SYLLABUS – POSTCOLONIAL/DECOLONIAL
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY STUDIES

A three-hours-long graduate seminar in a weekly basis

As of Fall 2019.


This is a sixteen-weeks-long, including one reading week, graduate seminar, examining the multiscalar interactions between knowledge, artifacts, and geopolitical actors and structures, seen from the perspectives of social and political theories, especially postcolonial and decolonial studies. This class aims to help students develop the capabilities of addressing the following three questions: how to do social studies of scientific knowledges and technical artifacts that are globally circulated, accredited, ending up universal, or open to controversies? How to expose STS concepts and methods to the postcolonial, decolonial, and anti-imperial sensibilities? And how to do social studies of postcolonial objects/subjects in technoscience? These three questions and our discussions will be unfolded along Part I to Part III after an introductory week as the semester goes.

Each week, students will be expected to read and prepare to discuss four (or five on one occasion) research articles/chapters. For some weeks, in addition to several common reading materials, multiple topics and the corresponding articles/chapters within the topics will be given together, among which students will choose one topic. To prevent any topic from being unselected, students will be asked to select topics in advance a week before. Through those articles, not just will influential postcolonial STS scholars such as Sandra Harding, Warwick Anderson, Gabrielle Hecht, Kim Tallbear, Helen Verran, David Turnbull, and Kim Fortun be introduced; but also will much wider humanistic and interpretive social scientists as well as historians of science and technology be presented when it comes to postcolonialities and technoscience during the last decade since 2010 (Figure 1).

![Figure 1](image.png)

*Figure 1. Years of publication of 51 mandatory readings and 52 optional ones, spanning three decades.*
1. REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The grading will be based on response papers (40%) and term papers (60%). First, along fifteen weeks with reading materials, students are required to submit eight response papers, each of which accounts for 5% of the whole points. Each response paper will be up to two pages, in single-space, containing the summaries, juxtapositions, assessments, and critiques of various authors’ thoughts in the corresponding week (or/and of those discussed during previous weeks). Each submission will be electronically turned in by the starting time of each class. Any submission later than the starting time of the class will not be regarded as a legitimate submission. Please take your due date and time seriously. Within two weeks upon submission, each response paper will be returned with some comments, graded on a 10 points basis, between 7 and 10, incrementing by 1.

The term paper will identify and address the gaps, incoherences, tensions, or latent interstices, in the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological senses, in the postcolonial and decolonial STS understanding of our technoscientific worlds. Students don’t have to do empirical case studies, but they may do if they would like. It will be up to 6,000 words long plus reference. The proposals of term Papers should be electronically turned in by 23:59 on the day of Week 12 class. And the final term paper should be electronically turned in by 23:59 at four days before the end of the semester. The grading will be on a 60 points basis, between 48 and 60, incrementing by 3.

2. SUGGESTED READINGS

Students can be referred to the materials below when they embark on this seminar and when they survey for term paper topics.

an Introduction (in the STS Handbook)

Foundational works in postcolonial theories


Addressing multiscalar topics


Regarding Global Development (in the STS Handbook)


3. MORE READING LISTS IF YOU TAKE SOME THEMES FAR SERIOUSLY

Full syllabi
For students interested in the subject matters in this seminar, they can be referred to additional sets of literature found in three other syllabi. I would like to introduce those three, by indicating the differences between these earlier syllabi’s approaches and that of this syllabus. First, if student are interested in the intersections where social studies of infrastructure on the one hand, and area studies, post/colonial studies, and “Global South” studies on the other, they can be referred to Gabrielle Hecht’s syllabus in 2019 Winter entitled “Infrastructure and Power in the Global South.”¹ Based on foundational scholars’ works in an initial week, Hecht’s syllabus shows a mixture of various topics in infrastructures in Global South areas such as Energy and water; Mobility; Racialized Knowledge Infrastructures; Security; Toxicity; City Shit; and Capital, Austerity, Debt. While some research works appear in common both in Hecht’s syllabus and this syllabus, the foci are different. Hecht aims to examine the specificities of diverse and infrastructural settings along with the global power dynamics, whereas this syllabus tries to show the inseparability of the mainstream STS concepts and methods from postcolonial perspectives, thus framing many concepts and middle-range theories through geopolitical and postcolonial lenses.²

The other syllabi are not up to date: one is Eden Medina’s syllabus in Spring 2011 entitled “Geographies of Technology,”³ and another is Kim TallBear’s one in also Spring 2011 entitled “Indigenous, Feminist, and Postcolonial Approaches to Science, Technology, and Environment.”⁴ Medina’s syllabus was focused more on the moves of technological artifacts and the involved actors and agencies than those of scientific knowledge and practices. While her syllabus attended to broad approaches from various disciplines, such as history, anthropology, sociology, geography, and science and technology studies, this

¹ https://www.academia.edu/37728377/Infrastructure_and_Power_in_the_Global_South.
² For discussions upon middle theories in STS, see the special issue of Science, Technology & Human Values in Vol. 32, No. 6, November, 2007, “Middle-Range Theories in Science and Technology Studies.”
syllabus is mainly concerned with postcolonialism-inflected concepts in social theories and STS.

Third, TallBear’s syllabus specifically attended to ten book-length canons of indigenous and postcolonial STS like *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon* by Paul Nadasdy (2003, Vancouver and Toronto: The University of British Columbia Press). In contrast, this syllabus aggregates a vast array of articles and chapters, reflecting the recent research outputs in the 2010s so as to help students get practical senses of how to design, conduct, and situate various kinds of postcolonial case studies of technosciences.

**Compact syllabi**

For anyone interested in postcolonial and decolonial approaches toward digital humanities, they can be referred to a syllabus entitled "De/Post/Colonial Digital Humanities," composed by Roopika Risam and micha cárdenas. It is not a syllabus set for a-semester-long course, but was intended for a five-days-long workshop during the Humanities Intensive Learning and Teaching (HILT) 2015, in the combination of hands-on experience and informed discussions. In addition, their syllabus has an ample amount of reading list and a well curated list of digital humanity projects from the post- and de-colonial perspectives. While the link to the syllabus file is broken, the Internet Archive has preserved the file as of 2015.

**List for wider publics including scientists and technologists**

Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, a "theoretical physicist specializing in early universe cosmology," compiled a reading list entitled "Decolonising Science Reading List" and has updated it. It is not strictly limited to postcolonial studies of science, but including general STS works like laboratory studies and non-Western history of science, philosophy of science, and Wikipedia articles. Her list will give a chance of putting yourself in scientists' shoes to see how scientists become sensitized by postcolonial and decolonial thoughts when it comes to seeing their own works in reflexive ways.

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5 https://dhtraining.org/hilt/course/depostcolonial-digital-humanities/.


8 https://medium.com/@chanda/decolonising-science-reading-list-339fb773d51f.
4. WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

16 WEEKS AT A GLANCE

Week 1: Introduction: who have put forward postcolonial technoscience studies?

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<th>WEEK</th>
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<td>PART I: KNOWLEDGE, ARTEFACTS, PRACTICES, BEING CIRCULATED, ACCREDITED, AND UNSETTLED: Cross-geographical, transnational STS (6+1 weeks)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Immutable mobiles I: concepts and revaluations of them in STS</td>
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<td>Immutable mobiles II: feminist, geographical, and postcolonial reflections</td>
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<td>Geographical sensibilities in STS</td>
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<td>“The same while being profoundly different” I: ontological politics of natures and indigenous practices and knowledge</td>
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<td>“The same while being profoundly different” II: natureculture, multi-naturalism, and cosmopolitics</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>PART II: POSTCOLONIZNG STS (3 weeks)</td>
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<td>Feminist, crip, and postcolonial science studies</td>
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<td>Asia as method, Provincializing STS, and Going South</td>
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<td>PART III: POSTCOLONIAL TECHNOSCIENCE (5 weeks)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Global systems, local grounds, postcolonial structures I: Global industrialism, globalized health science, environmental justice, and sustainability</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Global systems, local grounds, postcolonial structures II: Climate change, and the Anthropocene</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Race, Aboriginal and Indigenous STS, and “Melbourne-Deakin school”</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Settler colonialism and slavery: past and present</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Global development, Infrastructure, and Sociotechnical imaginaries of other pluriversal worlds</td>
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READINGS BY WEEK

Week 1: Introduction: who have put forward postcolonial technoscience studies?


*(Supplements)*


PART I: knowledge, artefacts, and practices, being circulated, accredited, and unsettled: Cross-geographical, transnational STS (6+1 weeks)

Week 2: Immutable mobiles I: concepts and revaluations of them in STS


(Supplements)


Week 3: Immutable mobiles II: feminist, geographical, and postcolonial reflections


Week 4: Geographical sensibilities in STS


Week 5: “the same while being profoundly different” I: Ontological politics of natures and indigenous practices and knowledge


(Supplements)


**Week 6: “the same while being profoundly different” II: Natureculture, multinaturalism, and cosmopolitics**


(Supplements)


**Week 7: Trading zones and contact zones**


Choose a topic among two and read the articles under that topic.

*(Topic I: Trading zones afterwards)*


*(Topic II: contact zones afterwards)*


Week 8: Reading week

**PART II: Postcolonizing STS (3 weeks)**

**Week 9: Feminist, crip, and postcolonial science studies**


Kafer, Alison. 2017. "Bodies of nature: The environmental politics of disability." in *Disability Studies and the Environmental Humanities. Toward an Eco-Crip*
Theory, Edited by Sarah Jaquette Ray and Jay Sibara, 201-241. Nebraska: Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska.


Choose a topic among the below four and read the articles under that topic.

(Topic I: Feminism, new materialism, and postcolonialism)


(Topic II: Disability studies from postcolonial perspectives)


(Topic III: Post-humanist postcolonialism)


Deckha, Maneesha. 2012. "Toward a postcolonial, posthumanist feminist theory: Centralizing race and culture in feminist work on nonhuman

**(Topic IV: Reproduction technology and postcolonialism)**


**Week 10: Postcolonial digital studies**


**Choose a topic among the below three and read the articles under that topic.**

**(Topic I: Engineering, automation and coloniality)**


**(Topic II: Agencies and global digital economy’s loop)**


**(Topic III: Data justice)**


**Week 11: Asia as method, Provincializing STS, and Going South**


(Supplements)


PART III: Postcolonial technoscience (5 weeks)

Week 12: Global systems, local grounds, postcolonial structures I: Global industrialism, Globalized health science, environmental justice, and sustainability

[NOTE] Your Term Paper Proposal should be electronically turned in by 23:59 at the day of Week 12 class. The mails are encouraged to be titled "[Postcolonial STS] Term paper proposal."


Choose a topic among the three below and read the articles within the topic.

(Topic I: global design, global knowledge)


(Topic II: colonial and non-Western medicine)


(Topic III: Global health)


Week 13: Global systems, local grounds, postcolonial structures II: Technology Transfer, Climate change, and the Anthropocene


(Topic I: Technology Transfer)


(Topic II: Climate change and the Anthropocene)


Week 14: Race, Aboriginal and Indigenous STS, and “Melbourne-Deakin school”


(Supplements)


Week 15: Settler colonialism and slavery: past and present


(Supplements)


Week 16: Global development, Infrastructure, and Sociotechnical imaginaries of other pluriversal worlds


(Supplements)


[NOTE 2] Your final term paper should be electronically turned in by 23:59 the four days before the end of semester. The mails are encouraged to be titled “[Postcolonial STS] Term paper.”