HIST 201 HS: Advanced Historical Literature: Science, Technology & Medicine
Spring 2016
SYLLABUS

Professor: Elena Aronova (earonova@history.ucsb.edu)
Class Location: HSSB 4041
Class Times: Tuesdays, 9:00-11:50AM
Office Location: HSSB 4215
Office Hours: Wednesday, 3 to 5 PM or by appointment

Course description

This seminar will serve as an introduction at graduate level to the discipline of the history of science. The first part of the course focuses on a series of key questions, theoretical lenses, and methodological approaches, which have shaped that discipline since its emergence as a professional academic field in the mid-twentieth century. The second part focuses on recent works that define the state of the field at present. Taking the longer view of recent history of the field, the course aims to introduce different approaches and the core readings in the history of science, and to provide you with the conceptual “tools” you will need to plan a research project, to frame questions that would guide and focus your research, or to write a research paper. A great deal of recent historiography of science has focused on the significance of tools and instruments in shaping science. We will adopt this model by focusing on a particular kind of “tool” each week, exploring both the power and the limitations of different conceptual lenses: scientific revolutions, ethnographies of laboratories, power relations instituted in and through science, geographies of knowledge, visual epistemologies, material culture of science, etc. This is meant not only to introduce you to the major approaches in the history of science field, but also to help you build your own toolkit for doing innovative and solidly-grounded historical work.

Course requirements

Come to class every week, having prepared a synopsis of each reading. The synopsis must be a summary of the argument, not a critique of it; you should explain how the argument is constructed, what kind of empirical evidence it draws upon, and what it argues against. The synopsis is due by email to the entire class by 5 pm the day before the class. Since the purpose of the synopsis is to prepare for the discussion, the late submissions can reduce the effectiveness of the discussion, so please be good citizens and submit in time! The weekly responses will be graded in toto at the end of the quarter and will result in 20% of your grade.
In addition, each student will be required to lead discussion of the readings at least once (20%) and to participate in the discussion every week (20%). Active and constructive participation in class is imperative.

Final project: this could be a review essay, a research project proposal, or any creative medium you decide might be appropriate for your topic. In any case, the expectation is that the final project will involve further reading/research beyond the course materials, and will bring this other secondary (or primary) literature into conversation with course materials (40%).

The topic of your final project must be approved by the end of WEEK 4. I will arrange one-on-one meetings with each of you to discuss your final project and the course, in general.

Course readings

Each week’s reading will consist of one or two short theoretical or historiographical essays, and a book-length historical account that serves as an example of a historical work that uses this particular conceptual approach. Most of the readings will be available as PDF’s on Gaacho Space. Any other readings will be on course reserve and available at the library’s circulation desk.

SCHEDULE OF READING

PART I. THE ORIGINS OF THE FIELD

WEKK 1: 3/29/16

Introduction: What’s the Field?


It might be helpful to compare in chronological order the justificatory statements from the field:


WEEK 2: 4/5/16

**Revolutions**

Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), with a new forward by Ian Hacking; first pub. 1962

*Conceptual and historiographical issues:*


*Recommended:*


WEEK 3: 4/12/16

**Social Construction of Knowledge**


*Conceptual and historiographical issues:*


John Zammito, “How Kuhn Became a Sociologist,” *A Nice Derangement of*
WEEK 4: 4/19/16

**Ethnography of a Laboratory and the Practice Turn**


Conceptual and historiographical issues:


Recommended:


PART II: THE FIELD’S PRESENT: SELECTED RECENT APPROACHES, CONCEPTS, AND METHODOLOGIES

WEEK 5: 4/26/16

**Circulation of Knowledge: Post-colonial Perspectives**


Conceptual and historiographical issues:


WEEK 6: 5/3/16
Co-production: Science in the Cold War


**Conceptual and historiographical issues:**


**Recommended:**


WEEK 7: 5/10/16

**Spaces: Geographies of Knowledge**


**Conceptual and historiographical issues:**


Richard White, “What is Spatial History?”
[https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29](https://web.stanford.edu/group/spatialhistory/cgi-bin/site/pub.php?id=29)

**Recommended:**


WEEK 8: 5/17/16

**Images: Visual Cultures of Science**
Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), the introduction, chapters 1, 2, and 3, and the conclusion.


**Conceptual and historiographical issues:**


*Recommended:*


WEEK 9: 5/24/16.

**Things: Material Cultures of Science**


**Conceptual and historiographical issues:**


*Recommended:*


WEEK 10: 5/31/16

**Objectivity: Historicizing Self-Evident**
Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison. *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2010), the prologue and chapters 1, 3, and 4.

**Conceptual and historiographical issues:**
