

HON 394: Spring 2019  
**Science, Social Justice and Activism**



*Shanghai 2009* by Jota Castro, Peru

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**Course description:**

Science and medicine are incredibly powerful forces that have the power to heal, destroy, create, disrupt, and organize our lives. This course will interrogate the ways in which health, medicine, technology, and scientific practices are created, organized by and situated within complex social and structural dynamics. We will draw on science and technology studies, bioethics, and theories from the feminist, race and disability communities to think about the ways in which social justice is both promoted and hindered by science and medicine. We will look at specific instances of scientific dissent and interrogate the power of lay citizens to change the direction and speed of scientific progress.

**Required texts:**

There is one course reader you are **required** to purchase. The other readings will be posted online, in the Readings folder of our class Canvas site.

The reader is available at Alphagraphics, which is located at 815 W University Dr, Suite #101, Tempe AZ 85281; 480-968-7821. Order your copy at [agonuniversity.com](http://agonuniversity.com).

## Schedule of Readings<sup>1</sup>

Jan 7 Introduction to the course

Introduction: Theory and Praxis

Jan 9 Sarewitz, D. 2003. "Science and Happiness." In *Living with the Genie*, edited by A. Lightman, D. Sarewitz, and C. Desser, 181-200. Washington, DC: Island Press.  
Grzanka, P.R. 2014. "Science and Technology Studies as Tools for Social Justice" in *Intersectionality: A Foundations and Frontiers Reader* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press), pp. xi-xxv, 259-265.  
Gordon, A. Theory and Justice.

Jan 14 Nelkin, D. 1995. "Scientific Controversies: The dynamics of public disputes in the United States." In: *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. Edited by Jasanoff, S. et al. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press), pp. 444-456.  
Sarewitz, D. "How science makes environmental controversies worse." *Environmental Science and Policy* 2004; 7: 385-403.

Optional:

Trotta, D. "Born this way? Researchers explore the science of gender identity." *Reuters* 2017 (Aug 2). Available online at: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-lgbt-biology-idUSKBN1AJ0F0>  
[http://www.slate.com/articles/health\\_and\\_science/science/2017/08/evolutionary\\_psychology\\_is\\_the\\_most\\_obvious\\_example\\_of\\_how\\_science\\_is\\_flawed.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2017/08/evolutionary_psychology_is_the_most_obvious_example_of_how_science_is_flawed.html)

Jan 16 Jain, L. Malignant: How Cancer Becomes Us. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. Introduction and Chapter 1.  
Porter, T. 1995. *Trust in Numbers*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 2.

Jan 21 Martin Luther King Day (no class)

Patients as Doctors/Pharmacists/Researchers: Activism and HIV/AIDS

Jan 23 Excerpts from: Epstein, S. 2003. *Impure Science: AIDS, activism and the politics of knowledge*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.  
Watch: "How to Survive a Plague" (2012)

Jan 28 Nelson, A. 2011. *Body and Soul*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. Introduction and Chapter 2.

Jan 30 Nelson, A. 2011. *Body and Soul*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 5.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this list of readings is subject to change, so consider this document to be organic and fluid. I welcome suggestions for topics you would like to explore and am happy to make changes.

## Reproductive Rights

- Feb 4 Roberts, D. (1997) 2017. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage Books. Chapter 2.
- Feb 6 Excerpts from: Takeshita, C. 2012. *The Global Politics of the IUD: How science constructs contraceptive users and women's bodies*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.  
Sanger-Katz, M. "Set It and Forget It: How Better Contraception Could Be a Key to Reducing Poverty." *New York Times*, 18 December 2018. Available online: <https://nyti.ms/2QZFeiA>.  
Anu Manchikanti Gomez, Emily S. Mann & Vanessa Torres. (2017). "It would have control over me instead of me having control": intrauterine devices and the meaning of reproductive freedom," *Critical Public Health*, DOI: 10.1080/09581596.2017.1343935
- Feb 11 Oudshoorn, Nellie. "On masculinities, technologies, and pain: The testing of male contraceptives in the clinic and the media." *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 1999; 24(2): 265-289.
- Feb 13 Roth, R. "She Doesn't Deserve to be Treated Like This." In: *Radical Reproductive Justice*. Edited by L. Ross et al. (New York: Feminist Press), pp. 285-301.  
Joffe, C. "The Struggle to Save Abortion Care." *Contexts*. August 6, 2018. Accessed online at: <https://contexts.org/issues/summer-2018/>.
- Feb 18 Emre, M. "Once and Future Feminist: On Reproduction." *Boston Review Forum* 2018; 7 (43.3): 7-32.  
Firestone, S. 1970. *The Dialectic of Sex*. New York: Bantam Books. (Chapter 1 only.)
- Feb 20 Thompson, C. "Confessions of a Bioterrorist: Subject position and reproductive technologies," in E. Ann Kaplan and Susan Squier (Eds.), *Playing Dolly: Technocultural Formations, Fantasies, and Fictions of Assisted Reproduction* (Rutgers University Press, 1999), pp. 189-219.
- Animal Rights, Food Production Systems, and GMOs
- Feb 25 Watch: *Okja*  
Foster Wallace, David. "Consider the Lobster." *Gourmet* 2004 (August): 50-64.  
Accessed online: <http://www.columbia.edu/~col8/lobsterarticle.pdf>  
  
Vegan Mafia (read: <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/11/vegan-mafia-food-investor-network-includes-bill-maris-kyle-vogt.html> and look up companies)
- Feb 27 Pachirat, T. 2011. *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chapters 1 and 3.
- Mar 4-9 Spring Break
- Mar 11 Galusky, W. "Playing Chicken: Technologies of Domestication, Food, and Self." *Science as Culture* 2010; 19:1, 15-35.

- Mar 13 Delborne, J. "Transgenes and Transgressions: Scientific dissent as heterogeneous practice." *Social Studies of Science* 2008; 38(4): 509-541.  
Wynne, B. "Creating Public Alienation: Expert Cultures of Risk and Ethics on GMOs." *Science as Culture* 2001; 10(4): 445-481.
- Mar 18 Alkon, A., Block, D., Moore, K., et al. 2013. "Foodways of the Urban Poor." *Geoforum* 48: 126-135.  
Kirkland, A. "The Environmental Account of Obesity: A case for feminist skepticism." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 2011; 36(2): 463-485.
- Mar 20 Jones, Michael Owen. "Eating Behind Bars." *Journal of American Folklore* 2017; 130 (515): 72-108. \*C  
NPR story "Food as Punishment" (2014) \*C  
The Marshall Project's "What's in a Prison Meal?" (2015) \*C

#### Testing and Targeting

- Mar 25 Corbett, K.P. "‘You’ve Got it, You May Have It, You Haven’t Got It’: Multiplicity, Heterogeneity, and the Unintended Consequences of HIV-Related Tests." *Science, Technology and Human Values* 2009; 34(1): 102-125.  
Sanghavi, D.M. "Wanting Babies Like Themselves, Some Parents Choose Genetic Defects." *New York Times* 5 December 2006. Available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/05/health/05essa.html>. \*C  
Harmon, A. "Prenatal Test Puts Down Syndrome in Hard Focus." *New York Times* 9 May 2007. Available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/09/us/09down.html>. \*C

And choose one of the following:

Roadside drug tests: <https://www.propublica.org/article/common-roadside-drug-test-routinely-produces-false-positives?src=longreads>

Natural Cycles, birth control app: <https://arstechnica.co.uk/science/2017/03/natural-cycles-birth-control-review/>

Rape kits: <http://www.elle.com/culture/a37255/forgotten-rape-kits-detroit/?src=longreads>

#### Prison as Technology

- Mar 27 Thuma, E. "Against the Prison/Psychiatric State: Anti-violence Feminisms and the Politics of Confinement in the 1970s." *Feminist Formations* 2014; 26 (2): 26-51.  
Specter, D. "Cruel and Unusual Punishment of the Mentally Ill in California's Prisons: A Case Study of a Class Action Suit." *Social Justice* 1994; 21(3): 109-116.

Optional:

Angela Davis and Gina Dent. "Prison as a Border." *Signs* 2001 \*C

- Apr 1 Hatch, A.R. and K. Bradley. "Prisons Matter: Psychotropics and the Trope of Silence in Technocorrections." In *Mattering: Feminism, Science, and Materialism*, edited by V. Pitts-Taylor (New York: NYU Press), pp. 224-241.

- Hatch, A.R. (2019). "Billions Served: Prison Food Regimes, Nutritional Punishment, and Gastronomical Resistance." In: *Captivating Technology*, edited by R. Benjamin. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. \*C
- Apr 3 Shabazz, R. (2012). "Mapping Black Bodies for Disease." In: Loyd, J., Mitchelson, M., and A. Burrige (eds). *Beyond Walls and Cages: Prisons, Borders, and Global Crisis*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, pp. 287-300.
- Angwin, J., Larson, J., Mattu, S. and L. Kirchner. "Machine Bias." *ProPublica* 23 May 2016. Available online: <https://www.propublica.org/article/machine-bias-risk-assessments-in-criminal-sentencing>. \*C  
\*Visit website and look at their supporting documents and data (including, e.g., <https://www.propublica.org/article/how-we-analyzed-the-compas-recidivism-algorithm>)
- Apr 8 Bioethics case study: "Dale Refuses his Psychotropic Medications"  
\*See Canvas for teams and details\*
- Apr 10 AAAS Forensics Report: Latent Fingerprint Examination (read Conclusions and Recommendations \*C  
ProPublica's "Blood Will Tell" (Parts I & II) \*C  
ProPublica's "How an Unproven Forensic Science Spread Through the Criminal Justice System" \*C
- Nuclear Missiles, Nuclear Energy
- Apr 15 Gleiser, M. "Does Science Know Right from Wrong?" *NPR* 2017. Available online: <http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2017/02/15/515342681/does-science-know-right-from-wrong>  
Wellerstein, A. "The Psychological Power of Nuclear Weapons." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 2016; 72(5): 298-303.  
Edwards, P.N. "Entangled Histories: Climate science and the nuclear weapons research." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 2012; 68(4): 28-40.
- Apr 17 Bhadra Haines, M. "Fighting Nuclear Energy, Fighting for India's Democracy." *Science as Culture* 2013; 22(2): 238-246.  
Watch: Dr. Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb (1964)
- Apr 22 Petryna, A. "Biological Citizenship: The Science and Politics of Chernobyl-Exposed Populations." *Osiris* 2004; 19: 250-265.  
Hecht, G. "Nuclear Janitors: Contract Workers at the Fukushima Reactors and Beyond." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 2013; 11(1.2). Accessed online at: [http://www.japanfocus.org/site/make\\_pdf/3880](http://www.japanfocus.org/site/make_pdf/3880)
- Anti-Vaxxers
- Apr 24 Reich, J. "Neoliberal Mothering and Vaccine Refusal." *Gender and Society* 2014; 28(5): 679-704.
- Apr 29 Last Day of Class

## **Readings**

Asking yourself the following questions forces you to take a stance of curiosity toward the reading, and will help you prepare thoughtful responses to our texts. You should be able to answer these questions for each text before you come to class.

- What questions is the author asking?
- What assumptions is the author making?
- What controversial claims does the author make, and what are the possible objections?
- What interesting (non-obvious, original, thought-provoking) question does the author make and why is it interesting?
- What conclusions does the author draw, and what are the implications of those conclusions?

## **Assessment**

This course will be a dynamic, discussion-based class that demands a high level of engagement from the students. Students are required to complete all assigned readings and come to class prepared for discussion. The final grade for the course will be based on participation (30%), short writing assignments and media analysis (10%), discussion leader/questions (10%), a short essay (25%) and final exam (25%).

## **Participation**

Your participation grade will be assessed by the quality of your in-class contributions, and your participation in in-class group activities. Things that will help improve your participation score include: coming to class prepared, contributing productively and thoughtfully to the discussion at least once per class meeting, responding to your classmates' comments. Things that will hurt your participation in class include: being disruptive (talking to your neighbor, texting, forgetting to put your mobile on silent), being unprepared, checking e-mail or online shopping, sleeping in class, being late, not bringing the text(s) to class.

Daily attendance is required; you must attend class to participate. If you miss three or more classes, your final grade will be lowered by one grade (i.e., your maximum possible grade will be a B). If you miss five classes, your grade will be lowered by two letter grades (i.e., maximum C). I reserve the right (and am likely) to give a failing grade in the course to those who miss twenty percent or more of the class meetings for any reason.

## **Media Analysis**

You will sign up for one day when it is your responsibility to present a relevant and recent (within the last 6 months) news article to the class. When it is your turn to present, you will (1) send me a link to the news story 24 hours before class, and (2) briefly summarize the story in class and explain the pertinent connections to our class material. You will also hand in a 300-400 word critical reflection of the article.

## **Discussion Leader**

Each student is responsible for leading the first part of class on an assigned day. The student will also provide two substantive discussion questions that will be posted on Canvas at least 24 hours before class. I will post guidelines for crafting strong discussion questions on Canvas.

## Short Essay

You can choose from one of the following 6-8-page research assignments:

1. **Activist Imaginary:** Choose a scientific or technological issue and imagine an act of protest or dissent around that particular issue. What measures might be most effective in changing the course of research and development? Who are the key actors and how might they be incentivized to get involved?
2. **Activist History:** There are some incredible examples of citizens speaking/acting out against scientific and technological development (e.g., protests against nuclear energy, ballot propositions banning fracking in particular towns or counties, anti-GMO protests, etc). Choose an example of a campaign for or against a particular technology and critically explore the history. What were the key points of controversy? Who faced resistance from whom? What actions were taken and what were the consequences, if any?
3. **A Call for Help:** What social justice issue is both helped and hindered by scientific research? In this research paper, you will choose a particular social problem and critically examine the set of solutions (economic, cultural, technical) offered to alleviate this issue.

## Final exam

The exam is not a regurgitation of what you know, but instead a close inspection and recapitulation of the themes that have come up during the course. That is, it will center not on parroting back the facts we covered in the course, but rather on exploring the issues. There will be eight questions, and you will be asked to write three or four essay responses. You will write **no more than three hours** total. You are free to talk to one another about the course themes and your thoughts, but the final examination is to be your own thoughts in your own words.

## Grading key

The grading will be on a traditional scale of 100-98=A+, 97-93=A, 92-90=A-, 89-88=B+, 87-83=B, 82-80=B-, 79-78=C+, 77-70=C, 69-60=D, 59 and below=F.

A-level work will demonstrate mastery of the material and will go far beyond the minimum requirements of a particular assignment; in addition, there will be few or no mistakes.

B-level work will exceed the requirements of an assignment and demonstrate strong competency with the material; some mistakes, but no egregious errors.

C-level work will meet the requirements of an assignment but demonstrate only basic comprehension of the material; some mistakes and potentially a major error.

D-level work will fail to meet the requirements of an assignment and demonstrate little or no content comprehension; many mistakes and more than one major error.

F-level work will fail to meet the requirements of an assignment and have little merit as a demonstration of knowledge or ability.

## Policies

**Regrading policy:** If you think the grade I gave you on an assignment is wrong, you may submit it to be regraded. It must be resubmitted within one week, with a paragraph explanation as to why you

think my assessment was incorrect and why the paper deserves a different grade. Please refer to our grading rubric when making your case and remember that grades are earned, not given.

**Electronic devices:** You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in class if you are referencing relevant readings. Do not use the laptop or tablet to check e-mail or Facebook or shop for shoes because that will significantly affect your overall participation grade. (It will affect your grade for the worse, just to be clear).

**E-mail etiquette:** Please include a salutation (“Dear Dr. Brian”, for example), and refrain from using text message abbreviations. I know it’s e-mail and we all receive hundreds of them a day/week, but good communication skills are important.

### **Plagiarism**

If you submit work that is not your own, you will be fully disciplined in accordance with university policies. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are strictly forbidden and will result in a failing grade for the assignment, the class, and disciplinary action with the Dean. It is your responsibility to be aware of, understand, and adhere to the rules and regulations of The Barrett Honors College. Please review the ASU Academic Integrity Policy and available resources here: <https://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/students>. The policy is also posted on Canvas, in Essay Materials.

### **Documented Disabilities**

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who would like to discuss course requirements and accommodations are asked to see the instructor within the first week of class.

### **Ethics and Multiculturalism**

The Barrett community is committed to upholding values of academic, professional and personal honesty of the highest order. We believe that ethical and respectful behavior is one of the most important measures of the worth of an individual and, as such, the overall integrity of our community as a whole.

Barrett, the Honors College at Arizona State University, is committed to creating a multicultural learning environment, which is broadly defined as a place where human cultural diversity is valued and respected. I hope that you will contribute your unique perspectives to this effort by respecting others’ identities and personal life histories and by considering and raising issues related to multiculturalism and diversity as appropriate in our course discussions. Thoughtful discussions on multiculturalism and diversity will enhance each person's experience within and beyond the classroom.