Disability History: The State of the Fields," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 87, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 499-535.

Week 11: Nov. 14th

Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (University of California Press, 1997)

- Also read David Edgerton, "Innovation, Technology or History: What is the Historiography of Technology About?"

Week 12: Nov. 21st — NO CLASS

Week 13: Nov. 28th

Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933* (MIT Press, 2002)

Week 14: Dec. 5th

Andrew Needham, *Power Lines: Phoenix and the Making of the Modern Southwest* (Princeton University Press, 2014)

- Also read Thomas P. Hughes, "Technological Momentum," in *Does Technology Drive History?* eds. Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx

Week 15: Dec. 12th

Eden Medina, *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende's Chile* (MIT Press, 2011)

Dec. 19th: Final papers due at 5pm. Please place hard copies in both Professor Benson's and Professor Linker's mailboxes in Cohen 303

Thursday, Dec. 22nd — Fall Term Ends