

# Technoscientific Bodies

PSCI 573, W 6:00-8:50PM

Professor Ali Kenner, [ali.kenner@gmail.com](mailto:ali.kenner@gmail.com)

Office: MacAlister 3025, Office hours: T/TH 12:30-2PM

## Course Description

This course examines how bodies have been rendered by science, technology, and medicine in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Course modules are organized around enduring and emerging concepts in STS – labor, populations, difference, information, cyborgs, species, and ethics. Through assigned readings, we will explore the theoretical and methodological traditions (in the social sciences and humanities) that investigate the body, getting a rich sense of the field of STS. We will work to question, de-tangle, and discuss contemporary technoscientific issues regarding bodies – dementia, reproductive technologies, virtual worlds, health risks, research ethics, and pharmaceuticalization – and how STS analysis lend insight into their dynamics.

The course will have four **learning outcomes**. You will:

1. Learn how understandings of the human body have been shaped by advancements in science and technology, as well as how the complexities and challenges presented by the body push these advancements.
2. Cultivate analytic acumen that is specific to the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS).
2. Develop an ability to discuss STS concepts across multiple readings.
3. Develop an understanding of how different disciplinary traditions within STS have approached the body.
4. Develop analytic writing skills in support of a literature review.

## Course Texts

[The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice by Annemarie Mol](#)

[Sick Building Syndrome and the Problem of Uncertainty by Michelle Murphy](#)

[The Alzheimer's Conundrum by Margaret Lock](#)

[Fluent Bodies: Ayurvedic Remedies for Postcolonial Imbalance by Jean Langford](#)

[How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics by Katherine Hayles](#)

All other course readings – a selection of articles and book chapters – will be provided electronically. Readings must be completed prior to the assigned class session. Be prepared to draw on reading assignments in various class activities.

## Grading

Class Participation	24%	(8 quizzes, 3 points each)
Concept Papers	50%	(5 annotations, 10 points each)
Final Paper	26%	

**Point breakdowns for grades:** 98-100 (A+); 93-97 (A); 90-92 (A-); 88-89 (B+); 83-87 (B); 80-82 (B-); 78-79 (C+); 73-77 (C); 70-72 (C-); 68-69 (D+); 63-67 (D); 60-62 (D-) Below 60 (F)

**Attendance is required. Unexcused absences will result in a five-point grade reduction per absence.**

<b>Course Assignments and Evaluation</b>
--

### **Active Class Participation**

Attendance is required, but attendance alone does not guarantee a high participation grade. The participation grade is based on the quality of participation in class discussions. How is class participation calculated? Class participation grades are based on the quality of your contribution to class discussion. That means being on topic and helping the class build understanding related to the weekly readings and broader course goals. Each class will start with a quiz. The quiz, in addition to our reading rubric, will inform class discussion. If you do well on the quiz, you earn points towards your class participation grade. If you do poorly on the quiz, you can still earn points towards your class participation grade for the week by contributing to the discussion in ways that are productive and generative.

Computers should be brought to class but should not be used without explicit permission. Other forms of digital communication are not allowed; use of digital communication devices during class will always result in a lower participation grade.

### **Assignments**

All assignments should be submitted electronically as double-spaced Word documents in 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. The heading of each paper should include the following information: Name, Assignment, Title, Date, Word Count. Title your file as follows before emailing it to me: Last name\_Assignment (For example, Kenner\_Annotation2)

Assignments must be turned in **by 12:00PM the day the assignment is due** to receive full credit. I do not accept late assignments unless accompanied by an excused absence. *Your grade is very dependent on meeting assignment deadlines throughout the term.* Details on what is expected in each assignment are provided below. You are responsible for maintaining electronic backup copies of your work. I also recommend reading and thinking about digital citizenship ([http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine\\_Elements.html](http://www.digitalcitizenship.net/Nine_Elements.html)).

### **Concept Papers (50%)**

Each annotation should be approximately 800-1000 words long, and should answer the following questions:

1. What is the main argument of the text?
2. Describe at least three ways that the main argument is supported.
3. Describe the main literatures that the text draws on and contributes to, and the particular contribution made by the text.
4. Describe at least three of the text's themes or topics that are of general interest in STS.
5. What three quotes capture the critical import of the text?

In-text citations are expected. You are free to do your annotations on any of the assigned reading.

### **Final Paper**

For the final paper I will distribute a list of questions to the class on Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup>. You will select one of the questions and write a 10-12 page response paper that addresses the question. The paper should draw on 4-5 of the seminar readings and should also draw on additional outside sources. Papers are due Friday March 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **Academic Policies**

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic honesty of the highest order is expected. It is not acceptable to submit work done for another class in this class, though it is acceptable to build on previous work. Talk to me if you have questions about this. Nor, of course, is it acceptable to submit work done by someone else as your own. Citations must be included for both indirect and direct quotation, providing clear documentation of sources. Special care must be taken to properly cite digital resources. Here is a useful review of plagiarism: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>. *If I am able to confirm plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty on any assignment in this course, you are likely to fail the entire course.* As Drexel students, you are responsible for reading and adhering to Drexel's Code of Conduct: [http://www.drexel.edu/studentlife/community\\_standards/studentHandbook/general\\_information/code\\_of\\_conduct/](http://www.drexel.edu/studentlife/community_standards/studentHandbook/general_information/code_of_conduct/)

### **Attendance**

Attendance is required. Unexcused absences will result in a five-point grade reduction for each unexcused absence. See Drexel's Academic Policy on absences, <http://drexel.edu/provost/policyweb/absence.html>

### **Grade Appeals**

You may appeal a grade through a written statement describing the grounds on which a change of grade should be considered appropriate. Grade appeals must be submitted within one-week of receiving the grade. Before initiating a formal appeal, feel free to talk to me. Please wait a minimum of 24-hours after receiving the grade before contacting me about a grade appeal.

### **Course Drop Policy**

See [http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/course\\_drop.asp](http://www.drexel.edu/provost/policies/course_drop.asp)

### **Course Change Policy**

As the instructor, I have the right to modify this syllabus at any time. I will solicit feedback from the class before any changes are made, and students will be notified in a timely manner both in class and via Drexel email.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Resources should inform me of their needs as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Resources is located at 3201 Arch Street, Suite 210. For more information, see <http://www.drexel.edu/oed/disabilityResources/>

## **Quarter Schedule**

Week 1 – January 8<sup>th</sup>

**Orientations + De/parted Bodies**

Reading Discussion: Joseph Dumit, "How I Read"  
Emily Martin (1992), "The End of the Body"  
Ian Hacking (2007), "Our Neo-Cartesian Bodies in Parts"

Week 2 – January 15<sup>th</sup>

**Multiplicities**

Reading Discussion: Annemarie Mol (2003), *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*

### **Concept Paper #1 Due**

Week 3 – January 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Making + Ordering Bodies**

Reading Discussion: Foucault (1966), From *The Order of Things* "The Human Sciences"  
Foucault (1975), From *Discipline and Punish* "The Body of the Condemned"  
Nikolas Rose (2001), "The Politics of Life Itself"  
Nikolas Rose (2007), "Molecular Biopolitics, Somatic Ethics, and the Spirit of Biocapital"

Week 4 – January 29<sup>th</sup>

**Body Ethics**

Reading Discussion: Margaret Lock (2012), *The Alzheimer's Conundrum*

**Concept Paper #2 Due**

Week 5 – February 5 <sup>th</sup>	Laboring Bodies
-----------------------------------	-----------------

Reading Discussion: Jean Langford (2002) *Fluent Bodies: Ayurvedic Remedies for Postcolonial Imbalance*

Week 6 – February 12 <sup>th</sup>	Worlding
------------------------------------	----------

Reading Discussion: Michelle Murphy (2006), *Sick Building Syndrome and the Problem of Uncertainty*

**Concept Paper #3 Due**

Week 7 – February 19 <sup>th</sup>	Cyborg Reading
------------------------------------	----------------

Reading Discussion: Katherine Hayles (1999), *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*

**Concept Paper #4 Due**

Week 8 – February 26 <sup>th</sup>	Tracing Difference
------------------------------------	--------------------

Reading Discussion: Selection from Hannah Landecker's (2010), *Culturing Life: How Cells Became Technologies*  
Selection from Anne Pollock's (2012), *Medicating Race: Heart Disease and Durable Preoccupations with Difference*  
Selection from Steven Epstein's (2007), *Inclusion: The Politics of Difference in Medical Research*

**Submit 1-page proposal for Final Paper**

Week 9 – March 5 <sup>th</sup>	Embodied Species
--------------------------------	------------------

Reading Discussion: Selection from Donna Haraway (1989) *Primate Visions*, "The Persistence of Vision," and "Remodeling the Human Way of Life: Sherwood Washborn and the New Physical Anthropology, 1950-1980"  
Myra Hird (2008), "Animal Trans"  
Karen Barad (2008), "Queer Causation and the Ethics of Mattering"

Recommended: Myra Hird (2009), "Feminist Engagements with Matter"

**Concept Paper #5 Due**

Week 10 – March 12 <sup>th</sup>	Informing Bodies
----------------------------------	------------------

Reading Discussion: TBD  
Class Review  
Presentations

**Final Paper Due March 14th**

## Class Discussion Questions

Each week you should come to class, having read the assigned material, with a sense of what discussion questions will be most relevant to each text. Persistent reflection on these questions will keep you prepared for quizzes and class discussion as well as help you plan your final paper.

- \* What is an exemplary STS text, and why?
- \* What are the different **disciplinary approaches** that inform STS? How is this realized methodologically, and what do different approaches offer and what are their limitations?
- \* What are the text's **prescriptive intentions** and how are they realized?
- \* How does the author deal with **complexity**?
- \* What **conceptual frameworks** does the author draw on and contribute to? What are the basic tenets of the framework, how is the framework used, what does it highlight and what does it omit?
- \* STS is known for dealing with **technoscientific knowledge formation and legitimation** -- think of discussion on "expertise," "epistemic communities," and "boundary objects." How does the text contribute to or resist this tradition?
- \* What kind of **feminist analysis** is being made in the text?
- \* How does the text describe **the practice and space of technoscience**? (Think about the differences between lab studies, clinics, and scholarship on environmental justice.)
- \* What concepts are used to describe the contemporary **political economic order**? (Globalization, informationalism, neoliberalism, post-industrialism, for example)
- \* How does the text explain the content and operation of **dominant ideological frameworks**? How do dominant ideologies work and how are oppositional frameworks conceived?
- \* How does the text conceive of **democracy** and technoscientific political process, if at all? What is the driving force of social movements and how is citizenship enacted?
- \* How does the author discuss **the broader impact of technoscience** on individuals, society, and culture writ large? How does technoscience have a broad impact, and how is power exercised through technoscience?
- \* How does **change** happen within the technosciences? What drivers of change are highlighted in the text? What impedes or shapes the direction of change? What is the role of individuals and organizations? What is the role of language, culture, economics, and politics?