Science in Society Program

The sciences and scientifically sophisticated medicine and technology are among the most important and far-reaching human achievements. Scientific work has affected people’s intellectual standards, cultural meanings, political possibilities, economic capacities, and physical surroundings. Scientific research has also acquired significance, direction, authority, and application within various cultural contexts. To understand the sciences as human achievements is, in significant part, to understand the world in which we live.

The Science in Society Program (SISP) is an interdisciplinary major that encourages the study of the sciences and medicine as institutions, practices, intellectual achievements, and constituents of culture. Students in the program should gain a better understanding of the richness and complexity of scientific practice and of the cultural and political significance of science, technology, and medicine. The major is well suited for students interested in a variety of professional and academic pursuits after graduation, since it encourages students to integrate technical scientific knowledge with a grasp of the historical and cultural setting within which it is understood and used.

Faculty

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Departmental Advising Expert

Tony Hatch
• Undergraduate Science in Society Major (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/sisp/ugrd-sisp)

SISP109 Psychology and Technologies of the Self and Social World
The psychological sciences are generating novel and remarkable understandings of individual minds, social interactions, groups, and institutions, and these findings are being extended to benefit individual and social welfare. As we dwell in a world increasingly understood in psychological terms and managed through psychological technologies, crucial questions warrant attention. What are the implications of adopting these new understandings of self and others? Does this new knowledge change us and, if so, how? How do we assess the consequences of this knowledge as it is implemented in social practices? These questions guide our examination of cases where psychological knowledge has informed new practices and policies. The cases include research on decision-making, integration, positive psychology, psychopharmacology, stress, and attitudes. Also considered will be instances where psychological ideas have been implemented then challenged, including psychosurgery and token economies.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PSYC
Identical With: PSYC109
Prereq: None

SISP113 Care and Suffering
In this introductory course, we will explore the production and representation of human suffering, in addition to the modes of care deployed by healers, kin groups, aid workers, and state actors to alleviate the suffering of others. We will begin by mastering dominant approaches within anthropology for studying affliction. We will then examine case examples of bodies in distress. We will discover that suffering is inherently social: it is shared, socially produced, and communicated through socially learned and sanctioned means. Suffering is also social in the sense that it often begs a moral response. With that in mind, we will turn our attention to different regimes of care—such as experimental, pharmaceutical, and humanitarian care—and explore their limitations, paradoxes, and transformative possibilities. Taken as a whole, the course will invite students to question the creation and reproduction of suffering, while at the same time critically reflecting on dominant norms and forms of "doing good."

As a first-year seminar (FYS), this course will also guide and support students in fostering skills as academic researchers and writers. We will start from the position that college-level academic writing is its own genre, distinct from the kind of writing typically taught in high school, and that the steps required to hone this skill are not always transparent, self-evident, or without challenges. As such, the course will include detailed instruction, regular in-class writing exercises, and three take-home writing assignments designed to introduce students to the main principles of successful academic writing.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ANTH
Identical With: ANTH113
Prereq: None

SISP118 Reproduction in the 21st Century
This course will cover basic human reproductive biology, new and future reproductive and contraceptive technologies, and the ethics raised by reproductive issues.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: NSM-BIOL
Identical With: BIOL118, FGSS118, PHIL118
Prereq: None

SISP120F Uncertainty and the Future (FYS)
The world we live in is full of risk and uncertainty. Science, politics, and economics all tell us that this is a hazardous era in which great changes are inevitable and catastrophes are possible. How do people manage living in such an uncertain world? This first-year seminar introduces students to research and writing in the social sciences by studying a driving factor in the human search for knowledge: the uncertainty of the unknown future. We will consider how the ways in which humans define, relate to, and experience uncertainty influence social well-being and the production of the future. We begin with the anthropological study of uncertainty, which is rooted in the study of ritual and magic, and then consider perspectives in psychology, economics, and ecology. While we will reflect on the "negative" side of uncertainty, such as risk, precariousness, and insecurity, we will also examine the way the creative management of uncertainty is sometimes romanticized and consider the opportunities for creativity, adaptation, resilience, and imagination in uncertain times.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: WRCT120F
Prereq: None

SISP121F Living within the Bio-Logical (FYS)
How do biology and society relate to each other? This first-year seminar provides an introductory overview of how the biosciences have been entangled in social contexts, from the Enlightenment to the current technoscience era. We will examine contemporary case studies where society impacts biology and biology impacts society, particularly those that show the complex interplay between the body and the environment. We will look at how rates of obesity relate to inequality and insecurity, consider the impact of toxins on the body and environment, and discuss emergent research that challenges longstanding beliefs about medical science. This anthropologically informed course provides ethnographic accounts that give crosscultural context to the questions posed. Throughout the course, students will learn to discuss the interrelation of the biological with the social, political, and economic, and we will critically reflect on the influence of politics and economics on human biological agency.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-WRCT
Identical With: WRCT130F
Prereq: None

SISP125 TechnoPrisons: Corrections, Technology, and Society
The United States currently incarcerates more of its citizens than any other nation, and most of them are members of disadvantaged social groups. How does our government practically accomplish mass incarceration? This first-year seminar (FYS) examines prisons as technologies and the role that specific technologies play in the U.S. prison system. To say that prisons are technologies means that prisons operate as an architectural system that is designed to hold people captive within enclosed social spaces. At the same time, prisons are the location for multiple kinds of technological systems including surveillance systems, biomedical technologies, classification and administrative technologies, and military technologies. This seminar introduces basic concepts within science and technology studies (STS), criminology, and sociology to investigate how prison happens.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
experimental writing styles, innovative approaches to storytelling, and critical
interdisciplinary and uncertain nature of this subject matter provides space for
with the impact of humanity on the ecological well-being of the Earth. The
has become a way in which social scientists can critically and creatively engage
The “Anthropocene,” a term coined to categorize the current geological epoch,
Prereq: None
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Credits: 1.00

SISP130 Science and Technology at the Supreme Court in Current Term
This seminar will introduce students to legal decisionmaking in the context of
“disruptive” scientific and technical innovation by considering several cases that
will be taken up by the U.S. Supreme Court this term that concern science
and technology. To contextualize the specific factual and legal disputes in these
cases, students will learn about science, technology, and law as social institutions
that shape each other and also shape their constituents and publics. The seminar
will further consider the history and theory of the state monopoly on the use of
force, which is what will be set into action by the enforcement of these court
decisions.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

SISP135F Skin, Sex, State, Software: Surveillance & Society (FYS)
Scopophilia is the derivation of pleasure from looking. What pleasures does
the surveillance state gain from looking at us? From feeling and documenting
us? How do privacy activists fight back against such surveillance, and what
might be wrong with privacy rights discourse? Which groups are always already
surveilled? In this class, students will play with notions of surveillance—including
sousveillance, lateral surveillance, and counter surveillance—as engaged by queer
and feminist studies, the cultural anthropology of expertise, and social studies
of science and technology. We will draw on case studies ranging from police
technologies, facial recognition software, PornHub’s data collection projects, TSA
airport body scanners, Facebook ads, science fiction like Black Mirror, and more
to understand how bodies, races, genders, and sexualities are made known and
contested by activists, artists, corporations, and governments. Students will also
collect data for a creative personal surveillance project culminating at the end of
the quarter.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP

SISP202 Philosophy of Science
This course is a fast-moving introduction to some central topics in the philosophy
of science, aimed at students with some college-level study of at least one
natural science. Topics include the norms of scientific understanding or
explanation; the relation between finished theories or explanations and ongoing
research; the recognition and dissemination of discoveries; the justification of
scientific claims; conceptual and technical (revolutionary) change in the science;
the significance of instrumentation, experiment, and artifice in science; the
places of laws, models, and causal relations in scientific understanding; and
whether various sciences differ fundamentally in their aims, methods, and
achievements. Considerable attention will be given to examples of scientific
practice, both historical and contemporary.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-SISP
Identical With: PHIL288, ENVS204, ANTH204

SISP204 Extreme Landscapes of the Anthropocene
The "Anthropocene," a term coined to categorize the current geological epoch,
has become a way in which social scientists can critically and creatively engage
with the impact of humanity on the ecological well-being of the Earth. The
interdisciplinary and uncertain nature of this subject matter provides space for
experimental writing styles, innovative approaches to storytelling, and critical
discussion and debate. This course is designed to explore and challenge the term
"Anthropocene," questioning how narrative and drama are entangled in the
dissemination of complex truths, for better or worse.
In this course, we will consider texts, short films, and other mixed media that
investigate the everydayness of extreme landscapes, from "capitalist ruins"
to the depleting seas. We will dive into the social, political, economic, and
scientific power-scapes that influence narratives about the environment, from
late liberal ideology to corporate influence on science and the news. Through
the course materials and activities, we will question how to communicate complex
information with a broad range of people, particularly surrounding issues of
climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. Each student will build
their own writing portfolio of short essays for specific audiences. The class will
collectively build and design a storytelling website where they can share their
work. Students are encouraged to apply an ethics of care and the art of "non-
judgmental attention" to their critical engagement with the Anthropocene.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Identical With: WRCT204, ENVS204, ANTH204

SISP205 Sciences as Social and Cultural Practices
Philosophers long construed scientific knowledge as achieved and assessed by
individual knowers, but recent work has recognized a greater epistemic role
for scientific communities, disciplines, or practices and has taken seriously
the social and cultural context of scientific research. This course surveys some
of the social, cultural, and political aspects of the sciences that have been
most important for scholars in science studies, including differences between
experimental, field, and theoretical science; the role of disciplines and other
institutions in the sciences; interactions between science and its various publics;
the politics of scientific expertise and science policy; the globalization of science;
the social dimensions of scientific normativity, from metrology to conceptions
of objectivity; race and gender in science; and conceptual exchanges between
sciences and other discursive practices. The concept of the social will also receive
critical attention in its purported contrasts to what is individual, natural, rational,
or cultural.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Identical With: PHIL288, ENVS205

SISP211 Health and Social Justice
How does health become a matter of social justice? In the context of a growing
prominence of activist and advocacy groups that work toward health and justice,
this course will consider: how and why health advocacy groups emerge; what
goals, values, and assumptions inform their work; and how they use science and
other cultural resources to make claims. We will also consider the implications
of activist efforts for challenging structural inequalities, state and corporate
power, and the cultural authority of science and medicine. Case studies will cover
a range of geographical sites in the U.S. and abroad and represent the diverse
forms that such collectives assume. We will consider, for example, groups that
mobilize around broad constituencies (e.g., women’s health) or in response
to specific health threats (e.g., cancer, HIV, and toxic exposures), as well as
those more broadly committed to social justice, equity, and “health for all.” In
addition to exploring the above questions, readings and class discussion will
be designed for students to master some of the concepts and ideas central to
medical anthropology, science and technology studies, and allied fields, such
as embodiment, medicalization, biosociality, hegemony, citizenship, and the
production of scientific and lay knowledge. The role of the scholar-activist will
and the critics of this response. From there, we will reflect on the limits of these abuses—the creation and institutionalization of the discipline of bioethics—philosophical significance of these contradictions. We will begin by examining in the name of medicine itself. Our goal will be to grasp the ethical and open the door to new forms of exploitation, violence, racism, and oppression and treat disease in previously unimaginable ways, even as these same changes that health, medicine, biotechnology, and health care systems have taken in

SISP217 Bioethics and Social Justice
Prereq: ENVS211
Identical With: PHIL217
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHI
Identical With: PHIL217
Prereq: None

SISP221 History of Ecology
The word “ecology” has come to have many meanings and connotations: a scientific field dealing with the relation of organisms and the environment, a way of thinking about the world emphasizing holism and interconnectedness, a handmaiden of the environmental movement, to name a few. This course covers the history of ecology as a scientific discipline from the 18th-century natural history tradition to the development of population, ecosystem, and evolutionary ecology in the 20th century, situating the science in its cultural, political, and social contexts. Along the way, it traces the connections between ecology and economic development, political theory, ideas about society, the management of natural resources, the preservation of wilderness, and environmental politics. How have scientists, citizens, and activists made use of ecological ideas, and to what ends? How have they understood and envisioned the human place in nature? How have the landscapes and places in which ecologists have done their work shaped their ideas? Other major themes include the relationship between theories of nature and theories of society, ecology and empire, the relationship between place and knowledge about nature, the development of ecology as a professional discipline, the role of ecologists as environmental experts, the relationship between the state and the development of ecological knowledge, and the relationships among ecology, conservation, agriculture, and environmentalism.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST221, ENVS211
Prereq: None

SISP222 Disease and Epidemics in Historical Perspective
Disease and epidemics have been powerful agents of historical change as well as determinants of human development before the advent of historical records. In this lecture course we will examine how diseases have changed human societies over time, with special attention given to the place of disease-causing organisms, from viruses to parasites, in the ecological networks they make home. Yet at the same time, we will keep in mind the ways in which human society and culture also have important causal roles in human disease. HIV, for example, arose because of human interactions with animals but reached pandemic proportions, in part, because of cultural, social, and political forces.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST222
Prereq: None

SISP224 Critical Design Fictions
Design fiction involves the deliberate use of diegetic prototypes to suspend disbelief about change. Through practices of estrangement and defamiliarization, and through the use of carefully chosen design methods, this course experiments with the creation of provocative scenarios and imaginative artifacts that can help us envision different ways of inhabiting the world. The choices made by designers are ultimately choices about the kind of world in which we want to live—expressions of our dreams, fantasies, desires, and fears. As an integrated
mode of thought and action, design is intrinsically social and deeply political. In conversation with science fiction, queer and feminist theories, indigenous discourses, drag and other performative interventions, this course explores speculative and critical approaches to design as catalysts for imagining alternate presents and possible futures. We examine a number of environmental and social issues related to climate change, incarceration, gender and reproductive rights, surveillance, emerging technologies, and labor.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ALLB
Identical With: CSPL225
Prereq: None

SISP225 Darwinian Fictions
This class tracks the discourse surrounding evolutionary science as it circulated through various spheres of American intellectual life in the decades after the Civil War. If the ideas proposed by Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer fundamentally changed the way scientists and politicians understood the natural world and human beings’ relation to it, these ideas would also influence the way writers understood the function of literature. Best summed up by Emile Zola’s suggestion that, through literature, we are capable of “possess[ing] knowledge of man, scientific knowledge of him, in both his individual and social relations,” authors during this period began to explore the literary possibilities of evolutionary science. By reading works of literature alongside influential scientific treatises, this course encourages students to think about the kinds of knowledge literary experience gives us access to, and the relationship between literary knowledge and other disciplinary forms that emerged at the turn of the twentieth century.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL225, AMST257
Prereq: None

SISP230 Anti-Psychiatry
This course will investigate anti-psychiatry, the social and scientific movement that has critically analyzed and opposed psychiatry as a field of medicine. No field of medicine is more deeply implicated in creating and legitimating human suffering than psychiatry, from the role that psychiatry plays in managing people’s daily lives to the administration of the criminal justice system. We will ask how social and psychic traumas are transformed into discrete psychiatric disorders by exploring the cultural production of diagnostic criteria used to diagnose and the psychopharmacological drugs that are used to intervene on mental states.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Prereq: None

SISP235 Economies of Death, Geographies of Care
Living, dying, and care work are processes often governed by economic logics that render some lives killable and others grievable in global regimes of power. This course explores how theoretical frameworks of "economies of death" and "geographies of care" can help to illuminate how human and nonhuman lives, deaths, and systems of care are intertwined with economic logics. Whose lives are privileged over others and with what consequences? How are certain bodies made killable and others grievable? How do we understand and face care processes of death and dying, and how are these processes often geographically determined? How do we live and die well, give and receive care, and who has this privilege? This class interrogates these and other questions related to how we live and die with others in a multispecies world. With attention to race, gender, species, and other sites of perceived difference, students will gain a nuanced understanding of core themes related to fundamental processes of living, dying, and caring labor. This course asks students to theorize economies of death and geographies of care to understand the deeply political nature of life and death as differential moments on a continuum of being. We focus on key questions related to an affirmative politics of life--in other words, how we should live, how we care and for whom, and how we might foster nonviolent interpersonal life-affirming encounters. Students can expect to explore pressing contemporary issues such as mass incarceration and "social death"; climate change; valuing and commodifying life; breeding and raising nonhuman animals for food; plant consciousness; end-of-life care and euthanasia; and the role of marginalized bodies in biomedical research. The course will be primarily discussion-based.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-FGSS
Identical With: FGSS235
Prereq: None

Witnessing, mourning, and haunting are frameworks that make political the lives and deaths of human and nonhuman others. Bringing these frameworks into conversation, this course will explore the following questions: What does witnessing and grieving animal lives and deaths show us about economic logics, racialization, and species hierarchies that form the foundation of contemporary social relations? How does the emotional become political in these contexts? What are the limits and possibilities of witnessing and mourning as political acts? How is witnessing distinct from spectatorship or voyeurism? What power dynamics exist in witnessing? What do different rituals or practices of mourning say about the mourner and the subject being mourned? What further action does witnessing or mourning provoke or demand? How do conceptualizations of haunting help to theorize and inform political practices of witnessing and mourning? Central to these questions is a consideration of the way histories track forward and haunt the present--how racialized, gendered, and anthropocentric histories shape contemporary social and economic relations. The course will use these theoretical frames to explore a series of empirical examples, such as: What does it mean to witness and mourn the settler-colonial histories that haunt the present in daily practices of ranching and farming animals for food? How are settler-colonial histories implicated in the phenomenon of animals killed on roads (innocuously termed roadkill) through the development of the U.S. railroad and interstate highway system and through land use change and habitat destruction? What does witnessing the captive animal in the zoo tell us about the imperialist histories of the zoo where humans and animals have been exhibited? What does witnessing or mourning do for the ghostly specters of “spent” dairy cows (livelv-yet-soon-to-be-dead commodities) moving through the farmed animal auction yard and for their commodity afterlives born through slaughter and rendering? How does art act as a form of witnessing, for instance, through photographs such as Chris Jordan documenting the afterlives of plastic in the bellies of albatrosses on Midway Island? Throughout the semester, we will use art, fiction, poetry, and memoir to explore these concepts of witnessing, mourning, and haunting in the context of animal lives and deaths. The course will be heavily discussion-based.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-FGSS
Identical With: FGSS238
Prereq: None
Pocket computers, called "smartphones," have become a part of everyday life over the past decade. Earlier, during the early years of the Internet, eBay pioneered the "peer-to-peer" marketplace, in which a business doesn't have a place of business and hire employees, but provides software that links "users" to one another so that they can make exchanges, serving the roles of "customer" and "employee." The firm that creates the software takes a commission on the sale, or simply profits from the information it gathers about the users as they make the exchange. Massive amounts of economic activity have been generated using this model: through services like Amazon's Mechanical Turk, Uber, Postmates, TaskRabbit, and many other software-based labor markets that allow people to work when they choose, as little or as much as they choose. How do we study work and workers in these kinds of contexts? This course will train students in the use of qualitative social scientific methods to examine these new working populations and the work experience of people in them. We will draw, in part, from earlier studies of mobile workplaces (such as of the police on patrol), and more recent studies undertaken by scholars of science and technology in society that help us to look for labor even where it is not intuitively evident in the digitally networked context: such as in computerized gambling, software-facilitated dating, and activity on social media. Students will read a National Science Foundation research proposal and draft their own proposal for a study of work in the "on-demand," "contingent," and "gig" economy of the twenty-first century.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Prereq: None

SISP245 Ethnography and Design
Exercising humility and developing methods of meaningful engagement are essential to becoming an effective ethnographer and designer. Collaboration with users provides knowledge that allows designers to imagine artifacts, places, and systems that are thoughtfully enhanced or radically new. This course rethinks power dynamics to better understand how to design both for and with other people. With successful completion of this course students will be able to demonstrate competence in developing, refining, and communicating research interests in a committed, reflexive manner. They will gain an understanding of the strategic and tactical value of design and a sense of the practical problems involved in realizing design solutions and responses that are attuned to the needs of both an institution and individual users. Students will gain experience not only in theoretically framing social and political issues as these are expressed through design, but also in understanding the methodological tools needed to translate problems into creative interventions that are user-centered and compassionate.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Identical With: CSPL245
Prereq: None

SISP253 Science and/as Literature in Early Modern England
Seventeenth- and 18th-century England saw the development and popularization of the "new science." Microscopes, telescopes, airpumps, automata, and experiments captured the popular imagination. The first important scientific societies and journals were founded, and the public learned about new discoveries through sermons and coffeehouse lectures. This course will trace the literary reaction to these cultural changes. A female natural philosopher wrote utopian science fiction, and Jonathan Swift satirically skewed mathematicians and experimenters. While the best of early 18th-century nature poetry takes Newton quite seriously as it depicts the way light glimmers off objects, by the century's end, William Blake villainized Newtonian thought as reductive and deadening. We will try to understand what writers found exhilarating, scary, confusing, hilarious, or important about science at this key moment of its development. At the same time, we will read this science as literature--considering, say, Francis Bacon's symbolically fraught "idols" and Robert Boyle's "literary technology," the role of poetry in spreading scientific ideas, and the importance of analogy and metaphor to the very logic of scientific thought. The disciplines of science and literature were not as cleanly separated in this period as they are now, and we can better understand both by exploring their intersections.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL253
Prereq: None

SISP254 Science in Western Culture
This course offers an introduction to the history of the sciences between the late 17th and early 20th centuries, with the aim of understanding the varied ways of knowing that have come to be called "science" and how they have attained such an important status in shaping modern Western culture. To do so, we will both investigate key intellectual developments--such as Newtonianism, theories of energy and matter, and the rise of evolutionary thought--and consider these ideas in the cultural contexts in which they developed to better understand how people have "done science" in different times and places.
Throughout, we will pay attention to the relationships between science and other knowledge systems, between scientists and nonscientists, and between science and state power by exploring the changing nature of scientific authority, the cultural status of the scientist, and the connections among science, commerce, technology, and empire.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST254
Prereq: None

SISP255 Seeing a Bigger Picture: Integrating Environmental History and Visual Studies
This interdisciplinary course approaches the history of environmental policy and opinion making through a frame that takes seriously the rise in power accorded to visual imagery and visual practices (including photography, digital image production, film and new media) in modern society. The course introduces students to key landmarks in the visual history of environmentalism spanning a period from colonial America to the recent past, focusing both on images of nature and on the nature of images.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST262, ENVS255, ARHA262
Prereq: None

SISP256 Race and Medicine in America
This course will trace ideas of race in American medical science and its cultural contexts, from the late 19th century to the present. We will explore how configurations of racial difference have changed over time and how medical knowledge about the body has both influenced and helped to shape social, political, and popular cultural forces. We will interrogate the idea of medical knowledge as a "naturalizing" discourse that produces racial classifications as essential, and biologically based.
We will treat medical sources as primary documents, imagining them as but one interpretation of the meaning of racial difference, alongside alternate sources that will include political tracts, advertisements, photographs, and newspaper articles. Key concepts explored will include slavery’s medical legacy, theories of racial hierarchy and evolution, the eugenics movement, “race-specific” medications and diseases, public health politics and movements, genetics and modern “roots” projects, immigration and new technologies of identification, and intersections of race and disability.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AMST
Identical With: AMST256
Prereq: None

SISP257 Japan and the Atomic Bomb: History, Myths, and Mysteries
Even today, when discussing the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, newspaper and other media sources often refer to “Truman’s decision” to drop the bomb, the idea that these bombings conclusively brought an end to World War Two, arguments that they saved more lives than they killed, and assertions that the United States would not have dropped the bomb on Germany since its citizens were white. But what do the historical sources actually say on these and other related points? This course emphasizes the use of archival sources to address these and many other issues. It establishes the historical context for the atomic bombings of Japan by tracing events that led to the War in the first place, how civilians became the targets of mass bombings, and the scientific discoveries that made nuclear weapons possible. It also examines how after the War the American press and government strove to establish a particular perspective on the atomic bombings of Japan. By the end of this course students will have a much better idea about the historical facts, the popular myths, and remaining mysteries related to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST256, CEAS226
Prereq: None

SISP259 Discovering the Person
This course surveys major developments in psychology and psychiatry from 1860 to 1980. Through readings and lectures, the course introduces the major schools, theories, and systems in the American “psy” sciences. We examine the kinds of persons who were “discovered,” the techniques of discovery, the extensions of psychological ideas to institutions and policy formulations, and the consequences of these discoveries for public as well as private life. We examine psychological phenomena that were located, catalogued, and explained by these sciences, including irrationality, sexuality, cognitive powers, personality, emotional processes, neurotic behaviors, intelligence, addictive tendencies, and the will. Attention is also given to the scientific grounds for investigating persons, the empirical evidence sought in the century-long process of discovering and naming psychological kinds, and the modes of producing this knowledge (aggregate methods, case study, and theories). Readings include primary source documents, histories of the disciplines, and philosophical analyses.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PSYC
Identical With: PSYC259, AMST259
Prereq: PSYC105

SISP262 Cultural Studies of Health
Nothing is more fundamental to the human condition than our most basic right—the right to healthy life. Tragically, this right is inequitably distributed across human bodies and populations, especially along axes of race, gender, class, age, and nationality. In fact, persons residing in the U.S. do not have a right to healthy life. Issues of health and illness are, quite literally, matters of life and death that are shaped by broader political and economic institutions in human societies. In neoliberal nation states like the U.S., the guardian of the right to live a healthy life is a highly bureaucratic and technological form of corporate medicine. Medicine comprises a network of social institutions and technoscientific practices that people have created and use to diagnose and heal our bodily and psychic ills. While the practice of medicine has produced dramatic improvements in life expectancy and quality of life for billions of people, most people on the planet do not have access to basic medical care. Who thrives, who gets sick, who dies, and why constitute core questions for social justice.

This course investigates the complex embroidery of biosocial and cultural processes that shape the unequal experiences and meanings of health. Cultural studies of health document the role of medicine as a great instrument of power that both generates and alleviates suffering. As more and more areas of social life and parts of bodies are falling under the control of medicine (a process called medicalization), we must ask, What are the dynamics and implications of medicalization for human societies and cultures? Drawing on provocative readings and media from diverse fields in sociology and cultural studies of science, technology, and medicine, this course will investigate these questions and more with an emphasis on the answers to them might contribute to social justice and improve the conditions necessary for human thriving.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Identical With: SOC259, AMST272
Prereq: None

SISP264 Social and Cultural Studies of Science
This course provides a survey of theories and methods attending the social and cultural study of science and technology. Students will consider the role of design (such as by engineers) and use (such as by consumers), and will learn historical perspectives that frame the question of whether scientific and technological innovation, and the social and cultural configurations involved, are really “new.”

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Prereq: None

SISP265 Anthropology of Science
What are scientific facts? How do we know what we know? In this course, students will gain an introduction to thinking about science and technology as cultural practices shaped by power, politics, race, indigeneity, gender, and sexuality. Students will explore how anthropologists, long interested in how “culture” works, have recently turned their gaze toward critically examining the cultures of people in positions of technoscientific power, including nuclear scientists, Wall Street analysts, drone weapon designers, climate scientists, molecular biologists, and more. Students will also be trained in conducting ethnographic fieldwork on a group of experts in their own communities in order to ask questions about scientific rituals, truth-making, and distributions of power and privilege.

Students who received credit for SISP 265—Introduction to Science as Culture may NOT enroll in this course for credit

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Identical With: ANTH217
Prereq: None
SISP276 Introduction to History: Science in the Making: Thinking Historically About Science

This course introduces students to a range of perspectives—drawn from history, sociology, anthropology, geography, media studies, and literary studies, among others—on how to write about the history of science. Throughout, the emphasis is on understanding the relationship between the histories of science we can tell and the materials that our histories draw upon, from publications and archival documents to oral histories, material culture, and film.

In addition to reading academic literature, students will gain practical experience working with historical sources and conducting original research. They will also familiarize themselves with new digital tools for presenting historical materials by developing a course website that showcases their research projects.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST176
Prereq: None

SISP281 Post-Kantian European Philosophy

In this study of 19th- and 20th-century philosophy in Europe (primarily France and Germany), special attention will be devoted to the interpretation of modern science, its significance for understanding the world as distinctly modern, and ourselves and the world as natural (or as transcending nature). Related topics include the scope and limits of reason, the role of subjectivity in the constitution of meaning, the place of ethics and politics in a science-centered culture, and the problems of comprehending historical change. Philosophers to be read include Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, Weber, Marcuse, Habermas, and Foucault. The course is designed to introduce students to a very difficult and widely influential philosophical tradition and will emphasize close reading and comparative interpretation and assessment of texts and reasoning. This course meets the Social, Cultural, and Critical Theory Certificate's requirement in philosophical origins of theory.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL258
Prereq: None

SISP282 Religion and the Scientific Imagination

Where do we get the idea that science and religion are opposed to one another? What did Darwin do to classic proofs of the existence of God and how have those proofs bounced back? What sort of evidence do theologians marshal in support of their hypotheses, and what sort of spiritualities do scientists generate in support of theirs? What do neuroscientists think they’re finding when they measure the neural activity of meditating monks? What are the “new atheists” so annoyed about? How do cosmologists talk about the origins of the world, and how do climate scientists talk about its end? In this class we will explore the many ways “religion” and “science” have interacted, conflicted, collided, and combined with one another—in an effort to move beyond the frankly boring “debates” between them.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI282
Prereq: None

SISP283 What Is Rationality?

What does it mean to be rational? Although this question has traditionally been the province of philosophy, reference to reason and rationality is also pervasive in the modern social and behavioral sciences. Humans are rational creatures—or, if they are not in practice, they should be. This course takes an expansive view of rationality and its history, tracing how the concept has changed over time, and critically examining its significance in the sciences and broader culture today.

From the role of reason in human flourishing and civic discourse in the ancient world, to early modern conceptions of logic as “the art of thinking,” to Cold War attempts to build machines that might reason more reliably than frail humans, this exploration of reasoning and rationality explores several interlocking themes: the relationship between reason and other facets of the mind, especially emotion; conceptions of reason as an evaluative vs. a calculating faculty; the role of reason in human judgment; the relationship between rationality and rules; the relationship between choosing rationally and choosing ethically; and the fraught history of attempts to formulate universally valid principles of rationality.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST283, PHIL154
Prereq: None

SISP285 History of Science and Technology in Modern China

Science, technology, and medicine played an integral role in the China’s transition to modernity and inspired dramatic economic, social, and political transformations. As scholars of modern China developed a keen interest in transnational histories and comparative methodologies, they have paid closer attention to the histories of science, technology, and medicine. This course introduces students to this emerging field of study. It examines broad philosophical questions that motivate the research in history of those areas. We will learn to explore science, technology, and medicine in China on “its own terms” by understanding how the unique political and social challenges of modern China shaped Chinese science.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST386, CEAS222
Prereq: None

SISP286 Philosophy of Mind

This class is a philosophical investigation into the nature of the mind. We will explore such questions such: What kinds of beings are capable of having mental states? Can non-human animals or computers think and feel? What is it to be conscious, and can the subjective, first-person experience of consciousness be adequately captured by a scientific theory? How do our minds represent the world? By what mechanism do our thoughts, feelings, and desires get linked up to the things around us? We will ask these questions with the goal of shedding light on our nature as thinking, feeling beings, and on the relation of our inner lives to the physical world.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL286
Prereq: None

SISP287 Science in Modernity and After: 20th-Century Science and Technology

The 20th century was a time of dramatic achievements in science, from nuclear physics to space exploration to gene sequencing. It also saw the emergence of many of the technologies that underpin our world today: atomic weapons, electronic digital computers, synthetic fertilizers, and high-yield crop varieties, to name a few examples. This course surveys these developments, focusing not only on the histories of specific ideas and techniques, but more broadly exploring the complex relationship between science and technology; the relationship between science, the military, and state power; the changing cultural and political influence of scientists and engineers; the institutions and places where
science and innovation gets done; the globalization of science and technology; and the emergence of critiques of science and technology.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-GOVT
Identical With: HIST287
Prereq: None

SISP300 Black Phoenix Rising: Death and Resurrection of Black Lives
The Black Lives Matter Movement has renewed our collective need to theorize the value of black lives within a deluge of death and disappearance in black communities. This movement is part of a deep transnational tradition in black radical praxis that aims to transform scholarly, activist, and public discourse and public policies concerning the systemic and epistemic effects of institutional racisms and the prospects for antiracist futures. How might we envision a black radical praxis that simultaneously recognizes the vitality of black lives and challenges the cultural ideas and social practices that generate and justify black people’s death and suffering? This seminar traces a genealogy of black radical praxis that interrogates the necropolitics of race and positions this system of power against the prospect of thriving black people. In doing so, the course erects an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that features scholarship in critical race science studies, intersectionality, and transnational cultural studies as they inform how a black radical praxis can contribute to the uprising and raising up of black communities.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM300, AFAM300
Prereq: None

SISP303 Matter, Community, Environment
In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to consider human communities without also considering questions of “nature” or “environment.” Actor-network theory condemns nature/society dualisms; ecological theory argues that there is indeed no “nature” or “society”—only the anthropocene; and, drawing from the former two positions, object-oriented ontology conceives of ideas (such as “community” or “society”) as objects and ecological actors. In this seminar, we will consider various approaches taken in recent years to thinking about our relations to the worlds we inhabit. We will attempt to think not only outside a focus on “us” as humans in the first place but even outside a focus on sentient life or life in general. Examining theories of matter, community, and environment, we will discuss and analyze work by philosophers, evolutionary biologists, literary scholars, and sociologists, among others. We will pay special attention to how theorists and critics are blurring the boundaries between nature and society, environment and community, life and matter. In addition to class participation and a series of brief reading responses, students will be required to produce a final paper dealing with any topic related to the course.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM305, ENGL302, COL303
Prereq: None

SISP305 Pantheologies: Animal, Vegetable, Mineral, World
Pantheism teaches that the world itself is divine. The idea seems simple enough, yet it has suffered extraordinary ridicule at the hands of western philosophers and theologians, who have considered “matter” to be lifeless, dark, and feminine (which is to say, as different as possible from “God.”) This course will explore this generalized panic over pantheism—in particular, the anxieties it encodes over gender, race, nationality, and class, and the contribution such anxieties have made to an unequally distributed attack on the “environment.”

Seeking an alternative to our raced and gendered ecocidal metaphysic, the course then turns to contemporary pantheologies. To what extent are recent theories of cosmology, complexity, and materiality setting forth subtle pantheisms? What are the feminist, anti-racist, and ecological stakes of these theories? Properly conceived, what is pantheism; is it ultimately distinguishable from atheism; and what use are any of these platforms in developing an ethic and political of environmental justice?

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI305, FGSS304
Prereq: None

SISP307 The Economy of Nature and Nations
On many of the key environmental problems of the 21st century, from climate change to biodiversity conservation, the perspectives of ecology and economics often seem poles apart. Ecology is typically associated with a skeptical stance toward economic growth and human intervention in the environment, while economics focuses on understanding (and often, celebrating) human activities of production, consumption, and growth. At the same time, ecology and economics share a common etymology: both words spring from the Greek oikos, or household. They also share much common history. This course thus explores the parallel histories of economics and ecology from the 18th century to the present, focusing on changing conceptions of the oikos over this period, from cameralism’s vision of the household as a princely estate or kingdom, continuing through the emergence of ideas about national or imperial economic development, and culminating in the dominant 20th-century recasting of economics as being centrally concerned with problems of resource allocation. Simultaneously, the course explores connections between changes in economics and the emergence of ecological science over this period, from Enlightenment natural history and early musings on the “economy of nature,” to the design of markets for carbon credits today.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST307, ENV5307
Prereq: None

SISP310 Transnational Comparison of Technology Regulation in the U.S. and Europe
A key insight of the sociological study of science is that science and technology are social and cultural as well as scientific and technical things. This relativist philosophical stance has generated a robust research program into what science and technology are in social and cultural context. This course on the social and cultural study of science and technology will teach the theory and practice of transnational comparative research, drawing both on classical and new texts in the field, and on the professor’s own experience studying technology in two different national contexts (the U.S. and Denmark).

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Prereq: SISP262 OR SISP264

SISP314 Theories in Psychology
Theory is a central tool in psychology, directing empirical investigations and interpretations of human action. Psychology theory likewise has come to significantly guide social policy and personal understandings of human actions. This course introduces the practice of theory construction and appraisal. We will ask, What is a good psychological theory, what are its origins, and how should it be appraised? The theories to be considered include classic works from
learning theory to psychoanalysis; mid-range theories such as dissonance, mass action, script, and role theory; and contemporary theories emerging in social psychology, cognitive psychology, emotion research, and neuroscience.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PSYC
Identical With: PSYC314
Prereq: None

SISP315 The Health of Communities
Our focus will be on understanding the role of social factors (e.g., income, work environment, social cohesion, food, transportation systems) in determining the health risks of individuals; considering the efficacy, appropriateness, and ethical ramifications of various public health interventions; and learning about the contemporary community health center model of care in response to the needs of vulnerable populations. We explore the concept and history of social medicine, the importance of vocabulary and the complexity of any categorization of persons in discussions of health and illness, ethical issues related to the generation and utilization of community-based research, the role of place and the importance of administrative and cultural boundaries in the variability of health risk, and the idea of just health care. Enrolled students serve as research assistants to preceptors at the Community Health Center (CHC) of Middletown.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.25
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SOC
Identical With: SOC315
Prereq: None

SISP318 Critical Global Health
What does it mean to approach global health as not an applied science but an ethnographic object? This course will explore this question by bringing critical, social science perspectives to bear on global health issues and interventions. This course covers three areas of scholarship. First, we will examine the processes by which social inequalities produce patterns of health and disease in globalizing contexts. This will be followed by an interrogation of the term "global health," in which we will trace its emergence as a discourse and enterprise and unpack its contested meanings. While some view global health as a clinical practice, others conceptualize it as a business, security concern, charitable duty, or human right; yet another camp probes the term’s ideological construction. We will consider how such vantage points are underpinned by cultural assumptions and ethical agendas that, in turn, can determine how, and to whom, care is delivered. As a third area of inquiry, we will investigate the implications and unintended effects of doing global health by probing such questions as, When are good intentions not good enough? How useful is biomedicine for alleviating locally defined problems? Under what conditions does global health exacerbate the social inequalities it seeks to overcome?

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ANTH
Identical With: ANTH316
Prereq: None

SISP320 Life and Death: Relations of Biopower and Necropower
This seminar is an advanced examination of how science and technology shape the politics of life and death. We will consider how science and technology have become handmaidens to human (and, in some cases, not human) life and death, impacting the social, legal, and ethical frameworks we use to define what constitutes the embodied, relational, and conceptual space between "alive" and "dead." Using theories of biopower and necropower as our guides, we will cover a diverse set of themes including sexual reproduction, birth, population, toxicity, decay, genocide, mortality, and the afterlife as they intersect with modern institutions of power. We will ask, How can we better understand the ways in which social institutions and actors deploy sciences and technologies to foster health or manufacture death?

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Identical With: SOC320
Prereq: None

SISP321 BioFeminisms: Science, Matter, and Agency
This course rethinks feminism's relationship to nature, the body, and biological matter in light of new considerations of ontology in science studies, cultural studies, and feminist thought. We will read contemporary treatments of science, of Darwin and evolutionary theory, of neurobiology and epigenetics, and other fields and disciplines that consider biological matter, and think about them in feminist and queer frameworks. Readings will include "new materialists" alongside other works on the "new biology" and the "new sciences," and we will also revisit some second- and third-wave feminism. The course raises issues that challenge traditional boundaries of the body and self, conventional ideas of agency, and dualisms of mind/body. Readings include works by Donna Haraway, Anne Fausto-Sterling, Elizabeth Grosz, Karen Barad, Vicki Kirby, and Elizabeth Wilson, among others.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-FGSS
Identical With: FGSS321
Prereq: None

SISP324 Race and the Enlightenment: A Historical and Philosophical Enquiry
It was during the Enlightenment Era (c. 1760-1800) that scientific reasoning, a belief in progress, and new claims on personal and political liberty swept away a tenacious medieval worldview. It was also during this era, however, that the notion of race crystallized in European and North American thought. Today, we still live with implications of this major shift, be it in classification schemes, anatomical prejudices, or ethnographical myths. This is particularly true for Africans or people of African descent. This class will bring some the Enlightenment's most prominent thinkers into dialogue with the emergency of the concept of race theory. In particular, we will focus on the clash between the Enlightenment era’s belief that “all men were created as equals” and the various ways that the Black African came to be studied within “natural history” and various philosophical models. This historical backdrop will lead us not only to a discussion of the economic imperatives of human slavery but to a series of contemporary reflections on the status of the Enlightenment put forward by postcolonial critics. Note: This class is offered in the context of the Wesleyan’s Center for the Humanities’ “Grand Narratives/Modest Proposals” theme and speakers series.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AFAM
Identical With: AFAM325, CHUM324, RL&L325
Prereq: None

SISP330 Race, Science, Gender, and Species
What does it mean to be human or animal? How are these socially constructed lines drawn, redrawn, enforced, and contested? How are categorizations and contestations surrounding humanity and animality a concern for feminist scholars? How does critical theory help us to understand the (at times) uneasy intersections—or “dangerous crossings,” as Claire Jean Kim calls them—where race, species, gender, and theories of science intersect to formulate ideas about humanity and animality? What theoretical and practical possibilities arise from exploring these overlapping taxonomies of power?
This course explores these questions, engaging in an ongoing conversation about how theories of science and law shape ideas about race, gender, and species. We will consider human and animal bodies in science and medicine. We interrogate how the human is a site of political contestation, articulated through colonial and racialized processes that render some lives human/subhuman/nonhuman within hierarchies of power and exclusion. Central to this uneven rendering of what it means to be human is the way law and legal processes criminalize and racialize human beings, and sustain anthropocentrism. Informed by these literatures, we move into exploring the possibilities and limits of posthumanism, with a particular emphasis on work that aims to decolonize posthumanist theory.

Within these theoretical frameworks, we move into thinking about the boundaries of the human/animal body; the politics of being and becoming in multispecies worlds; how fraught cultural and political cases where race and species intersect are negotiated; what the "feral" can add to these entanglements of race, species, and gender; the intertwining logics of species, colonialism, and empire; and how different ways of being embodied can inform a politics of multispecies care. We will conclude our work together for the semester with a collectively curated selection of readings, to be determined by our seminar.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-FGSS
Identical With: FGSS330
Prereq: None

SISP338 Masculinities
This course examines masculinities and the psychology of men using theories and research findings. We survey a range of perspectives on men and masculinity, drawing from evolutionary theory, cognitive psychology, psychoanalysis, social psychology, and queer theory. We will ask how the psychological attributes associated with men relate to private life and public spaces, and whether our enactments and conceptions of masculinity have changed over time. Exploration of these questions will be informed by both psychological research and close analysis of media representations; the course thus emphasizes methods for examining representations of masculinity in science and the media.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PSYC
Identical With: PSYC338, FGSS338
Prereq: PSYC105 OR [FGSS209 or ENGL208]

SISP342 Queer Robotics: Cyborgs in Science Fiction & Anthropology
What do representations of robots and cyborgs in popular film, sci-fi literature, and cultural anthropology tell us about gender, sexuality, race, and what it means to be "human"? In this class we will use critical race studies, queer and feminist theory, disability studies, and science and technology studies (STS) to analyze representations of "cyborg" bodies in speculative fiction and ethnography. Our case examples explore the politics of the body through narratives of military research, artificial intelligence, sex work, urbanism and segregation, biotech research, prosthetics and athleticism, new reproductive technologies, and more. We will engage with poetry, film, visual art, and speculative fiction to explore how bodies are dreamed, crafted, and represented.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-SISP
Identical With: FGSS342
Prereq: None

SISP343 Imitations of Life: Experimental Bodies at the Interface of Science and Culture
This seminar will examine scientific and cultural practices of corporeal simulation, or, practices of bodily substitution, imitation, and re/modeling. Topics examined will include: reproductive surrogacy; gender reassignment surgeries; experimental subject protocols; prosthetic enhancements; xenotransplantation; biometrics and alternative forms of bodily imaging; the use of nonhuman animals as human proxies; the rise of personalized medicine, and more. Students will engage with a wide range of case studies and theoretical materials from interdisciplinary perspectives. Special attention will be paid to the relationship between scientific discourses of "universality" and "particularity," where socio-cultural forms of difference (e.g., race, gender, disability, etc.) are at once ignored and exacerbated. While most of the material addressed in the class will relate to recent phenomena, we will also be attentive to relevant histories of corporeal differentiation and reimaging.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM, SBS-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM343, AMST343, FGSS343
Prereq: None

SISP344 The Rise of the Neurosciences
This course examines the expansion and proliferation of the neurosciences from the early modern period to the present. We will investigate the recent claim that we are living in the midst of a "neuro-revolution" with vast social, political, and economic consequences around the globe. Yet at the same time, we will look to the past for similar moments of transition and transformation of the modern sciences abetted by experiments on the nervous system. Students will analyze texts from Descartes to Damasio, paying attention to the rhetorical explanatory power of certain epistemic objects and instruments—samples of brain tissue, synaptic networks, clinical case histories, and MRI scans—as well as the institutional power shifts that sanctioned research practices such as vivisection, phrenology, electrophysiology, and functional imaging. Through our reading of primary sources by philosophers and physicians and secondary sources by historians and sociologists, this course will explore what is at stake in the "neuro-turn," and why it provokes such a mixed reaction of hope and hype, then as well as now.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PSYC
Identical With: PSYC344
Prereq: None

SISP352 Media Revolutions: Color Television and the Humanities in the 1960s and 1970s
This course visits some of the groundbreaking TV series that presented humanities and sciences to global mass audiences in the 1960s and 1970s. Television emerged as a powerful cultural presence and with remarkable speed. From the late 1960s, the British Broadcasting Company, in partnership with PBS in America, created a series of television programs (partly to widen the audience market for new color television programming). This course focuses on the role of television as a still new, and potentially disruptive, medium. We will look at and discuss a range of British TV series from Kenneth Clark’s "Civilisation" and "Monty Python’s Flying Circus" (both 1969) to Jacob Bronowski’s "The Ascent of Man" (1973) and Alistair Cooke’s "America" (1972), John Kenneth Galbraith’s "The Age of Uncertainty" (1977), and David Attenborough’s "Life on Earth" (first aired in 1979). We will read and discuss works of art and media criticism around this time that laid the groundwork for major conceptual and theoretical remappings of the fields of cultural and visual studies. We will also explore the impact of television on art worlds and museums, looking at how 1960s’ color television documentaries influenced the way that humanities are
presented televisually up to today. This course satisfies requirements for the "Visual and Material Culture" module in history and major requirements for the Science in Society Program.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM353, HIST345
Prereq: None

SISP353 Health, Illness, and Power in America
In this class, we will explore the interlocking histories of health, illness, and power in America. Special attention will be paid to the ways in which discourses of the healthy body have undergirded notions of citizenship and belonging in the nation. We will consider how processes of disease, disability, and contagion have been imagined through the lenses of social difference, including race, gender, sexuality, and class. We will address civil institutions designed to manage individual and population health, and we will consider theories of political power in the making of the "modern" body.

Sample topics covered will include immigration policies and contagious disease scares; STDs and the politics of public health campaigns; physical fitness and the value of bodily labor under capitalism; the management of diseases that are symptomatic and those that are not; race- and gender-based approaches to medicine and medical difference; clinical trials and the ethics of human experimentation; regulations surrounding blood and organ donation; changing rituals of bodily hygiene; preventative medicine and the call to personal responsibility; mental health policies and institutions; and pride movements surrounding the "unhealthy" body.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AMST
Identical With: AMST353
Prereq: None

SISP355 The 1918 Influenza Pandemic: A Research Seminar
This fall is the centennial of the 1918 influenza pandemic, which swept around the globe that year and caused an estimated 40 million deaths worldwide. It caused more deaths in the 20th century than any other event except World War II. In this seminar we will examine this pandemic from multiple perspectives with the goal of defining how understanding it changed from the time it occurred to the present. In class, we will examine contemporary journalistic and scientific accounts and various secondary sources, with the goal of establishing a starting point for student research projects that will be completed over the second half of the semester. We will explore sources in Olin Special Collections, various digital archives, Middletown and Connecticut State archives, and other collections as available. Possible outcomes for the class can be a paper, documentary, exhibition, or web resource.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST355
Prereq: None

SISP357 Algorithmic Revolutions: Fakery, Race, and Labor in the New Artificial Age
This course plays with artificial intelligence (AI) as a cultural, sociopolitical, and literary term. Course readings will begin with the observations of anthropologists at the post-WWII Macy Conferences on cybernetics. Students will put data mining and machine learning in historical context, exploring classification systems, intelligence testing, and forensic sciences. Students will also examine the reanimation of the artificial human in newer discourses of AI, such as big data and predictive policing, virtual reality and drone strikes in commercial and military operations, health and assistive technology, and play and labor on platforms like Fortnite and Mechanical Turk. Course texts will include speculative fiction on artificial life, social theories of simulation and virtuality, and new work from queer studies and critical race studies interrogating the basis for testing artificiality and humanity. Students will conduct a semester-long project on artifice and artificiality using an avatar self, culminating in a "Theatre of the Oppressed"-style performance-activism piece exploring how digital labor produces new forms of (de)humanization.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM357
Prereq: None

SISP360 Making the Psychological: Discovering, Manufacturing, Circulating
Psychology aims to explain human experiences and thoughts, including unconscious ones. Using scientific methods, psychology produces valid representations of human nature, names them, and circulates that knowledge for both its truth value and usefulness to society and individuals. Despite much success in these aims, the validity of much of psychology’s knowledge is in being challenged - as evidenced in recent concerns about the reproducibility of experiments. We will examine the epistemic grounds of psychology’s truth claims and consider alternative models that understand the truth claims to be enactments, constructions, or ideologies that rehearse cultural beliefs. Case studies of science-based knowledge eventually found to be inaccurate or exaggerated (priming research; the power pose) are used to examine how some truth claims are generated and challenged, and cases of robust research are used to explore how some truth claims acquire credibility inside and outside the laboratory. We ask, too, how these claims travel to be taken up as new ways for individuals to experience the self and social world, and examine the public’s and our own aspirations to expand consciousness and act otherwise. Students will develop case studies of psychological knowledge, its validation, circulation, and effects in the world.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-CHUM
Identical With: CHUM359, PSYC359
Prereq: PSYC105

SISP365 Nature Description: Literature and Theory
What happens to the world when we describe it using language? What happens to language? Do different modes of description and figurative language do different things to the world? Might we think of such modes--and the literary genres that offer them--as tools that help us approach and understand nature? And in what ways do these modes and the unexamined assumptions that structure them limit what we can see? How much can we really know about nature as it is, in itself, outside of our representational strategies? Further, how have modes of description changed over time, and what can we today learn from studying other ways of understanding how language reflects, touches, and transforms the material world?

This course will grapple with big questions about nature, language, literary form, and human minds--as well as the complex interactions between and among these. We will seek answers by attending closely to both literary and theoretical texts.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL367
SISP366 Bodies, Machines, and Meaning: Cultural Studies of the Sciences
Cultural studies of the sciences shift the focus of interdisciplinary science studies from understanding the sciences as producing and justifying knowledge to understanding them as meaning-making and world-transforming practices. Cultural studies attend to scientific meaning-making at multiple levels, and to the interactions among them: concrete material relations among bodies, technologies, and their settings or situations; verbal, visual, corporeal, mathematical, and other expressive performances; and social, cultural, or political institutions, practices, boundaries, and movements across and within them. Cultural studies of science also emphasizes political engagement with scientific practices and their broader cultural entanglements. This course explores what it means to do cultural studies of science, with a focus on three interrelated themes: alternative conceptions of what it means to make claims and reason about what happens in "nature"; case studies in how scientific meaning and understanding are embodied and prosthetically extended technologically; and some specific conceptual and material relations among scientific understandings of life, bodies, sex, reproduction, and being human.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-PHIL
Identical With: PHIL366
Prereq: None

SISP367 Life of Modern Fact
Facts aren't born; they are made. The challenge is to understand how people have come to think of facts as existing in the world independent of human intervention. This seminar explores the tools and techniques that people have used to craft facts. We consider examples from the 18th century through the present day, such as training manuals, films, and instruments. We also examine how broader structures such as social networks and the law help produce facts as people share, defend, and use them. Finally, this course encourages skepticism and creativity in the use of primary sources and the formulation of original research, questioning the givens of human knowledge.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST367
Prereq: None

SISP370 Disease and Health in Modern Asia
While this course might seem highly focused and specialized at first glance, it is intended for students of all majors and backgrounds. It has two main goals. The first is to explore the influence of epidemics and diseases more broadly over the course of East Asian history while keeping a global context in mind. The focus is on China and Japan, but Korea will be included when possible. The second is to consider how historically, diseases and epidemics are embodied and prosthetically extended technologically; and some specific conceptual and material relations among scientific understandings of life, bodies, sex, reproduction, and being human.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST370, CEAS272
Prereq: None

SISP373 Religion, Science, and Empire: Crucible of a Globalized World
The development of modern science—and of modernity itself—not only coincided with the rise of European imperialism, it was abetted by it. Meanwhile, religion was integral to both the roots of European science and Western encounters with others. This class will explore how the intersections of religion, science, and empire have formed a globalized world with examples of European engagement with the Americas, Middle East, and, particularly, India from the age of Columbus through to the space race. We will examine how the disciplines we know today as biology, anthropology, archaeology, folklore, and the history of religions all crystallized in the crucible of imperial encounter and how non-Westerners have embraced, engaged, and resisted these epistemologies.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI373
Prereq: None

SISP374 Food Security: History of an Idea
The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations has held that “food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.” This course is a history of food insecurity as a material condition and a geopolitical concept for explaining uneven access to provisions. Although we begin with the emergence of food security as a concept during World War II, we will spend the majority of the course studying other ways of organizing access to the means of subsistence. Topics discussed will include why human beings share food, the invention of agriculture, transportation infrastructure, international trade, food aid, agricultural research and development, poverty, conflict, and famine.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST374
Prereq: None

SISP377 Worlding the World: Creation Myths from Ancient Greece to the Multiverse
This course will focus on two questions that have thwarted and enthralled scientists, philosophers, and theologians for millennia: Where have we come from? and Where are we going? By reading ancient Greek and early Christian sources alongside contemporary astrophysicists, we will witness the reconfigured resurrection of some very old debates about the creation and unmaking of the world. Is the universe eternal, or was it created? Is it finite or infinite? Destructible or indestructible? Linear or cyclical? And is ours the only universe, or are there others?

The semester will be divided into four sections. The first will explore the dominant, or “inflationary,” version of the big bang hypothesis in relation to the Christian doctrine of creation. The second will consider the possibility that the whole universe might be a negligible part of a vast “multiverse” in conversation with the early Greek atomists, who posited an extra-cosmic space teeming with other worlds. The third will explore contemporary cyclical cosmologies—that is, theories that posit a rebirth of the cosmos out of its fiery destruction—in relation to early Stoic philosophy and cross-cultural cyclic mythologies. The fourth will explore quantum cosmologies, in which the universe fragments into parallel branches each time a particle “decides” upon a position. We will examine these varied cosmologies of multiplicity, not with a view toward adjudicating among them, but toward pointing out their mythic and ontological genealogies and consequences.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
SISP381 Japan's Nuclear Disasters
The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 are central to the history of the 20th century. This course examines the scientific, cultural, and political origins of the bombs; their use in the context of aerial bombings and related issues in military history; the decisions to use them; the human cost to those on whom they were dropped; and their place in history, culture, and identity politics to the present. Sources will include works on the history of science; military, political, and cultural history; literary and other artistic interpretations; and a large number of primary source documents, mostly regarding U.S. policy questions. In addition, we will be examining the development of the civilian nuclear industry in Japan with a focus on the nuclear meltdowns in Fukushima and other accidents. This is an extremely demanding course.

This interdisciplinary, experiential, and experimental course combines studio learning (movement studies and interdisciplinary, creative exploration) and seminars (presentations and discussions). No previous dance or movement study is required, and the course is not particularly geared toward dancers or performers. However, your willingness to experiment on and share movement is important. We encourage you to think about movement as a method of accessing human experiences and making distance malleable, a way to explore your own sensations, thoughts, and reactions in learning history.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.50
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST381, CEAS384, DANC381, ENV381
Prereq: None

SISP382 Anthropocene as Modern Grand Narrative
The Anthropocene refers to the new age in which humankind started to have a significant impact in altering or rupturing the Earth's system, and the Earth is now moving out of its current geological epoch (the Holocene) and into "a less biologically diverse, less forested, much warmer, and probably wetter and stormier state." (Steffen, Czutzen, and McNeill 2007, Sciences Module, 614). This course begins by examining the debates on the definition and periodization. It then explores precursors to the concept of the Anthropocene, such as Confucian and Daoist writings on the taming of the natural environment for human needs, the catastrophism vs. uniformitarianism debate, and contesting definitions of sustainability. Finally, it looks at how recent works of environmental history engaged with the concept of the Anthropocene and brought our attention to the impact of the transition from organic economy to carbon economy. Is the Anthropocene a new meta-narrative that proffeses to be the theory that explains all human activity? Is the Anthropocene a call to arms for environmental justice? Is the Anthropocene just a declensionist fairy tale—one that leads us down a dead end, throwing up our arms in resignation over the irreversible destruction of the natural environment?

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST382, CHUM307, HIST382
Prereq: None

SISP384 Critical Approaches to the History of Disease and Epidemics
Epidemic disease is as much a part of the human condition as earthquakes, droughts, floods, heat waves and other natural hazards that can result in disaster. This course will examine four cases of epidemic disease: (tentatively) cholera, tuberculosis, and AIDS. While we will definitely be asking the classic historical question "what happened and how?" we also will be considering how different epistemological frameworks, metaphorical strategies, and historiographical assumptions have shaped past historians' understandings of these events, while exploring alternative approaches. Students will write a research paper as a final project on an epidemic disease of their choice using an approach that helps explore some little-examined dimension of that disease. Choices will not be limited to diseases caused by microorganisms, but also can include cancer, diabetes, and other diseases that arguably have reached epidemic proportions, whether past or present.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST384
Prereq: None
course are devoted to applying historical knowledge to contemporary debates in global public health, including international pharmaceutical research, drug development, and epidemic disease.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST393, AMST393
Prereq: None

SISP399 History and Geography
Maps are part of a broader family of value-laden images. This is a research seminar about the global history of cartography from 1490s to the recent past. We will study maps from the early modern and modern world and examine how maps were used as instruments of political power, shaped the imagination of peoples around the world, and inspired new ways to imagine our self-identity.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST399, CEAS214, ENV399
Prereq: None

SISP401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

SISP402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

SISP403 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

SISP404 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

SISP407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

SISP408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

SISP409 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

SISP410 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

SISP411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT