GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

HTS XXXX: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES OF BIOMEDICINE

Semester:
Day/Time:
Room:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructor: Anne Pollock, PhD</th>
<th>Instructor: Jennifer S. Singh, PhD, MPH</th>
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<tr>
<td>Office: Skiles 360</td>
<td>Office: Old Civil Engineering, G22</td>
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a doctoral seminar based on selective scholarship that focuses on the social and cultural studies of science, technology and biomedicine in the 21st century. Although many of the themes we will address have a long history, the emphasis will be on recent interdisciplinary scholarship drawn from sociology, history, anthropology and cultural studies. This graduate seminar will explore what becomes of power, knowledge, and expertise, and their relationships to one another, under contemporary transformative conditions.

To do so, we will read a dozen books, all published at or after the turn of the century, and consider how they take up and answer the following questions:

- How are bodies and populations controlled, regulated, managed, maximized? What are the implications of privileging one set of strategies or objectives—for example, risk reduction—over others—such as optimization?
- How are the social distributions of, and conditions of possibility for, knowledge and expertise changing? Or are they? In what ways? And with what consequences and potentials?
- How are ever-proliferating and -elaborating techniques, forms of capital, and social arrangements entangled with changing configurations of power and inequality?
- What is the role of the “state,” and indeed, how is the very nature and interpretation of what the “state” is, being changed by biomedicine?
- How should we now think about expectation, responsibility, and obligation—of whom, and to whom—in the realm of health, illness, bodies, and life?
- What becomes of subjectivity and agency, individual freedom and collective action under these circumstances?
- What metaphors, frameworks, and theories of power do we have, or do we need to modify, in order to grasp the operation and implications of contemporary forms of biomedical power?
We will seek to understand biomedicine by exploring multiple domains, including:

Unit 1: Biomedicalization and Biological Citizenship
   Week 1 Introduction: Biomedicalization (Clarke, et al.)
   Week 2 The politics of life itself (Rose)
   Week 3 Biological citizens (Petryna)

Unit 2: Brains
   Week 4 Brains and biomedical identity (Dumit)
   Week 5 Feminism and the neurological body (Wilson)

Unit 3: Genes
   Week 6 Global Biotechnology (Thacker)
   Week 7 Race, science and genetics of inequality (Montoya)

Unit 4: Circulation
   Week 8 Race, pharmaceuticals and heart disease (Pollock)
   Week 9 Medical practice (Mol)

Unit 5: Reproduction
   Week 10 Human embryos (Morgan)
   Week 11 Contraceptive users and women’s bodies (Takeshita)

Unit 6: Health Social Movements
   Week 12 Biopolitics of breast cancer (Klawiter)
   Week 13 Autism (Silverman)

REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS


Books under consideration:


COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Participation: This course is designed as a seminar in which participation from all students is necessary if everyone is to profit; the benefits of this class come from talking as much as listening. It is expected that the readings will be prepared fully and carefully by each participant. A portion of the final grade will be based on the quality and appropriately relative frequency of participation.

2. Critical Reviews (one each week) (30% of final grade): All students in the course will share responsibility for preparing critical reviews for each of the required readings (a few chapters?), which are intended to help you help each other grasp the ideas and implications of the readings. Each student is required to complete one critical review each week. They are due on T-Square at 5PM the day before class.

Components of these reviews must include: (a) a summary of the theoretical position of the author and her/his core points and arguments; (b) brief reflections on its relationship to the other material assigned for that session, and how it relates to readings encountered earlier in the course (e.g., theoretically consonant—if so, how; in disagreement—if so, how; elaboration of another’s argument; etc.); (c) two thoughtful questions that you would like to address to the class based on the review. Depending upon the length of the reading, reviews should be 1-2 pages. See template at end of the syllabus for the critical reviews.

By having prepared a response to the material in advance and sharing your evaluations with the rest of the class, it is my hope that you will be better prepared to engage in productive class discussions and that you will gain more from each other’s analyses than you would otherwise. I will be looking for clear intellectual engagement with the materials, coherent examination of the topic, and thoughtful, relevant discussion questions.

THERE MANY ALTERNATIVES TO THIS, SUCH AS:

Think-Pieces: A total of three written “think-pieces” will be required throughout the quarter. These think-pieces will ask you to either: (a) reflect on the significance of a key excerpt of text (to be identified in advance) for the larger reading/book; or (b) compare and contrast an assigned reading with a previous week’s reading. Think-pieces are intended to help students think critically but somewhat more freely about the readings, and to help generate some provisional thoughts about the reading in light of the larger theoretical concerns that motivate this course. Accordingly, they are not expected to be more than 2 double-spaced pages in length, and while they must be thoughtful, they need not be polished writing. At the beginning of each class, one student will be randomly selected to read or summarize their think-piece as a means to spark that day’s discussion. Think-pieces will not be graded or commented upon individually; instead, one grade will be assigned for the cumulative quality of the three submissions. On the first day of class, assignments for think-pieces will be allocated.
3. **Final Paper:** Length of 10-12 text pages, *excluding* title page, references, and the like. This paper should focus on a theoretical problem or topic within the course, or a topic of interest to you that can be addressed by appropriating in some fashion the arguments of the readings in the course. Either way, the paper must articulate a central question or set of questions that will serve to orient and focus the paper (as opposed to simply doing a literature review on a health topic or theoretical discussion of a general theme). The intent of the paper should be to critically assess the literature, engage it at a theoretical level, and develop and articulate your own theoretical positions and arguments.

For this final paper, students are encouraged to think strategically, to consider whether portions of qualifying examinations, explorations of potential research questions, or sections of dissertation proposals can be worked into a paper for this class. Feel free to schedule an appointment to discuss your paper topic.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>( (\text{your grade})(.10) = a )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reviews (or Think Pieces)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>( (\text{your grade})(.30) = b )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>( (\text{your grade})(.60) = c )</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>( (a+b+c) = \text{your grade} )</td>
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Course grade: 90-100=A  80-89=B  70-79=C  60-69=D  Lower than 60=F

**CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

- Since our class is debate-oriented, I expect you to respect and listen to everybody’s opinions and perspectives. I value and respect your contributions. Please do the same for others in the class. Our class is a space free of sexist, racist or other offensive comments.
- Please silence cell phones, and turn off iPods, or other electronics during class.
- Late arrivals & early departures disrupt not only me, but also other students; therefore, if you know you will be late or need to leave early—please talk to me *before* class (or email me).
- Regular attendance of the course is expected. Students are expected to attend every class, except in the case of documented personal illness, family/personal emergency, or observance of a religious holiday.

**ACADEMIC HONOR CODE**

All students are required to abide by the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. Based on the [Graduate Addendum to the Academic Honor Code](#): Scholarly misconduct refers to misconduct that occurs in research and scholarly activities outside of the classroom. The following definitions are taken from the Institute Policy on Scholarly Misconduct:
* "Misconduct" or "scholarly misconduct" is the fabrication of data, plagiarism, or other practice that seriously deviates from those that are commonly accepted within the academic or research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research or scholarly activity. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretation or judgments of data.

* "Plagiarism" is the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages of his or her writings, or language or ideas of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. It involves the deliberate use of any outside source without proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism is scholarly misconduct whether it occurs in any work, published or unpublished, or in any application for funding.

All graduate Students are encouraged to become familiar with this policy, which is available from the Office of the Dean of Students.

**ACCOMODATIONS**

Students with disabilities needing reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Office of the Dean of Students, ADAPTS Disability Services Program is available to assist us with the reasonable accommodations process. More information at: [http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/index.php](http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/index.php).

**POLICIES FOR WRITTEN WORK**

All written papers are to be typed, double-spaced, using 12-pt. Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins, and must include page numbers, proper use of citations, and bibliographies.

Late assignments: Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late, as follows: grades for papers submitted up to 24 hrs late will be reduced by one-third (e.g., from A-to B+); 24-48 hrs late, by two-thirds of a grade (e.g., from A-to B); 48-72 hrs late, by a full grade; and so on.

If you have a personal or family emergency and are unable to complete an assignment, you must speak with me as soon as possible so we can discuss how and when you will complete the assignment. **Do not assume that you may hand in all of your assignments at the end of the course, or that you will be granted an extension.**

**Research/Writing Resources at Georgia Tech:**

[http://libguides.gatech.edu/research](http://libguides.gatech.edu/research): This guide will help you learn how to conduct research, how to write well, and how to avoid plagiarism by citing your sources.

The Communication Center at Clough Commons also provides tutoring in communication-related assignments or projects regardless of discipline. The CommLab is located on the 4th floor of the Clough Commons: [http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/](http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/)
For international students, there is a writing center that will help you with your written reports. Please see the Language Institute about writing services:
http://www.esl.gatech.edu/esl/communication-center

Some noteworthy STS Journals:

- Social Studies of Science
- Science, Technology and Human Values
- Research Policy
- Science as Culture
- Technology and Culture
- Science and Public Policy