COMMITTEE ON CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES OF SCIENCE

Interim Chair (2020-2021)
• Michael Rossi, History

Chair (on leave 2020-2021)
• Adrian Johns, History

Professors
• Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, History
• Lorraine Daston, Social Thought
• James A. Evans, Sociology
• Adrian Johns, History
• Karin Knorr Cetina, Sociology and Anthropology
• Joseph Masco, Anthropology
• Karl Matlin, Department of Surgery
• Salikoko Mufwene, Linguistics
• Robert J. Richards, History
• Michael Rossi, History
• James T. Sparrow, History
• Stephen M. Stigler, Statistics
• Kaushik Sunder Rajan, Anthropology

Emeritus Faculty
• Arnold Davidson, Philosophy
• Judith B. Farquhar, Anthropology
• Jan Goldstein, History
• Robert Perlman, Pediatrics
• William C. Wimsatt, Philosophy

Affiliate Faculty
• William H. Sterner, CHSS

The Committee on Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science (CHSS) is an interdisciplinary graduate program dedicated to advancing social, historical, and philosophical perspectives on science. Its areas of interest are broad, extending across the sciences and from the ancient world to the present day. Its faculty derive from many departments in the University, but particularly from History, Sociology, Anthropology, and Philosophy. We currently have major strengths in the study of evolutionary biology, psychology, and medicine, and in issues of the social activity of science, such as those relating to scientific authority, credibility, communication, and intellectual property. Students in the Ph.D. program have an opportunity to investigate such aspects of the scientific enterprise in depth, within its many rich historical, social, and philosophical contexts. They are also encouraged to grapple with the practices and approaches of science itself.

A brief description of the Committee’s degree requirements is provided below, along with a representative list of courses that have been taught in recent years. For more complete information, you are encouraged to consult the website at http://chss.uchicago.edu/. This site contains an up to date description of faculty research interests, a complete statement of degree requirements, descriptions of individual courses being taught this year, a calendar of events (including meetings of the Committee’s regular Workshop in the History, Philosophy, and Sociology of Science), a list of students who have received Ph.D.s from the Committee with the titles of their dissertations, and more.

Those with questions about the Committee should write to the Administrative Assistant, The Committee on Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science, The University of Chicago, 1126 East 59th Street, Chicago, IL 60637 (bethercalderon@uchicago.edu (bbmackev@uchicago.edu)).

APPLICATION

New students are admitted to the Committee through the Division of the Social Sciences. Applicants will be expected to submit undergraduate transcripts, scores from the general Graduate Record Examination, three
Committee on Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science

letters of recommendation, short descriptions of their interests and/or reasons for wanting to study in CHSS, and a writing sample.

The application process for admission and financial aid for all Social Sciences graduate programs is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online at: https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply/. Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to ssd-admissions@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-8415.

Our application process is now entirely online (paperless). All supporting material - including letters of recommendation, transcripts, and writing samples (if required by a specific department) - must be submitted electronically through the online application.

More information about applying to programs in the University of Chicago’s Division of the Social Sciences can be found at https://socialsciences.uchicago.edu/admissions/how-to-apply/.

Degree Requirements

Every new student in CHSS is assigned an adviser, with whom he or she designs an individual program of study. Because the interests of students within CHSS vary widely, so too do these programs. Yet all students are expected to fulfill certain common requirements. Full and up to date details are given on the website, but the main elements are described here.

Students choose one of the following options:

1. SCIENCE OPTION: The student may earn a master’s degree in a science (here understood to include mathematics, statistics, and social science).
2. PHILOSOPHY OPTION: The student may earn a master’s degree in philosophy.
3. HISTORY OPTION: The student may earn a master’s degree in history.

All students must complete a total of at least eighteen courses at the University for a grade of B or better, including at least seven CHSS courses. They must maintain at least a B+ average every quarter. Students must take a coherent series of six courses in a scientific area at the University, approved by the Committee, at a level appropriate to their preparation and of an appropriately advanced nature. (The term science here includes social sciences as represented in the University’s Division of the Social Sciences.) This will normally mean that students must take at least some portion of their science work at a graduate level. Note that if a student enters the program with a master’s degree in an appropriate area, the committee determines what level of credit is given for it.

The expected timetable is that students entering with a master’s degree will complete coursework by the end of the second year, and those entering without will complete it by the end of year three (see the website for this and other details of the expected timetable).

Among the coursework of the first two years, students should take three courses offered by the committee: Philosophy of Science, History of Science, and Introduction to Science Studies.

Students must then pass two oral examinations. Each student has the option of taking the exams in history of science, philosophy of science, sociology of science, or anthropology of science; but at least one of the exams must be in either history of science or philosophy of science. These exams are, in part, designed by the students themselves.

At this point the student writes a dissertation proposal, and defends it at a hearing before his or her dissertation committee. He or she is then considered to have advanced to Ph.D. candidacy, and proceeds to write the dissertation itself.

Courses

The department website offers descriptions of representative courses offered in recent years: https://chss.uchicago.edu/content/courses/

Conceptual and Historical Studies of Science Courses

CHSS 30924. Science, Modernity, and Anti-Modernity. 100 Units.
TBD
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 44905, SCTH 30924

CHSS 30925. The Humanities as a Way of Knowing. 100 Units.

Despite intertwined histories and many shared practices, the contemporary humanities and sciences stand in relationships of contrast and opposition to one another. The perceived fissure between the "Two Cultures” has been deepened by the fact that the bulk of all history and philosophy of science has been devoted to the natural sciences. This seminar addresses the history and epistemology of what in the nineteenth century came to be called the "sciences” and the "humanities” since the Renaissance from an integrated perspective. The historical sources will focus on shared practices in, among others, philology, natural history, astronomy, and history. The philosophical source will develop an epistemology of the humanities: how humanists know what they know.
CHSS 30927. Knowledge as a Platter: Comparative Perspectives on Knowledge Texts in the Ancient World. 100 Units.

In various ancient cultures, sages created the new ways of systematizing what was known in fields as diverse as medicine, politics, sex, dreams, and mathematics. These texts did more than present what was known; they exemplified what it means to know - and also why reflective, systematic knowledge should be valued more highly than the knowledge gained from common sense or experience. Drawing on texts from Ancient India, Greece, Rome, and the Near East, this course will explore these early templates for the highest form of knowledge and compare their ways of creating fields of inquiry: the first disciplines. Texts include the Arthashastra, the Hippocratic corpus, Deuteronomy, the Kama Sutra, and Aristotle’s Parva naturalia.

Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 20925, HIST 39517, PHIL 30925, HIST 29517, SCTH 30925, CLAS 37316, KNOW 40303

CHSS 30928. Thinking the Present through the Past: Classic Works of History since 1750. 100 Units.

As proudly empirical as the sciences, as interpretive as the humanities, and as analytical as the social sciences, history as the pursuit of knowledge about the past resists classification. Because all history is written through the lens of the present, most works of history cease to be read after a generation, especially during the modern period, as the pace of change accelerated. In this seminar we will read some of the exceptions, including works by Kant, Toqueville, Michelet, cCassirer, Huizinga, Lovejoy, and Frances Yates, to understand how powerful vision of the past can transcend its own present.

Instructor(s): Lorraine Daston Terms Offered: Spring. This course will be taught spring 2019.

Prerequisite(s): Seminar - primarily graduate students; all students require the permission of the instructor.

Note(s): German would be helpful, but it is not required.

Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 26701, GRMN 25304, FNDL 25315, PHIL 30610, PHIL 20610, GRMN 35304, KNOW 31302, HIST 35304, HIST 25304

CHSS 31413. Sex and Enlightenment Science. 100 Units.

What do a lifelike wax woman, a birthing dummy, and a hermaphrodite have in common? This interdisciplinary course seeks answers to this question by exploring how eighteenth-century scientific and medical ideas, technologies, and practices interacted with and influenced contemporary notions of sex, sexuality, and gender. In our course, the terms "sex," "Enlightenment," and "science" will be problematized in their historic contexts using a variety of primary and secondary sources. Through these texts, as well as images and objects, we will see how emerging scientific theories about sex, sexuality, and gender contributed to new understandings of the human, especially female, body. We will also see how the liberating potential of Enlightenment thought gave way to sexual and racial theories that insisted on fundamental human difference. Topics to be covered include theories of generation, childbirth, homosexuality, monstrosities, race and procreation, and hermaphrodites and questions about the "sex" of the enlightened scientist and the gendering of scientific practices.

Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 26701, GRMN 25304, FNDL 25315, PHIL 30610, PHIL 20610, GRMN 35304, KNOW 31302, HIST 35304, HIST 25304

CHSS 31202. Goethe: Literature, Science, Philosophy. 100 Units.

This lecture-discussion course will examine Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s intellectual development, from the time he wrote Sorrows of Young Werther through the final states of Faust. Along the way, we will read a selection of Goethe’s plays, poetry, and travel literature. We will also examine his scientific work, especially his theory of color and his morphological theories. On the philosophical side, we will discuss Goethe’s coming to terms with Kant (especially the latter’s third Critique) and his adoption of Schelling’s transcendental idealism. The theme unifying the exploration of the various works of Goethe will be unity of the artistic and scientific understanding of nature, especially as he exemplified that unity in "the eternal feminine.”

Instructor(s): R. Richards Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): German would be helpful, but it is not required.

Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 26701, GRMN 25304, FNDL 25315, PHIL 30610, PHIL 20610, GRMN 35304, KNOW 31302, HIST 35304, HIST 25304

CHSS 31314. Sex and Enlightenment Science. 100 Units.

What do a lifelike wax woman, a birthing dummy, and a hermaphrodite have in common? This interdisciplinary course seeks answers to this question by exploring how eighteenth-century scientific and medical ideas, technologies, and practices interacted with and influenced contemporary notions of sex, sexuality, and gender. In our course, the terms "sex," "Enlightenment," and "science" will be problematized in their historic contexts using a variety of primary and secondary sources. Through these texts, as well as images and objects, we will see how emerging scientific theories about sex, sexuality, and gender contributed to new understandings of the human, especially female, body. We will also see how the liberating potential of Enlightenment thought gave way to sexual and racial theories that insisted on fundamental human difference. Topics to be covered include theories of generation, childbirth, homosexuality, monstrosities, race and procreation, and hermaphrodites and questions about the "sex" of the enlightened scientist and the gendering of scientific practices.

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 22218, KNOW 21413, GNSE 21413, HIPS 21413

CHSS 31502. Sciences of Memory in the Twentieth Century. 100 Units.

This course will examine a series of episodes in the history of the understanding of autobiographical memory, beginning with the emergence of academic psychology, and also psychoanalysis in the late nineteenth century and ending with the "memory wars" of the 1980s and '90s. The course will include an examination of the yoked history of beliefs about individual and "collective" memory: the impact of memory therapies during the First and Second World Wars, the impact of innovations in brain surgery on beliefs about the physiological memory record and the neurophysiology of remembering, and the impact of the rise of forensic psychology on the popular, scientific, and legal understanding of memory.

Instructor(s): A. Winter Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 28002, HIST 35505, HIST 25510

CHSS 32000. Introduction to Science Studies. 100 Units.
This course provides an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of science, medicine, and technology. During the twentieth century, sociologists, historians, philosophers, and anthropologists raised original, interesting, and consequential questions about the sciences. Often their work drew on and responded to each other, and, taken together, their various approaches came to constitute a field, "science studies." The course furnishes an initial guide to this field. Students will not only encounter some of its principal concepts, approaches and findings, but will also get a chance to apply science-studies perspectives themselves by performing a fieldwork project. Among the topics we may examine are: the sociology of scientific knowledge and its applications; actor-network theories of science; constructivism and the history of science; and efforts to apply science studies approaches beyond the sciences themselves.
Instructor(s): Michael Paul Rossi Terms Offered: Autumn. Offered in Autumn 2020
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 40137, HIPS 22001, HIST 56800, ANTH 32305, KNOW 31408

CHSS 32011. Data: History and Literature. 100 Units.
Data is a notion that seems to characterize our contemporary world. Digital revolutions, artificial intelligence, and new forms of management and governance all claim to be data-driven. This course traces the origins of these trends to the nineteenth century, when new statistical knowledges and literary traditions emerged. Moving across disciplinary boundaries, we will analyze the ways in which practices of observation and calculation produced data on populations, crime, and economies. Likewise, the literature of this period reflected the ways that data shaped subjective experience and cultural life: the rise of the detective novel transformed the world into a set of signs and data points to interpret, while Balzac’s Human Comedy classified individuals into types. Drawing on these historical and humanistic perspectives, students will have the opportunity to measure and analyze their own lives in terms of data as well as think critically about the effects of these knowledge practices.
Instructor(s): Alexander Campolo, Anastasia Klimchynskya Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): undergrads permitted with permission of instructors
Equivalent Course(s): DIGS 30016, PPHA 32011, KNOW 22011, HIPS 22011, KNOW 32011, ENGL 32011, STAT 36711, SOCI 30518, SOCI 20518, SCTR 32011

CHSS 32708. Planetary Britain, 1600-1900. 100 Units.
What were the causes behind Britain’s Industrial Revolution? In the vast scholarship on this problem, one particularly heated debate has focused on the imperial origins of industrialization. How much did colonial resources and markets contribute to economic growth and technological innovation in the metropole? The second part of the course will consider the global effects of British industrialization. To what extent can we trace anthropogenic climate change and other planetary crises back to the environmental transformation wrought by the British Empire? Topics include ecological imperialism, metabolic rift, the sugar revolution, the slave trade, naval construction and forestry, the East India Company, free trade and agriculture, energy use and climate change.
Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 32808, KNOW 22708, ENST 22708, HIST 22708, HIST 32708, HIPS 22708

CHSS 32900. History of Statistics. 100 Units.
This course covers topics in the history of statistics, from the eleventh century to the middle of the twentieth century. We focus on the period from 1650 to 1950, with an emphasis on the mathematical developments in the theory of probability and how they came to be used in the sciences. Our goals are both to quantify uncertainty in observational data and to develop a conceptual framework for scientific theories. This course includes broad views of the development of the subject and closer looks at specific people and investigations, including reanalyses of historical data.
Instructor(s): S. Stigler Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Prior statistics course
Equivalent Course(s): STAT 36700, HIPS 25600, STAT 26700

CHSS 33300. Introduction to Philosophy of Science. 100 Units.
We will begin by trying to explicate the manner in which science is a rational response to observational facts. This will involve a discussion of inducivism, Popper’s deductivism, Lakatos and Kuhn. After this, we will briefly survey some other important topics in the philosophy of science, including underdetermination, theories of evidence, Bayesianism, the problem of induction, explanation, and laws of nature. (B) (II)
Instructor(s): T. Pashby Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 22000, PHIL 25109, PHIL 32000, PHIL 22000, HIST 35109

CHSS 33500. Elementary Logic. 100 Units.
An introduction to the concepts and principles of symbolic logic. We learn the syntax and semantics of truth-functional and first-order quantificational logic, and apply the resultant conceptual framework to the analysis of valid and invalid arguments, the structure of formal languages, and logical relations among sentences of ordinary discourse. Occasionally we will venture into topics in philosophy of language and philosophical logic, but our primary focus is on acquiring a facility with symbolic logic as such.
Instructor(s): Autumn 2020: G. Schultheis; Winter 2021: M. Kremer Terms Offered: Autumn Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 30000, HIPS 20700, LING 20102, PHIL 20100
CHSS 33600. Intermediate Logic. 100 Units.
This course provides a first introduction to mathematical logic for students of philosophy. In this course we will prove the soundness and completeness of deductive systems for both propositional and first-order predicate logic. (B) (II)
Instructor(s): A. Vasudevan Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Elementary Logic (PHIL 20100) or its equivalent.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 39600, PHIL 29400, HIPS 20500

CHSS 34903. Victorian Science. 100 Units.
This course examines how Victorians sought to understand the natural world, and how their scientific work helped develop modern intellectual conventions, social relations, and institutions. We will study a wide range of topics from the 1830s through the beginning of the twentieth century in order to develop a kind of panorama of scientific life and to determine when key features of modern science came into being.
Instructor(s): A. Winter Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 34913, HIPS 24913, HIST 24913

CHSS 35010. Central Problems in the Philosophy of Biology. 100 Units.
The course will address central issues in philosophy of biology. We will begin by discussing the nature of evolutionary theory, focusing on issues of adaptation, selection vs. drift, units of selection and the concept of species. We shall then look into some central ideas in the philosophy of science—such as reduction and laws—and examine their application in biology. Last, we will discuss causal concepts such as mechanism, function and teleology. The format of the course will be short lectures followed by presentations by students and discussion.
Instructor(s): C. Bloch Terms Offered: Winter
equivalent Course(s): HIPS 22711, PHIL 32705, PHIL 22705, HIST 35010, HIST 25010

CHSS 35014. Introduction to Environmental History. 100 Units.
How have humans interacted with the environment over time? This course introduces students to the methods and topics of environmental history by way of classic and recent works in the field: Crosby, Cronon, Worster, Russell, and McNeill, etc. Major topics of investigation include preservationism, ecological imperialism, evolutionary history, forest conservation, organic and industrial agriculture, labor history, the commons and land reform, energy consumption, and climate change. Our scope covers the whole period from 1492 with case studies from European, American, and British imperial history.
Instructor(s): F. Albritton Jonsson Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 35014, ENST 25014, HIPS 25014, HIST 25014

CHSS 35121. The Brazil-Argentina Nuclear Cooperation Agreement and Thermoelectric Transition in Brazil. 100 Units.
In this course we present a history of Brazil-Argentina nuclear cooperation and how Brazil is planning the transition of its electric matrix from predominantly hydraulic towards a mix with increased share of nuclear power. Proliferation risks are a main concern of international community when nuclear programs expansion is considered. The Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, created in 1991, has been fundamental in assuring the international community (via the International Atomic Energy Agency) that the nuclear materials and facilities of both countries are being used for peaceful purposes. Domestically, the debate has been environmental in nature, and concerns topics ranging from mining to power generation, and from radioactive materials disposal to radiation effects in living organisms and major accidents. These diplomatic, environmental, social and political issues are in turn dependent on technical details of the thermoelectric generating process, and this nexus of issues provides the topics for the course.
Instructor(s): Ramos, Alexandre Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Tinker Visiting Professor Autumn 2018
Equivalent Course(s): PPHA 39921, LACS 35121, LACS 25121, HIPS 25121

CHSS 35208. Motion Pictures in the Human Sciences. 100 Units.
This course will examine the relationship between moving images, particularly motion-picture films, and the human sciences, broadly construed, from the early days of cinema to the advent of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). It will use primary source documents alongside screenings to allow students to study what the moving image meant to researchers wishing to develop knowledge of mind and behavior, and what they thought film could do that still photography and unmediated human observation could not. The kinds of motion pictures we will study will vary widely, from infant development studies to psychiatric films, from documentaries to research films, and from films made by scientists or clinicians as part of their laboratory or therapeutic work to experimental films made by seasoned filmmakers. We will explore how people used the recordings they made in their own studies, in communications with other scientists, and for didactic and other purposes. We will also discuss how researchers' claims about mental processes—perception, memory, consciousness, and interpersonal influence—drew on their understandings of particular technologies.
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 39002, CMST 29002, HIST 25208, HIST 35208, HIPS 25208

CHSS 35307. History and Historiography of Science. 100 Units.
Science poses particular problems of historical understanding because it claims to reveal truths independent of human culture and historical change. Yet scholars have argued for decades that both the enterprise of science...
and, indeed, scientific knowledge itself can be accounted for historically. Since World War II a thriving discipline has arisen to pursue this objective. It has transformed our understanding of such central topics as the practice of experiment, the social meaning of nature, and the constitution of scientific authority. History and Historiography of Science offers an opportunity to see how historians of science have achieved this. We will read both canonical works and new research, in order to understand how they practice their craft of bringing history to bear on what seems the most unhistorical of subjects.

Instructor(s): A. Johns Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 35307, HIST 25307, HIPS 25307

CHSS 35309. History of Perception. 100 Units.
Knowing time. Feeling space. Smelling. Touching. Tasting. Hearing. Are these universal aspects of human consciousness, or particular experiences contingent upon time, place, and culture? How do we come to know about our own perceptions and those of others? This course examines these and related questions through detailed readings of primary sources, engagement in secondary scholarship in the history and anthropology of sensation, and through close work with participants’ own sensations and perceptions of the world around them.

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 25309, KNOW 21404, ANTH 34308, ANTH 24308, HIPS 25309, HIST 35309, KNOW 31404

CHSS 35408. The History of Suggestion. 100 Units.
This course examines the history of studies of the nature of what has commonly become known as suggestion—subtle influences over personal and group behavior that are thought to affect us outside our conscious awareness or control. The idea of an unconscious influence of this kind has deep roots, but it was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that it became a major focus of research, controversy and reflection. The course will examine the development and significance of characterizations of suggestion and related concepts of subtle influence in medicine, advertising, and various fields in the sciences. Course materials will include primary sources in those areas, literary materials, and film.

Instructor(s): A. Winter Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 25408, HIPS 25408, HIST 35408

CHSS 35525. Environmental Histories of the Global South. 100 Units.
Drawing on cases from Africa, Latin America, and especially Asia, this course explores key themes in the modern environmental history of the world beyond the rich industrialized North. Our investigations will focus on the ecological impacts of colonialism, war, and development, and how environmental management has helped to construct modern states and capitalist practices in turn. Ranging from the malarial plantations of the Caribbean to the forests of southeast Asia, we will analyze not-so-natural disasters like floods and chemical spills as well as the slow violence of deforestation and droughts. Combining primary sources with classic scholarship, we will encounter pioneering green activists like the original “tree huggers” of the Himalayas and environmental advocates for brutal population control. The course will conclude by examining the emergence of a newly assertive Global South in international climate negotiations, and its implications for the environmental history of our planet at large. The course is open to all, but may be of particular interest to students who have taken “Introduction to Environmental History.”

Instructor(s): L. Chatterjee Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 35024, HIST 25025, HIPS 25525, ENST 25025, SALC 25025, SALC 35025

CHSS 36054. SIFK MAPSS Core: Ways of Knowing. 100 Units.
This seminar introduces students to the practices and principles that guide the nascent field of inquiry into the formation of knowledge. “Ways of Knowing” examines how claims to knowledge are shaped by disciplinary, social, historical, and political contexts, as well as local cultural factors both explicit and unspoken. How do we know what we know? How have cultures and scholars contested, reconfigured, and defamiliarized accepted claims to knowledge? Building on social science perspectives and methods, this course will explore the formation of knowledge through key historical, sociological, and anthropological case studies. Furthermore, the course will take a expansive approach to knowledge formation by considering the interface of theory, practice, and social action. “Ways of Knowing” is a required seminar for all students wishing to undertake the Formation of Knowledge MAPSS track (https://sifk.uchicago.edu/mapss/)

Instructor(s): Anastasia Kimchynskaya, Yan Slobodkin Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 26054, KNOW 36054

CHSS 36059. Media, Environment, and Risk. 100 Units.
In 1991, Ulrich Beck wrote that “society is made into a laboratory.” Following the Chernobyl disaster, Beck articulated how modern technology and its potential side-effects—such as radiation or chemical poisoning—had created the novel epidemiological category of environmental risk defined by threats that escape human perception and transcend borders. Institutions monitoring ecological conditions gained responsibility for communicating public health. Political conflicts emerged between formations of expert and lay environmental knowledge. The technological application of modern science, and its associated environmental risks, pushed research beyond the laboratory and into the governmental fabric of social order: nuclear reactors had to be constructed and chemicals distributed to populations before their properties and safety could be understood. This seminar reads the debates on risk in environmental sociology alongside the emergence of risk criticism in media studies to interrogate the probabilistic thinking inherent to the communication of ecological threat. Two common traits characteristic of recent environmental catastrophes ranging from Bhopal, Fukushima
Daiishi, Deepwater Horizon, Exxon Valdez, Hurricane Katrina, and the varied crises of global climate change, are that each disaster involves the failure or side-effect of an implemented technological project and that the corresponding risks—whether imperceptible or probable—are necessarily communicated to publics by media.

Instructor(s): Thomas Pringle Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 30329, KNOW 36059, CMST 42802, MAAD 26059, HIPS 26059

**CHSS 37015. Graphic Medicine. 100 Units.**
What do comics add to the discourse on health, illness, and disease? What insight do comics provide about the experience of illness? Can comics improve health? Graphic Medicine: Concepts and Practice is a course designed to introduce students to the basic concepts and practices of the emerging field of graphic medicine. Broadly defined as the "intersection between the medium of comics and the discourse of healthcare," graphic medicine allows for a unique exploration of health, disease, and illness through the narrative use of graphic and textual elements. Following a life-cycle framework, this course will examine the range of graphic medicine works that address topics such as pregnancy, abortion, mental health, sexuality, chronic medical diseases, HIV/AIDS, dementia, and end-of-life issues. Students will learn about conceptual and practical aspects of the field and be exposed to a variety of styles and genres that capture its breadth and diversity. In addition to reading, analyzing, and discussing the works, an important component of the class will be exercises during which students will create their own graphic medicine works. Taught by a nurse cartoonist (also a founding figure in the field) and a physician, the course also provides a perspective of the field from within the practice of medicine. Through didactics, discussion, and practice, this course will provide students with a thorough understanding of the field of graphic medicine.

Instructor(s): Brian Callender, MK Czerwiec Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): No prior knowledge or experience of graphic novels, comics, drawing, or medicine required.
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 27015, KNOW 27015, KNOW 37015, ENGL 27015

**CHSS 38400. Darwin’s "On the Origin of Species" and "The Descent of Man" 100 Units.**
This lecture-discussion class will focus on a close reading of Darwin's two classic texts. An initial class or two will explore the state of biology prior to Darwin’s Beagle voyage, and then consider the development of his theories before 1859. Then we will turn to his two books. Among the topics of central concern will be the logical, epistemological, and rhetorical status of Darwin’s several theories, especially his evolutionary ethics; the religious foundations of his ideas and the religious reaction to them; and the social-political consequences of his accomplishment. The year 2019 was the 210th anniversary of Darwin’s birth and the 160th anniversary of the publication of On the Origin of Species. (B) (II)

Instructor(s): R. Richards Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 24901, PHIL 23015, FNDL 24905, PHIL 33015, HIST 34905, HIST 24905

**CHSS 38900. Philosophy of Mind and Science Fiction. 100 Units.**
Could computers be conscious? Might they be affected by changes in size or time scale, hardware, development, social, cultural, or ecological factors? Does our form of life constrain our ability to visualize or detect alternative forms of order, life, or mentality, or to interpret them correctly? How do assumptions of consciousness affect how we study and relate to other beings? This course examines issues in philosophy of mind raised by recent progress in biology, psychology, and simulations of life and intelligence, with readings from philosophy, the relevant sciences, and science fiction. (B)

Instructor(s): W. Wimsatt Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 33400, PHIL 23400, HIPS 25400

**CHSS 39405. Advanced Logic. 100 Units.**
Since Russell’s discovery of the inconsistency of Frege’s foundation for mathematics, much of logic has resolved around the question of to what extent we can or cannot prove the consistency of the basic principles with which we reason. This course will explore two main efforts in this direction. We will first look at proof-theoretic efforts towards demonstrating the consistency of various foundational systems, discussing the virtues and limitations of this approach. We will then closely examine Godel’s theorems, which are famous for demonstrating limits on the extent to which we can formulate consistency proofs. Much has been written on the implications of Godel’s theorems, and we will spend some time trying to carefully separate what they really entail from what they do not entail. Assessment will be by regular homework sets. Intermediate logic or prior equivalent required. (II) and (B).

Instructor(s): K. Davey Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Elementary Logic or equivalent
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 29405, PHIL 39405, PHIL 29405

**CHSS 40196. Cultural Evolution. 100 Units.**
This course explores the nature of process of cultural evolution. After establishing a background on the characteristics of biological evolution, we consider topics in cultural evolution that explore similarities and differences between processes of biological and cultural evolution, and theoretical and conceptual innovations necessary to deal with the latter, using a variety of approaches and methodologies, including agent-based modeling, “big data” approaches, and case studies. These will include topics like: the nature of inheritance, the limits of ‘memes’, the role of cognitive development, the coevolution of cognition and lithic technology, the scaffolding and evolution of social support, institutions, organizations and firms, the structure of scientific communities, entrenchment and the emergence of conventions and standards, the role of technology, horizontal
The quarrel between reason and faith has a long history. The birth of Christianity was in the crucible of rationality. The ancient Greeks privileged this human capacity above all others, finding in reason the quality wherein man was closest to the gods, while the early Christians found this viewpoint antithetical to religious humility. As religion and its place in society have evolved throughout history, so have the standing of, and philosophical justification for, non-belief on rational grounds. This course will examine the intellectual and cultural history of arguments against religion in Western thought from antiquity to the present. Along the way, of course, we will also examine the assumptions bound up in the binary terms “religion” and “reason.”

Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 40201, PHIL 43011, CLAS 46616, DVPR 46616, HIST 66606

CHSS 40203. Biopolitics & Posthumanism. 100 Units.

Much has been written about the possibility (or impossibility) of creating an integrated political schema that incorporates living status, not species boundary, as the salient distinction between person and thing. In this course, we will explore how biopolitical and posthumanist scholars like Michel Foucault, Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben, Jane Bennett, Cary Wolfe, and Donna Haraway have acknowledged (and advocated transcending) the anthropocentric ümwelt, to borrow Jakob von Uexküll’s influential term. In parallel with our theoretical readings, we will explore how actual legal systems have incorporated the nonhuman, with a particular focus on Anglo-American and transnational law. Our goal is to develop our own sense of an applied biopolitics—whether to our own research, to future legislation and jurisprudence, or both.

Instructor(s): Nicolette I. Bruner Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): This course fulfills part of the KNOW Core Seminar requirement to be eligible to apply for the SIFK Dissertation Research Fellowship. No instructor consent is required, but registration is not final until after the 1st week in order to give Ph.D. students priority.

Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 40203, CMLT 40203, KNOW 40203

CHSS 40205. Ecological Thinking. 100 Units.

What is the environment, anyway? Is it a collection of resources? An entity in need of protection? An autonomous state of being? In this course, we will engage with writers and thinkers who have grappled with what it means to think ecologically. We will examine how environmental concerns have reached across borders to shape law, culture, and theories of knowledge on a global scale. Course themes will include environmental justice, the energy humanities, postcolonial environmentalisms, ecocriticism, ecolifenism, queer ecologies, and critical life studies. Readings will include works by Rachel Carson, William Cronon, Lawrence Buell, Helena Maria Viramontes, Christopher Stone, Rob Nixon, Tamara Giles-Vernick, Timothy Morton, and others.

Instructor(s): Nicolette I. Bruner Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 40203, CMLT 40203, KNOW 40203

CHSS 40206. Assaulting the Paradigm: Franz Boas and His Contemporaries. 100 Units.

How do ideas succeed? What challenges do those who voice new ideas face as they try to gain adherents, and how do they rise to influence against the odds? This course examines how the unexpected, the unconventional, and the radically original can dethrone accepted truths. We will investigate this question through a case study of the anthropologist Franz Boas and his contemporaries, who assaulted the paradigm of race at the turn of the twentieth century. In addition to reading Boas, we will study the works of John Dewey, W. E. B. Du Bois, Sigmund Freud, Zora Neale Hurston, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Margaret Mead, and Thorstein Veblen. By tracing the mutual influence between Boas and thinkers in fields from psychology to philosophy, we can examine how knowledge is contested and propagated—including the challenges those who frame ideas face as they break away from the pack, the role of social networks in the success of concepts that go “against the grain” of conventional wisdom, and the special agency of multidisciplinary collaboration in the periods of ferment produced when authority is tested and new ideas are demanded.

Instructor(s): Isaiah Lorado Wilner Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 40206, ANTH 44810

CHSS 40207. Human Rights and Humanitarianism in the Modern World. 100 Units.

The related concepts of human rights and humanitarianism form the basis of contemporary ethical and political thought. Acting in the name of “humanity” is seen as unequivocally noble, and very few of us would ever claim to be anti-humanitarian or anti-human rights. Yet the moral consensus surrounding these terms obscures a contested and often disturbing history. Rather than uncritically accepting a triumphalist story of the progressive victory of human rights and humanitarianism, this course will explore how these concepts were constructed over time, paying special attention to how they were used in practice, what kind of rhetorical work they accomplished, and whose interests they served. The course will consider the origins of modern concepts of humanity, rights, citizenship, and social responsibility during the enlightenment and trace how they developed over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries. We will study the role of human rights and humanitarianism in the transformative events and processes of modern history, including the rise of nation-states, the trans-Atlantic slave trade and its abolition, imperial expansion and decolonization, the world wars, and twentieth-century genocides. Students will leave the course with an understanding of how human rights and humanitarianism can be applied to their own research interests.
Instructor(s): Yan Slobodkin
Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): HMRT 40207, KNOW 40207

CHSS 40208. Man and/or Machine. 100 Units.
Recently, Amazon employees fighting for better working conditions united under the slogan “We are not robots!”
Recalling Karl Capek’s R.U.R., which coined the word robot (from the Czech word for slave), the slogan suggests
the importance of the machine as an object and a concept in relation to which human identity has been - and
continues to be - defined. Throughout the history of human thought, the machine has existed as both something
that we are like (for example, Descartes comparing the brain to a machine) but also as an opposite to humanity
(as in the aforementioned slogan). This course will trace this tension between the machine as an ‘Other’ and as
a metaphor for our human self from the early modern period to the present. Beginning with theoretical and
philosophical writing on the importance of oppositions and binaries to human identity and language, it will trace
the history of the idea of the machine as it relates to the human in texts by Rene Descartes, La Mettrie, Emile
Zola, Karl Capek, Alan Turing, and Donna Haraway, among others. In addition to confronting the complexity
and ambiguity of a concept that ubiquitously shapes our lives today, students in this course will also wrestle with
broader humanistic questions regarding the nature of the Self, the boundaries between self and other, and the
relationship between human identity and technology.
Instructor(s): Anastasia Klimchynskaya
Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 40208

CHSS 40300. Case Studies on the Formation of Knowledge II. 100 Units.
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
Module 1: Foundations of Psychology in Linguistics and Biology Robert Richards, John Goldsmith 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 Robert
Richards, Alison Winter 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
Equivalent Course(s): MAPH 40300, MAPS 40301, SOCI 40210, CMLT 41803, KNOW 40300, HIST 64901, EALC
50300, SCTH 40300

This course critically examines concepts of “nature” and “artifice” in the formation of scientific knowledge, from
the Babylonians to the Romantics, and the ways that this history has been written and problematized by both
canonical and less canonical works in the history of science from the twentieth century to the present. Our course
is guided by three overarching questions, approached with historical texts and historiography, that correspond to
Instructor(s): Margaret Carlyle, Eduardo Escobar, Jennifer P. Daly
Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course fulfills part of the KNOW Core Seminar requirement to be eligible to apply for the SIFK
Dissertation Research Fellowship. Ph.D. students must register with the KNOW 40304 course number in order
for this course to meet the requirement.
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 40304, HIPS 40304, HIST 34920, KNOW 40304, GNSE 40304

CHSS 40305. The Archive of Early English Literature: Manuscripts, Books, and Canon. 100 Units.
This course will introduce students to early English literature through manuscript studies and book history.
Throughout the course we will reflect on archival research as a critical practice: how do the material histories
of early texts invite us to rethink the fundamental categories that organize literary history, like authorship or
canonicity? The course will be both a practicum (teaching the basics of paleography, codicology, and textual
editing) and an ongoing conversation about the archives of literary history, as sites of interpretation, memory,
and erasure. We will meet in the Special Collections Research Center, and use the collections of the University
of Chicago. We will first focus on the archives of Chicago’s Chaucer Research Project and its principals, John
Matthews Manly and Edith Rickert, who tried to establish an authoritative text of the Canterbury Tales in the
early twentieth century. The second half of the course will focus on print culture and reading practice, with a
focus on Chicago’s collection of early modern commonplace books. Students will propose and pursue a research
project in the U of C or Newberry Library collections, on a topic of their choosing. Students will produce a piece
of scholarship that reflects both careful research in those collections and thoughtfulness about the place of that
research in critical practice.
Instructor(s): J. Stadolnik
Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course fulfills part of the KNOW Core Seminar requirement to be eligible to apply for the SIFK
Dissertation Research Fellowship. No instructor consent is required, but registration is not final until after the 1st
week in order to give Ph.D. students priority.
CHSS 40306. Race, Land, and Empire: History, Intersectionality, and the Meanings of America. 100 Units.
This seminar examines the making and meaning of the United States at the intersections of race, land, and empire. It considers a set of profound historical transformations that shape American and global life today: the conquest and colonization of the vast North American continent; the expansion of slavery and, with it, a system of global capitalism; the growth of opposition to that system of labor, culminating in the Civil War; the origins, as a result of that war, of a modern American nation-state; the ethnic cleansing and resettlement of the West; and the ascension of the United States of America to global eminence as a military power. Rather than framing these events within a national narrative about the idea of Manifest Destiny or an epic struggle toward the ideal of democracy—an approach that ignores most of the continent, divides the West from the North and South, and frames history itself as progress—this course makes use of a global lens to analyze the borders between and border crossings by American communities. Our focus will be the interrelations between regions and peoples; the processes that led to alteration; and the evolution of structures that redistributed social power.
Instructor(s): Isaiah Lorado Wilner Terms Offered: Spring
Note(s): This course fulfills part of the KNOW Core Seminar requirement to be eligible to apply for the SIFK Dissertation Research Fellowship. No instructor consent is required, but registration is not final until after the 1st week in order to give Ph.D. students priority.
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 37013, KNOW 40306

CHSS 40307. Seeing and Knowing. 100 Units.
The concept of visuality attends to the ways in which things become seeable, knowable, and governable. Scholars who study optical instruments, architecture, cinema, and media have done much to show us how visual technologies change our ways of seeing. Others in the history of science study how practices of observation transform our understanding of nature—and ourselves. This comparative course analyzes regimes of visuality in different cultural and historical contexts. After a short introduction on the philosophy of visual experience and psychology of visual perception, we will investigate a series of configurations of seeing and knowing. These sites range from the history of disability to contemporary climate science, and students will be asked to contribute visual topics from their own research or disciplines for collective exploration in our seminar. Through comparative study, we will work to develop new categories or relationships for linking perception and knowledge.
Instructor(s): Alex Campolo Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 40307, ARTH 40307, CMST 47007

CHSS 40308. Political Theologies of Slavery and Freedom in the Atlantic World. 100 Units.
This seminar examines the interdisciplinary form of knowledge known as “political theology” in the context of Atlantic slavery. The course will trace two major developments. First, we will explore how Christian metaphysics facilitated colonialism and slavery, focusing on the emergence of race as a theological (rather than a biological) concept and on the self-fulfilling providentialism that structured fantasies of Euro-Christian world dominance. Second, we will explore how indigenous and African cosmologies and Christianities informed enslaved resistance and abolitionism. Our readings will range from works of political theology (Augustine, Calvin, Hobbes) to early American writings (Las Casas, Ligon, Jefferson) to Black Atlantic anti-slavery texts (Wheatley, Walker, Turner). We will consider the explorer George Best’s rewriting of the biblical Curse of Ham, Francis Bacon’s claim that Europe’s superior technology evidenced its Chosen status, and the ideology of “hereditary heathenism” that forestalled early efforts to convert slaves to Christianity. Likewise, we will consider the role of obeah in the Haitian Revolution, the competing attitudes toward Christian slave revolt found in fiction by Douglass and Stowe, and the continued contestation of what W. E. B. Du Bois called “the new religion of whiteness.” Secondary authors may include Charles Taylor, Talal Asad, Max Weber, Colin Kidd, Rebecca Goetz, Jared Hickman, Katharine Gerbner, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, and J. Kameron Carter.
Instructor(s): Alex Mazzaferro Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 30308, SCTH 40308, KNOW 40308

CHSS 40310. Topics in Medical Anthropology. 100 Units.
Over the past two decades, the field of “global health” has become the dominant narrative and organizing logic for interventions into health and well-being worldwide. This seminar will review theoretical positions and debates in anthropology, focusing on the decolonizing global health movement. Divergent historical legacies of colonialism and racism, institutionalized forms of structural violence, and modern-day extractive capitalism have resulted in stark global inequalities, which currently stand at shockingly unprecedented levels. This seminar offers a critical lens to rethink contemporary global health’s logic and practice by considering other histories and political formations, experiences, and knowledge production systems. This seminar opens up a space for generative dialogue on the future directions of what constitutes health, equity, and aid, and whether social justice is or should be the new imperative for action.
Instructor(s): P. Sean Brotherton Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2021
Prerequisite(s): Strongly recommended: previous lower-division courses in the social studies of health and medicine through ANTH, HIPS, HLTH, or CHDV
Note(s): This is an advanced reading seminar. Among undergraduates, 3rd and 4th year students are given priority. Consent only: Use the online consent form via the registrar to enroll.
explore the ways in which science fiction might operate as ethnographic thought experiment while challenging
science fiction's speculative process, the course encourages a mode of inquiry that is experimental in order to
re-conceptualizing nature in relation to post-apocalyptic narratives and crises of the Anthropocene. Following
aims to elaborate potential correspondences between anthropology and science fiction, with particular focus on
environment, governance, the body, and the relationship between humans and machines. In so doing the course
practice in an attempt to develop novel theoretical and methodological interventions into questions concerning
This graduate seminar explores science fiction narratives alongside anthropological theory and ethnographic
practices in an attempt to develop novel theoretical and methodological interventions into questions concerning
environment, governance, the body, and the relationship between humans and machines. In so doing the course
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re-conceptualizing nature in relation to post-apocalyptic narratives and crises of the Anthropocene. Following
science fiction's speculative process, the course encourages a mode of inquiry that is experimental in order to
explore the ways in which science fiction might operate as ethnographic thought experiment while challenging

CHSS 40410. Technology and Aesthetics. 100 Units.
The idea of technological "progress" is a contested one, but it cannot be denied that innovation, at the very
least, is a continuous process. Technological innovations regularly enable new mediums, new styles, new
genres, and new subject matter as they offer us new ways to record the world, express ourselves, and tell
stories. And because art is one of the fundamental lenses through which we see the world, the advent of new
artistic and literary forms constantly offers us new ways to know. Each transformation in both creation and
reception, however, raises anew fundamental theoretical questions: what is the difference between an objective
record of the world and an artistic rendition of it? After touching briefly on the revolution brought about by
Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, this class will span the 19th through the 21st centuries to explore
how technological innovation has led to new literary and aesthetic forms. Though the primary focus will be
on literary texts, the course is intended as an interdisciplinary one, incorporating visual art and media. Class
sessions will include visits to the Rare Book Collection, local art museums, and, potentially, Chicago-area theatre
performances. For their final projects, students will be able to choose between a research paper or a creative
project that engages with the questions and concerns of the course.
Instructor(s): Anastasia Klimchynskaya Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): ARTV 40310, KNOW 40310, ARTH 40311

CHSS 42300. Scientific/Technological Change. 100 Units.
TBD
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 20300, PHIL 30300, HIPS 20300

CHSS 45101. Agriculture: Ancient and Modern. 100 Units.
This course surveys the history of agriculture and agrarian societies from the dawn of the Neolithic to the age
of genetic modification and anthropogenic warming. Topics to be discussed include the origins of agriculture,
domestication, population dynamics, soil husbandry, foodways, land tenure, dietary transitions, industrial
agriculture, the Green Revolution, and climate change. We will read texts by James Scott, Emmanuel le Roy
Ladurie, Elinor Ostrom, Deborah Fitzgerald, and others.
Instructor(s): P. Cheney Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Upper-level undergraduates with consent of instructors
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 45101

CHSS 45125. Seminar: Anthropology of the Body. 100 Units.
Drawing on a wide and interdisciplinary range of texts, both classic and more recent, this seminar will variously
examine the theoretical debates of the body as a subject of anthropological, historical, psychological, medical
and literary inquiry. The seminar will explore specific themes, for example, the persistence of the mind/body
dualism, experiences of embodiment/alienation, phenomenology of the body, Foucauldian notions of bio-politics,
biopower, queering the body, and the medicalized, gendered, and racialized body, among other salient themes.
Instructor(s): P. Sean Brotherton Terms Offered: TBD. Not offered in 2020-21
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 45125, GNSE 45112, CHDV 45100

CHSS 47000. Reading And Research: CHSS. 100 Units.
Readings and Research for working on their PhD

CHSS 50755. Race/Capital/Extraction. 100 Units.
In the concluding chapters of Capital, Vol. 1, Karl Marx describes the origins of capitalism as an enterprise
"written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire." This process that Marx christened as "so-called
primitive accumulation" rests fundamentally on the extraction of raw materials through colonial regimes of
enclosure and the brutal exploitation of racialized labor. Nonetheless, the relationship between race and capital is
not sufficiently elaborated in Marx's oeuvre. In turn, this course will reconsider Marxist concepts and categories
through a critical evaluation of the analytical domains of "race," "capital," and "extraction." Moreover, students
will consider the extent to which these domains productively modify each other: Does capitalism as an economic
system depend on race as its ideological substrate? Can race be understood as an extractive project founded the
violent enslavement and mercantile transit of racialized laboring subjects? How are the production of race and
the accumulation of capital transformed by extractive economies of fossil fuels and metallic ores? To this end,
students will consult the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Claudia Jones, Walter Rodney, Sidney Mintz,
Norman Girvan, Lloyd Best and Kari Polanyi Levitt.
Instructor(s): Ryan Jobson Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2020
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 45125, ANTH 45125, CHDV 50755

CHSS 51947. Techno-Natures: Anthropology and Science Fiction. 100 Units.
This graduate seminar explores science fiction narratives alongside anthropological theory and ethnographic
practice in an attempt to develop novel theoretical and methodological interventions into questions concerning
environment, governance, the body, and the relationship between humans and machines. In so doing the course
aims to elaborate potential correspondences between anthropology and science fiction, with particular focus on
re-conceptualizing nature in relation to post-apocalyptic narratives and crises of the Anthropocene. Following
science fiction's speculative process, the course encourages a mode of inquiry that is experimental in order to
explore the ways in which science fiction might operate as ethnographic thought experiment while challenging
received understandings of the nature of empirical evidence. Course material will include science fiction texts as well as films.
Instructor(s): Michael Fisch Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2019
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 51947
CHSS 53709. Conceptual Change and the a-priori. 100 Units.
(II) and (III)
Instructor(s): K. Davey Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 53709
CHSS 54833. Engineered Worlds III: Terraformations. 100 Units.
This experimental seminar is part of a larger series of events in 2019-20 organized under the Engineered Worlds theme. It will be linked to activities on several other campuses as well as a spring 2020 conference. It examines the effects of industrial living on the biosphere and considers the multiple ways that people have been involved in terraforming planet earth. Attending to the ways that race, gender, and class inform industrial life, the seminar will explore (via social theory, ethnography, and history) ways of thinking about planetary scale problems that have local intensities that matter. This is an advanced graduate seminar. Registration is by permission of instructor.
Instructor(s): Joseph Masco Terms Offered: Autumn. Autumn 2019
Prerequisite(s): Consent of Instructor
Note(s): Course will involve Skyped in participants from another university.
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 54833
CHSS 55100. The Development of Whitehead's Philosophy of Nature. 100 Units.
Alfred North Whitehead’s philosophy has seen a resurgence of academic interest in recent years via a line of influence passing through Deleuze and Latour. Meanwhile, Whitehead’s Process and Reality (1929) has gained a reputation, not undeserved, as possibly the most challenging English language text in the philosophical canon; it is seldom read in a department of philosophy. This is a pity, since the striking originality and creative potential of the philosophy contained within is unmatched. This course offers an opportunity for a gradual approach to understanding the "philosophy of organism" of Process and Reality by first taking in the foothills of earlier and less obtuse Whitehead texts Concept of Nature and Science and the Modern World. We will supplement these readings with newly discovered notes from Whitehead’s Harvard lectures (published just last year). These documents reveal Whitehead in meditative mood, thinking through in real time his philosophical concerns. With their help, this course will explore the striking continuity of his earlier natural philosophy with the mature philosophy of Process and Reality and so provide a more gentle ascent to the heady realms of "actual entities", "concrescence" and "conceptual feelings" described therein. (II)
Instructor(s): T. Fashby Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 55100, KNOW 55100
CHSS 55978. AdvRdgs in Technoscience. 100 Units.
Advanced Readings
Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 55973
CHSS 57400. Freud Wars: Hist & Philo Rdgs. 100 Units.
TBD
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 57400
CHSS 58108. The Philosophy of Howard Stein. 100 Units.
Howard Stein’s impressive body of work is notable for its tight integration of history of science with philosophy of science. Topics include: theories of spacetime structure (Newtonian and relativistic), the conceptual structure of quantum mechanics, the methodology of science in general and the character of scientific knowledge, and the history of physics and mathematics. Readings by Stein will be supplemented by primary historical texts and secondary philosophical literature, including selections from a forthcoming edited collection on Stein. (II)
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 58108
CHSS 66900. Colloquium: Reading Marx’s Ecology. 100 Units.
In this course we will read Marx’s own ideas in their historical context and then explore commentaries on them by Paul Burkett, John Bellamy Foster, and others to see what of Marx’s ideas can be productively used in environmental history and in discussions of the Anthropocene.
Instructor(s): F. Albritton Jonsson & D. Chakrabarty Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 66900
CHSS 70000. Advanced Study: Conceptual & Historical Studies of Science. 300.00 Units.
Advanced Study: Conceptual & Historical Studies of Science