

# **Proseminar in Anthropologies of Science, Medicine, and Technology (MSTS) Spring 2010**

Tom Boellstorff  
Professor, Department of Anthropology  
Editor-in-Chief, *American Anthropologist*

Meets Tuesdays, noon–1pm, SBSG 3322  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11am–noon and 3–4pm  
Office: SBSG 3322, 824-9944, tboellst@uci.edu

First Meeting: Tuesday, March 30, Noon, SBSG 3322

## **Course Description**

The historical development of medical anthropology as well as science and technology studies (hereafter STS) has been shaped by a series of questions regarding health and illness, scientific inquiry, and technological development. How can social scientists contribute to an understanding of disparities in access to health care, as well as differences in health outcomes based on social characteristics? How might new digital media and social networking technologies transform not just health care institutions and practices, but understandings of “health” itself? Why is it crucial to understand social and cultural specificity when considering questions of technology design? How has social science research contributed to the fields of medicine and technology, broadly conceived?

The fields of medical anthropology and STS have taken up questions like these for the past several decades, yet new convergences have brought these two fields closer together. This workshop is predicated on the realization that the social phenomena studied by “medical anthropology” and “STS” are in fact inextricably linked, and understanding these linked formations requires moving between disparate fields of inquiry.

This course is open to all graduate students (it has no prerequisites), but is required of all Ph.D. students seeking the Graduate Concentration in Anthropologies of Medicine, Science, and Technology, as well as all MSTS M.A. students. If the seminar is overenrolled, preference will be given to these two groups of students.

The course has a two-part structure. Following the introductory meeting in Week 1, we will spend Weeks 2-5 looking at a sample of key texts in STS and medical anthropology. For Weeks 6-10, guest speakers (faculty in the Department of Anthropology) will discuss how their own research questions and interests have been shaped by medical anthropology, STS, and intersections of these fields. Guest speakers will assign readings

ahead of their visits, which will be the topic for précises on those days (see below for an explanation of précises).

## Course Requirements

1) You must attend the weekly seminar and have prepared for it by doing the assigned reading ahead of time. You must participate actively in the seminar discussions. Eighteen percent of your grade will be based on participation. If you cannot make a course meeting, please do not send an email explaining why: simply do not show up. (Normally, you should email professors when you are going to miss a class, but since this course has graded précises keyed to attendance, it is not necessary for this course.) The seminar discussions will follow three basic guidelines:

*Generosity.* With a ten-week course there simply is not time for substandard texts. All readings selected for the syllabus are insightful and theoretically innovative. Critiquing aspects of the readings is fine, but if you find yourself rejecting an argument in toto, this indicates your reading is insufficiently generous.

*Provisionality.* You are allowed (indeed, encouraged) to think out loud, say something and then take it back, and generally speak in a provisional manner, knowing that those around you will be patient, supportive, and slow to take offense.

*Community.* Some individuals are quite comfortable speaking at length: this is desirable, but the instructor reserves the right to ask persons to wrap up their comments, or to solicit comments from persons who have not yet participated in any particular course meeting.

2) You must do eight précises (every course meeting but the first meeting and one of your choosing). The précis will take the form of a one-page generous, engaged, and critical commentary on the readings for that week, and will be graded on a three-point scale. Précises will be circulated in class to learn how others are reacting to the texts. Please note the following rules, as there will be no exceptions:

Précises must be turned in within the first five minutes of class in triplicate.

Précises can never be turned in at a later date.

You must attend any course meeting in which you turn in a précis (someone else may not turn them in for you).

3) You must write 3 short course papers. These are due at the beginning of Tuesday's class on weeks 4, 7, and 10. They must be emailed before class on these days as a single Word document (not pdf) to [tboellst@uci.edu](mailto:tboellst@uci.edu).

Each short paper must be between 3,000 and 4,000 words in length, inclusive of title, endnotes, and references (I will use the “word count” function of Word to confirm this).

The paper be written in a professional manner (with a title page and bibliography), must cite and draw upon course texts and discussions in an extensive manner, and should also engage in some way with your own research interests. It must use American Anthropological Association formatting (see <http://www.aaanet.org/publications/guidelines.cfm>) and include full bibliographic references to course texts as they are used. You may bring in outside readings, but it is not necessary to do so. I recommend that you discuss your paper’s argument with me during the course meetings or in office hours.

Your course grade will be calculated as follows: participation 23 percent; each précis 4 percent (for a total of 32 percent); each short course paper 15 percent (for a total of 45 percent).

## Course Schedule

Note: recommended readings are primarily for your future reference or should you find consulting them useful for a short course paper: they are not acceptable substitutes for the main course readings.

*week one. introduction.*

*week two.*

- 1) Thomas Kuhn, The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions [1962], from *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Pp. 148–57 in *The Philosophy of Science*. Richard Boyd, Philip Gasper, and J. D. Trout, ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.
- 2) Warwick Anderson, Postcolonial Technoscience. *Social Studies of Science* 32: 643–58, 2002.
- 3) Max Weber, Science as a Vocation (1918). Pp. 129–56 in *Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Translated from the German by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills. Oxford University Press, 1946.
- 4) Karl Popper, Scientific Method & Falsificationism versus Conventionalism, from *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* [1934]. Pp. 99–112 in *The Philosophy of Science*. Richard Boyd, Philip Gasper, and J. D. Trout, ed. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991.
- 5) Eric Schatzberg, Technik Comes to America: Changing Meanings of

Technology before 1930. *Technology and Culture* 47(3):486–512, 2006.

RECOMMENDED:

Paul Feyerabend, Introduction to the Chinese Edition, Introduction, 1-3. Pp. 1-4 and 9-32 in *Against Method*. Verso, 1993.

Ludwik Fleck, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact*, Trans. F. Bradley and T. Trenn. University of Chicago Press, 1979 [1935] (selections).

Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of India*. Princeton University Press, 1997 (pp. 3-48).

Victor Turner, *Drums of Affliction: A Study of Religious Processes Among the Ndembu of Zambia*. Cornell University Press, 1981 (pp. 156-97).

*week three.*

- 1) Nancy Scheper-Hughes & Margaret Lock, The Mindful Body: A Prolegomenon to Future Work in Medical Anthropology. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1(1):6-41, 1987.
- 2) Donna Haraway, Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism as a Site of Discourse on the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3):575-99, 1988.
- 3) Evelyn Fox Keller, Feminism and Science. *Signs* 7(3):589-602, 1982.
- 4) Ian Hacking, Experimentation and Scientific Realism. *Philosophical Topics* 13:71-87, 1982.
- 5) Byron Good, The Heart of What's the Matter. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry* 1:25-58, 1977.

RECOMMENDED:

Arthur Kleinman, Experience and Its Moral Modes: Culture, Human Conditions, and Disorder. Pp. 357-405 in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (20), 1999.

Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

Ronnie Frankenberg, Allopathic Medicine, Profession and Capitalist Ideology in India. *Social Science and Medicine* 15:115-25, 1981.

week four. (short course paper #1 due, emailed before class to tboellst@uci.edu)

- 1) Steve Woolgar, "The Turn to Technology in Social Studies of Science." *Science, Technology, and Human Values* 16(1):20-50, 1991.
- 2) Peter Galison, The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision. *Critical Inquiry* 21(1):228-66, 1994
- 3) Trevor Pinch, "The Social Construction of Technology: A Review." In *Technological Change: Methods and Themes in the History of Technology*, Robert Fox, ed. (pp. 17-35). Harwood Academic, 1996.
- 4) Michel Callon, Society in the Making: The Study of Technology as a Tool for Sociological Analysis. Pp. 83-106 in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, Wiebe E. Bijker, Thomas Parke Hughes, and T. J. Pinch, ed. MIT Press, 1987.
- 5) Lorraine Daston & Peter Galison, The Image of Objectivity. *Representations* 40:81-128, 1992.

#### RECOMMENDED:

Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences*. MIT Press, 2000.

Jean Comaroff, Healing and Transformation: The Tshidi of Southern Africa. *Social Science and Medicine* 15:367-78, 1981.

Margaret M. Lock and Judith Farquhar, *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*. Duke University Press, 2007

Lorna Amarasingham Rhodes, Studying Biomedicine as a Cultural System. Pp. 165-180 in *Medical Anthropology: Contemporary Theory and Method*. C. F. Sargent and T. M. Johnson, ed. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1996.

Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life*. Princeton University Press, 1985 (selections).

week five.

- 1) Vinh-Kim Nguyen and Karine Peschard, Anthropology, Inequality and Disease: A Review. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 32:447-74, 2003.

- 2) Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford University Press, 2007 (selections).
- 3) Karin Knorr Cetina, *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge*. Harvard University Press, 1999 (selections).
- 4) Monica Casper, Reframing and Grounding Non-Human Agency. *American Behavioral Scientist* 37(6):839-56, 1994.
- 5) Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society*. University of Chicago Press, 1998 (selections).

#### RECOMMENDED

Lawrence Cohen, Where It Hurts: Indian Material for an Ethics of Organ Transplantation. *Daedalus* 128(4):135-66, 1999.

Joan Fujimura, Authorizing Knowledge in Science and Anthropology. *American Anthropologist* 100(2):347-60 (1998).

Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Princeton University Press, 1986 (selections).

Adriana Petryna, Ethical Variability: Drug Development and Globalizing Clinical Trials. *American Ethnologist* 32(2):183-97, 2005.

#### week six.

- 1) Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*. University of California Press, 2005 (selections).
- 2) Veena Das and Ranendra Das. "How the Body Speaks: Illness and Lifeworld among the Urban Poor." Pp. 66-98 in *Subjectivity: Ethnographic Investigations*. João Biehl, Bryon Good, and Arthur Kleinman, ed. University of California Press, 2007.
- 3) Clarence C. Gravlee, How Race Becomes Biology: Embodiment of Social Inequality. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 139(1):47-57, 2009.
- 4) Paul Rabinow, *Essays on the Anthropology of Reason*. Princeton University Press, 1996 (selections).
- 5) Adam Reed, "My Blog Is Me": Texts and Persons in UK Online Journal Culture (and Anthropology). *Ethnos* 70(2): 220-42, 2005.

RECOMMENDED:

João Biehl and Torben Eskerod, *Will to Live*. Princeton University Press, 2009.

N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Hans-Jorg Rheinberger, *Toward a History of Epistemic Things: Synthesizing Proteins in the Test Tube*. Stanford University Press, 1997.

Jenny Sundén, *Material Virtualities: Approaching Online Textual Embodiment*. Peter Language, 2003.

*week seven. (short course paper #2 due, emailed before class to tboellst@uci.edu)*

Guest speaker: TBA.

*week eight.*

Guest speaker: TBA.

*week nine.*

Guest speaker: TBA.

*week ten. (short course paper #3 due, emailed before class to tboellst@uci.edu)*

Guest speaker: TBA.