STEVANOVICH INSTITUTE ON THE FORMATION OF KNOWLEDGE

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• James Hevia, Professor, International History and the New Collegiate Division; Director, International Studies Program
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- Haun Saussy, University Professor, Department of Comparative Literature
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- Jessica Stockholder, Raymond W. & Martha Hilpert Gruner Distinguished Service Professor
- Gary Tubb, Professor of South Asian Languages and Civilizations
- Alison Winter, Professor of History and in the Committee for the Conceptual and Historical Study of Science
- Wu Hung, Harrie A. Vanderstappen Distinguished Service Professor of Art History, East Asian Languages and Civilizations

The Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge opens in the fall of 2015 and will move into fully operational mode in October 2016. Our mission is to unite scholars from many different fields to study the process of knowledge formation and transmittal from antiquity to the present day and, in correlation, to explore how this history shapes our modern world. The Institute functions as a research laboratory and incubator for University of Chicago faculty and visiting scholars, and offers support for affiliated PhD students and post-doctoral scholars.

The questions we ask include: What are the sites from which discourses of knowledge emerge and derive legitimacy? What is the impact of the conditions and restrictions upon the constitution of knowledge, its circulation, and its transmission to the future? How are (and were) political life, religious belief, and scientific exploration shaped by assumptions about what knowledge is?

Website
sifk.uchicago.edu
STEVANOVICH INSTITUTE ON THE FORMATION OF KNOWLEDGE

KNOW 40200-40300. Case Studies on the Formation of Knowledge-I-II.
The KNOW core seminars for graduate students are offered by the faculty of the Stevanovich Institute on the Formation of Knowledge. This two-quarter sequence provides a general introduction, followed by specific case studies, to the study of the formation of knowledge. Each course will explore 2-3 case study topics, and each case study will be team-taught within a “module.” A short research paper is required at the end of each quarter. Graduate students from every field are welcome. Those who take both quarters are eligible to apply for a SIFK 6th-year graduate fellowship. For more information, please email your questions to sifk@uchicago.edu. For the full course description, please visit http://sifk.uchicago.edu/page/courses.

KNOW 40200. Case Studies on the Formation of Knowledge-I. 100 Units.
MODULE 1: APPROACHES TO KNOWLEDGE (SBZ, JG) The goal of this module is to identify central issues/debates in the theory of knowledge over the past century. Students will be introduced to issues in the sociology of knowledge, to arguments for against constructivist perspectives and to 21st century scientific standards for knowledge production. MODULE 2: DEMOCRATIC KNOWLEDGE (SBZ, WH) This module offers a variation on studies of the epistemic powers of democracy. Instead of asking questions such as how effective democracies are at gathering the knowledge they need to function, the module looks at what forms of knowledge democracies need to assume—for example, the validity of decisions taken by the many—in order to justify their own existence as a (“superior”) form of government. MODULE 3: PROGRESS BACKWARDNESS (CA, JP) Developmental thinking has been central to the European study of society. In the wake of the encounter with the New World increasing global commercial and imperial connections, the concepts of civilization and progress have been twinned with accounts of savagery, barbarism, backwardness. Much of modern social science originated in efforts in the late 19th century to understand what had made western Europe’s path of economic development unique. This module explores theories of progress modernization from Scottish Enlightenment stadial theories through liberal and Marxist developmental accounts in the 19th century to modernization theories in the 20th.
Instructor(s): S. Bartsch-Zimmer, J. Gilbert, W. Howell, C. Ando, J. Pitts
Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Undergraduates may enroll with instructor consent.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 40200, CHSS 40200, CLAS 41616, PLSC 40202, SCTH 40200, SOCI 40209, CMLT 41802, MAPH 40200, MAPS 40201
KNOW 40300. Case Studies on the Formation of Knowledge-II. 100 Units.
MODULE 1: FOUNDATIONS OF PSYCHOLOGY IN LINGUISTICS AND BIOLOGY (RR, JG) This module will examine the ways several established disciplines, particularly linguistics and biology, came together in the mid-19th century to establish the science of psychology. Both linguistics and biology offered empirical and theoretical avenues into the study of mind. Researchers in each advanced their considerations either in complementary or oppositional fashion. MODULE 2: ORIGINS OF THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE (RR, AW) This module will trace the development of the idea of the social construction of knowledge and its relation to philosophy and history of science. The development lit a spark, then created a conflagration, and yet still smolders. MODULE 3: THE POLITICS OF PHILOSOPHICAL KNOWLEDGE (HS, AG) The Politics/Philosophy module has to do with the emergence of theories of "schools of thought" in the context of political change. The two examples to be examined are Plato’s criticism of the Sophists and Sima Qian’s account of the Warring States intellectual landscape, terminated by the consolidation of the Empire.
Instructor(s): R. Richards, J. Goldsmith, A. Winter, H. Saussy, A. Glaeser Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Undergraduates may enroll with instructor consent.
Equivalent Course(s): CHSS 40300, CMLT 41803, EALC 50300, HIST 40201, SOCI 40210, MAPS 40301
KNOW 47001. Writing Images/Picturing Words. 100 Units.
What is the relationship between reading and looking? To what extent are all
texts images, and all images texts? What are the cognitive, phenomenological,
social, and aesthetic consequences of foregrounding the pictorial aspect of
alphabetical characters? How do textual and visual images compare to our mental
visualizations? In this arts studio course, students will construct original works of
literary and visual art that "picture language" in order to investigate the overlapping
functions of text and image. Studying works by contemporary visual artists like
Alison Knowles and Jenny Holzer, and practicing poets such as Susan Howe
and Tan Lin, we will frame our artistic and literary practice within the ongoing
conversation between word and image in modern culture. The course will feature
visits to our studio by contemporary poets and visual artists, who will provide
critiques of student work and discussion of their own ongoing projects. Faculty
members working at the intersection of word and image will also visit the class
to help us frame our creative practice within a critical, historical, and theoretical
context. Students will submit a final project, which may be accompanied by a critical
background essay, at the end of the term.
Instructor(s): S. Reddy and J. Stockholder Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor required. Interested students, please email
faculty a paragraph about your background and interest in the material.
Equivalent Course(s): CDIN 44319, ENGL 44319, MAPH 44319, ARTV 24319, ARTV 44319