

**Science and Technology in Society: Race / Gender / Class**  
**ETHN 102**

Prof. Nisha Kunte / nkunte@ucsd.edu

Fall 2012

Tuesdays / Thursdays 5:00 – 6:20 pm, CSB 005

Office Hours: Thursdays 3:00 – 5:00 pm, SSB 445  
or by appointment

**Course Description**

At a time when our lives are increasingly informed by scientific and technological change, it is important to consider the moments of constitutive intersection between the discourses of science/technology with race, gender, and class. Fears around immigration are bolstered by assertions of the spread of communicable disease across borders, militarized technological innovation in the form of unmanned aerial vehicles has forced a conversation on the ethics of drone warfare, and genetic research is redefining how we chart the social and material formation of our own bodies. This interdisciplinary course will constitute an introduction to the cultural study of science and technology, investigating how science is produced as a category of knowledge that informs and shapes renderings of race, gender, sexuality, and class. We explore this knowledge production through historical, anthropological, literary, and philosophical investigations of technology. We will engage in this form of intellectual inquiry in order to politically, socially, and culturally contextualize the institutions of science and technology. How does scientific thought constitute itself as objective? How does this objectivity when applied to social and cultural constructs of difference produce certain discourses of race, gender, and class as authoritative or “true”? Further, how is scientific thought itself contested when we emphasize a careful consideration of socially and culturally determined difference? This course will provide a framework for such questions through a rigorous examination of the nexus between historically and theoretically situated discourses of scientific knowledge production and race, gender, and class. Such an approach requires:

1. a historically and culturally underwritten investigation of science and technology.
2. the realization that what we call “science” is a fluid construct that bears investigating in so far as it informs cultural constructs of objectivity.
3. understanding changing discourses of science and technology to not only inform but also contest and contextualize our understandings of race, gender, and class.

**Class Structure and Policies**

Classes will be comprised of various course activities, including lectures, discussions, film viewings, and group work. Each week, readings are to be completed by the Tuesday or Thursday meeting as indicated on the syllabus. While we will focus on the readings due on Tuesday during that class meeting exclusively, during discussion on Thursday, we will tie together the entire week’s readings. Students must come to class with hard or electronic copies of the readings to be covered that day. Attendance is mandatory. Please

feel free to stop by my office hours to discuss any issues you are having with the course or if you'd just like to chat. If you can't make my regularly scheduled office hours, let me know and we can schedule a time to talk that fits both our schedules. Please note that I do not respond to emails received after 8 pm until the following day. Computers are allowed in class for note taking and course related activities only. Cell phone use is not permitted in class.

### **Class Blog**

In this class, we will be using a class blog to communicate ideas with each other that tie our course readings to current events and popular issues. Students will be required to make at least one blog post during the course of the Quarter in the form of a Reading Response Blog Post (as described below under Course Assignments). However, please feel free to use the course blog to share any of the fruits of your own online explorations into the topics of science, race, gender, and class – I will also be using the blog as a space to post the occasional short rumination on current events related to our line of inquiry. I will be giving you all contributor access to the blog once the Quarter begins, so you will be able to both respond to posts on the blog as well as post your own content. Please be aware that posting and responding to blog posts will count towards your class participation grade. As such, students are encouraged to check the course blog at least once a week as it is a valuable way to demonstrate your active engagement with class materials. The course blog website is [stracegenderclass.typepad.com](http://stracegenderclass.typepad.com).

### **Course Readings**

Course readings are all available online, either through Blackboard or through UCSD's course reserve system. Readings marked (BB) are available on Blackboard; all others are available through online reserve and are marked (E-Reserve). The online reserve system requires that you enter a password to access PDFs of the readings. The password is nk102.

### **Class Assignments and Grading**

Class assignments are designed to encourage you to think and write critically about science, technology, race, gender, and class.

1. Response Blog Post (10%): Students are required to select one of the course readings and write a short (approx. 1 page / 300 words) response. Response papers are not summaries; rather, they are reflections on aspects of the reading you found challenging, provocative, or meaningful. Response papers should be posted to the class blog by 8 pm the night before the reading is due.
2. Class Participation (15%): Students are required to practice active participation in class each week. You must be ready to engage with the readings, your professor and your classmates and you will be graded on the quality of your active participation in discussion. Active participation requires that you be ready to share your thoughts, observations and questions. Remember that a vital part of

- successful participation and discussion is listening to others and a willingness to exchange as well as announce ideas. Students may also gain participation points by posting responses to the class blog.
3. Midterm (25%)
  4. Critical Essay (25%): Students will write a short, 3 pg. essay on a topic of their choosing. Papers must be related to the general theme of the course, but they need not cleave exclusively to issues covered in class. Students are encouraged to choose topics in which they have a special interest to critically and theoretically evaluate the intersection of scientific discourse with race / gender / class – these topics may be drawn from current or historical events, film, literature, or popular culture. Essay topics must be discussed with the professor by Week 6.
  5. Final (25%)

\*\*\*Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the professor's discretion.\*\*\*

### **Week 0: Introduction (9/27)**

#### **Week 1 (10/2, 10/4): The Critical Study of Science and Technology**

*Tuesday:* Bruno Latour, "Do You Believe in Reality" pg. 1 – 23 (E-Reserve)

*Thursday:* Leo Marx, "Does Improved Technology Mean Improved Progress" pg. 32 – 41 (BB)

#### **Week 2 (10/9, 10/11): Introductory Terms: Race, Gender, and Sexuality**

*Tuesday:* Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "Racial Formation" pg. 53 – 76 (E-Reserve)  
Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes: Why Males and Females Are Not Enough," pg. 20-25 (BB)

*Thursday:* Siobhan Somerville, "Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body," pg. 15 – 38 (E-Reserve)

#### **Week 3 (10/16, 10/18): Thinking Cyborgs: Materially and Virtually Hybrid Bodies**

*Tuesday:* Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," pg. 149 – 182 (E-Reserve)

*Thursday:* Lesley A. Sharp, "Human, Monkey, Machine: The Brave New World of Human Hybridity," pg. 77 – 106 (BB)

#### **Week 4 (10/23, 10/25): Biopolitics and Reproductivity**

*Tuesday:* Emily Martin, "The Egg and Sperm: How Science Has Created a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," pg. 485 – 501 (BB)

*Thursday:* Laura Briggs, "Debating Reproduction: Birth Control, Eugenics, and Overpopulation in Puerto Rico, 1920 – 1940" pg. 74 – 108 (E-Reserve)

Alexandra Minna Stern, "Sterilized in the Name of Public Health: Race, Immigration, and Reproductive Control in Modern California" pg. 1128 – 1138 (BB)

**Week 5 (10/30, 11/1): Biotechnologies of Citizenship**

*Tuesday:* James Jones, “The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment” pg. 275 – 286 (E-Reserve)

Dorothy Roberts, “Genetic Surveillance” pg. 261 – 286 (E-Reserve)

*Thursday:* Nayan Shah, “Making Medical Borders at Angel Island” pg. 179 – 203 (E-Reserve)

\*\*\*Midterm Review\*\*\*

**Week 6 (11/6, 11/8): Science, Technology, and Imperialism**

*Tuesday:* \*\*\*Midterm\*\*\*

*Thursday:* Ed Cohen, “Immune Communities, Common Immunities,” pg. 269 – 281 (E-Reserve)

Warwick Anderson, “The Military Basis of Colonial Public Health,” pg. 45 – 73 (E-Reserve)

**Week 7 (11/13, 11/15): Moving Parts: Global Technologies of Transplantation**

*Tuesday:* Lawrence Cohen, “The Other Kidney” pg. 9 – 30 (E-Reserve)

Nancy Scheper-Hughes, “The Global Traffic in Human Organs” pg. 191 – 224 (BB)

*Thursday:* Margaret Lock, “The Social Life of Human Organs” pg. 315 – 340 (E-Reserve)

**Week 8 (11/20, 11/22 -- NO CLASS THANKSGIVING): Big Pharma: R&D at the Borders of Difference**

*Tuesday:* Londa Schiebinger, “Prospecting for Drugs: European Naturalists in the West Indies” pg. 119 -134 (E-Reserve)

Jonathan Kahn, “Surrogate Markers and Surrogate Marketing in Biomedicine: The Regulatory Etiology and Commercial Progression of ‘Ethnic’ Drug Development” pg. 263 – 288 (E-Reserve)

**Week 9 (11/27, 11/29): Genetics and Property Rights**

*Tuesday:* Priscilla Wald, “Cells, Genes, and Stories: HeLa’s Journey from Labs to Literature” pg. 266 – 247 (E-Reserve)

*Thursday:* Winona LaDuke “Wild Rice: Maps, Genes, Patents” pg. 167 – 190 (E-Reserve)

Jenny Reardon and Kim TallBear, “Your DNA Is *Our* History: Genomics, Anthropology, and the Construction of Whiteness as Property” pg. 233 – 245 (BB)

**Week 10 (12/4, 12/6): Community and Activist Responses to Scientific and Technological Interventions**

*Tuesday:* Alondra Nelson, “As American as Cherry Pie: Contesting the Biologization of Violence” pg. 153 – 180 (E-Reserve)

*Thursday:* Jenna Loyd, “Where is Community Health? Racism, the Clinic, and the Biopolitical State” pg. 39 – 68 (E-Reserve)

\*\*\*Critical Essay Due\*\*\*

**Final Exam:** Friday, December 14, 7 pm

### **Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD**

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet do not realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact:

Daisy Rodríguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor  
858-534-3277 or [d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu](mailto:d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu) or [www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu](http://www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu)

### **Student Consent for Release of Student Information**

I hereby authorize the UCSD Ethnic Studies Department/Program to return my graded final examination/research paper by placing the examination/research paper in a location accessible to all students in the course. I understand that the return of my examination/research paper as described above may result in the disclosure of personally identifiable information, that is not public information as defined in UCSD PPM 160-2, and I hereby consent to the disclosure of such information.

Quarter: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Student I.D.#: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_