

Sociology 6801.03

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIETY.

In this course, students are exposed to the diverse sociological literature on science that followed the publication in 1962 of Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. We critically assess the epistemic claim that an objective and neutral knowledge of the natural world can be achieved through scientific practice, in the light of social studies of science perspectives that argue that scientific knowledge is socially and culturally constituted.

The theoretical contributions of, and debates about, various forms of social constructivism including actor-network and social worlds theory, feminist critiques of science and science studies, and new social movements perspectives on science set the course agenda. We will highlight the role of human agents in constructing a social-cultural world that is infused with scientific knowledge and technological know-how and reflect on the possibilities for subordinating the creation, dissemination and application of scientific knowledge to democratically informed social practice.