Comm 4660/STS 4661:
Public Communication of Science & Technology
Spring 2019

This syllabus (including any updates) is also available through Cornell’s Canvas site
This version updated: 21 January 2019, 3:45 pm.

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Office hours
Thursday, 1:00-3:00 in Morrill 303
and happily by appointment

Class time and location
Tues & Thurs, 8:40-9:55 am
Plant Science 141

Course description
Our broad topic is "public communication of science and technology" (PCST); this semester, our
specific topic will be science and culture – how can we understand science as a part of the public
culture around it? What do popular science toys tell us about childhood? Where do science
museums fit in family culture? What kinds of images appear on television or in movies? What do
celebrity scientists tell us about celebrity in the modern world? We’ll be exploring the meaning
of science in today’s culture – or do I mean the meaning of today’s culture when viewed through
science?

The course objectives are:
- To learn about various points of intersection of science and public culture in the last
  100 years or so (especially in the United States)
- To learn to read, analyze, and critique scholarly literature (about science and culture)
- To learn to write scholarly analyses of science and culture

This will be a seminar course. That means that everyone does the reading and everyone comes to
class prepared to explore the readings. To "explore the readings" means you've read the texts,
you've thought about them, and you're ready to see where the arguments lead. It also means
you've identified inconsistencies or problems with the logic and are ready to tear the text apart.
You will usually find material that is intellectually challenging; it may require multiple readings
to make sense, or it may challenge beliefs you already have (even though you may not have
known that you have them). You will be expected to justify your reactions to the texts with
specific references to the texts or, when relevant, to other texts.
For most class sessions, one or two of you will lead the discussion. The leader(s) will come to class with a specific set of questions raised by the readings. Those questions may emerge from the content of the reading, or they may question the logic or approach taken by the author(s). Discussion leaders will circulate the questions the day before class, via Canvas.

Readings
All readings should be done before the week begins (that is, before Tuesday’s class). Most readings will be posted online (with direct links to publications, links through the Cornell library system, and occasionally to scanned copies of material not available online). Some readings will involve you exploring a set of links online.

Grades
About 30% of your grade will depend on class participation, electronic bulletin board participation, your activity as a discussion leader, and short reading response assignments during the semester; 40% on short during-the-semester papers; and the remaining 30% will depend on your final paper (exact format to be determined).

Assignments
1. Each week, post a short (less than one page) response to the readings on the Canvas discussion site. I also encourage you to respond to the postings of other students, so that we have discussion going on throughout the week.
2. Short papers
   a. 24 January: What do you think science communication is? (1-2 paragraphs)
   b. 5 February: Science museum visit reflection (1 page)
   c. 12 February: Short reflection assignment (1 page)
   d. 5 March: Science in culture analysis (1-2 pages)
   e. 28 March: Movie review (1-2 pages)
   f. 18 April: Book review (1-2 pages)
3. Final paper
   a. 11 April: Paper proposal
   b. 25 April: Draft paper
   c. Finals week: Final paper (10-15 pages)

Academic integrity
Academic integrity is crucial to your personal scholarly identity. Your rights and responsibilities in this area are outlined in the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity: https://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/academic-integrity/.

Violations of the code of conduct include but are not limited to:
- Submitting work in this class that has also been submitted for a grade in another course without prior permission of both instructors.
- Using, obtaining, or providing unauthorized assistance on examinations, papers, or any other academic work.
- Misrepresenting another person's work as your own (including but not limited to purchased term papers and plagiarism).
You are responsible for obeying the Code of Academic Integrity. Ignorance of the code is not an excuse.

The most common problem for many students is plagiarism, which will not be tolerated and will be sanctioned, up to and including failure of the course. Students from cultures outside the United States should be especially aware that American standards of acknowledgement and use of material prepared by others (especially one's professors) can be much different than those in other cultures. More information about plagiarism is available at http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm.

To address issues of academic integrity, we will use the Turnitin system for some assignments. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.

If you have any questions about how to interpret the Code in the context of assignments or activities in this class (especially any that involve collaboration with your colleagues), please feel free to contact the instructor or the University Ombudsman.
Students with special circumstances
Cornell University (as an institution) and I (as a human being and instructor of this course) are committed to full inclusion in education for all persons. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students facing mental health issues or other personal situations, and to students with other kinds of learning needs. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class.

Some resources that might be of use include:
- Office of Student Disability Services, https://sds.cornell.edu/
- Cornell Health CAPS (Counseling & Psychological Services), https://health.cornell.edu/services/counseling-psychiatry
- Undocumented/DACA Student Support, write to Kevin Graham (Kevin.Graham@Cornell.edu) and a list of campus resources can be found here: https://dos.cornell.edu/undocumented-daca-support/undergraduate-admissions-financial-aid
- Learning Strategies Center, http://lsc.cornell.edu/

I would be glad to help you identify other resources if needed.
**Course plan, as of 19 January 2019**

Because of my travel schedule, this semester (especially early on) will be a bit choppy. But you’ll have things to do on the weeks that we don’t meet.

Note: Many of the links to readings require access to the Cornell University library. If you are not on the campus network, use one of the world’s great Cornell library inventions: Passkey. [https://www.library.cornell.edu/services/apps/passkey](https://www.library.cornell.edu/services/apps/passkey).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week #</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
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| 1      | 22 Jan 24 Jan | **Intro: Science and Culture**  
DUE, 25 January: Brief reflection on science and public culture |
| 2      | 29 Jan 31 Jan | **Science and culture**  
- NOTE: No class on 31 January. Instead, sometime this week visit the [Sciencenter](https://www.sciencenter.org/) or the [Museum of the Earth](https://www.museumoftheearth.org/). |
| 3      | 5 Feb 7 Feb | **How to analyze science and culture**  
DUE, 5 February: Science museum visit reflection |
| 4      | 12 Feb 14 Feb | **Science, culture, and communication**  
- NOTE: No regular class meetings this week  
- A set of virtual activities will be offered |
- At the end of this week, a new short report will be released about public engagement in science. Though the topic is slightly off our main course arc, you’ll get the link and should read it.

DUE, 12 February: Brief reflection (topic to come)

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<th>19 Feb 21 Feb</th>
<th>Science in culture: Museums and literature</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>26 Feb 28 Feb</th>
<th>Science in culture: Amateurs</th>
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NOTE: No class on 26 February -- February break

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<th>7</th>
<th>5 Mar 7 Mar</th>
<th>Science in Culture: Movies</th>
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### Science in Culture: Television

- **Gouyon, J.-B.** (2014). Making science at home: visual displays of space science and nuclear physics at the Science Museum and on television in postwar Britain. *History and Technology, 30*(1-2), 37-60. [link]

### Science in culture: The Internet


### Science in culture: Humor

- **Stemwedel, J. D.** (2013). #Overlyhonestmethods: Ethical implications when scientists joke with each other on public social media. In J. Goodwin, M. F. Dahlstrom, & S. Priest (Eds.), *Ethical issues in
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tr>
<td>11 Apr - 11 Apr</td>
<td><strong>Science in culture: Politics</strong></td>
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<td>• Wolfe, A. J. (2013, 23 August). Science diplomacy works, but only when it's genuine. Retrieved from [link]</td>
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<td>• Additional readings to come</td>
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<td>12 Apr - 18 Apr</td>
<td><strong>Science and celebrity culture</strong></td>
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<td>• And some short pieces about science communication and #MeToo</td>
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DUE, 18 April: Book review

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<th>25 Apr</th>
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| 13 |        | **Science and visual culture**  
  ● I've had trouble finding good readings on visual culture of science. So, here are several sites with amazing images, followed by a couple of more analytical articles. What themes do you find?  
  ● [http://ejheller.jalbum.net/](http://ejheller.jalbum.net/)  

DUE, 25 April: Draft final paper

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<th>30 Apr</th>
<th>2 May</th>
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| 14 |        | **Science and...YOUR culture**  
  ● TBD  
  ● Consider: [http://guerillascience.org/](http://guerillascience.org/) |

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| 15 | **Science, culture, and science communication**  
  ● So, what did we do this semester? |

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<tr>
<td>Finals</td>
<td><strong>DUE: Final paper due at time specified for this course</strong></td>
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