

Sociology of Science & Technology  
Soci 4930 6.0, Section A.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides final year students with an opportunity to apply the theoretical perspectives and methodologies they have learned in previous courses to the roles that science and technology are accorded in social life. Students are exposed to a diverse sociological literature including the recent theoretical contributions of, and debates about, social constructivism, and science and technology as culture and practice. We analyse inter-actions between and among scientific knowledge, technological change and the political, economic and socio-cultural order. We explore longstanding debates about the "objectivity" and "neutrality" of science and technology and we assess the political choices that are embodied in specific applications of technology and lines of scientific inquiry. A major aim is to examine the distinctiveness and centrality of human agency in shaping a social-cultural world that is infused with scientific knowledge and technological know-how.

As an integrative capstone course, students have the opportunity to apply their explorations of the socio-cultural aspects of science and technology to their major or minor area of study. Major course projects can focus on, for example, the implications of specific technologies for mass communications, health services, work place organisation, educational institutions, and monitoring the natural environment; the portrayal of scientific knowledge in art, literature and film; and the epistemological and ontological implications of social and cultural studies of science for social theory generally.

Final year students majoring or minoring in sociology and final year students majoring in areas such as cultural studies, education, fine arts, health studies, labour studies, law and society, mass communication, women's studies and any of the natural sciences with some sociology background are invited to enroll.

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:

Kleinman, Daniel Lee ( 2005) Science and Technology in Society: From Biotechnology to the Internet. Malden Maine: Blackwell Publishing. Available at the York University Bookstore.

A Reading Kit will be available at the York Bookstore. BE SURE TO ASK FOR THE KIT FOR SECTION "A" OF THIS COURSE.

Additional readings may be added from time to time.