This writing-intensive seminar explores questions of theory, method, and ethics in the anthropology of science and technology. How is biomedicine changing what it is to be human? How can technologies and scientific practices be studied ethnographically? How are the politics of difference linked to the production of scientific knowledge? Through close reading of ethnographic texts and engagement in fieldwork experience both on- and off-line, we will investigate how scientific practice and technological innovation reorganize various aspects of human life on both global and local scales. Topics include the social construction of scientific knowledge, the reproduction of racial categories in genomics, cultures of cyberspace, Facebook relationships, medical tourism, and the ways in which various technoscientific projects reshape natural and political orders in diverse locales.

The course also offers an opportunity to examine the craft of ethnographic research and writing in a critical fashion. We will develop techniques of comparison and abstraction in order to highlight important differences in research questions, theoretical frameworks, and methodological approaches. Each student will gain first-hand experience doing ethnographic research over the course of the semester.

Syllabus last updated November 1, 2015. Check the course website for the latest version.
READING MATERIALS

Articles are available online through Ares. Books are available on reserve at Olin Library.

Required Books:


Articles:

- Assigned articles are available through Ares (http://ares.wustl.edu/ares/).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Active Participation in Seminar Discussion (worth 20% of overall grade)

  Active participation is a crucial part of the seminar experience, and I expect each student to contribute substantively to our discussions every week. Attendance is therefore a necessary but not sufficient component of your participation grade. If you are already used to lively debate and argumentation, you will find yourselves getting the most out of the semester by drawing your quieter peers out in discussion.

  As part of the participation grade, each student will serve as the class rapporteur for one class session. This will involve taking careful notes during the session, revising them in narrative form, and then posting the final synthesis on the course website (http://anthropology4454.blogspot.com/) within one week. These rapporteurs' notes will serve as a cumulative record of the course to help enhance the continuity of our discussions.

- Course Blog (worth 20% of overall grade)

  As part of our inquiry into the ways in which technoscience shapes everyday life, each class participant will contribute to the course blog throughout the semester (http://anthropology4454.blogspot.com/). This blog will serve as a space for our personal reflections on course themes as well as our entry point into a shared intellectual community (both on- and off-line) with each other. This is also an experiment in participant-observation, a key hallmark of anthropological engagement. Writing on a
regular basis is the foundation of a writing-intensive course and you should update the blog on a regular basis (at least 2 times per week for 10 weeks of the semester, and more often if you feel inspired).

At least one weekly blog entry reflecting on the readings must be posted by 10 p.m. on the Wednesday before each class meeting. This weekly reflection post (~300 words) should analyze the key argument(s) of the readings. In other words, what is the author trying to convince you to believe or accept? What reasons or evidence does the author give for his or her claims, and how effective are they? Where does the reasoning break down or what things do not make sense? You should also situate the text(s) within the context of the course as a whole. How do the readings contribute to the main concepts and themes of the course? How do they compare (or contrast) to the ideas presented by previous readings? How has your thinking been altered by the reading(s)?

Ideas for other types of postings include:
1. Questions for class discussion.
2. Reflections on and reactions to class discussions and course topics.
3. Responses to your classmates' blog entries.
4. Excerpts from and links to relevant news stories, scholarly articles, images, videos, and other online material (together with a brief explanation of how these relate to course themes).
5. Ideas, field notes, analytical musings, and descriptive materials for your mini-ethnography projects.
6. Observations and comments on the blogging process and experiences with other forms of virtual mediation (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, text messaging, etc.)
7. Other creative uses are welcome! This blog should be a lively space for your personal reflections on course themes as well as your entry point into a shared intellectual community (both on- and off-line) with your colleagues.

Mini-Ethnography 1: Laboratory Cultures (worth 25% of overall grade)

In this assignment, you will engage in ethnographic fieldwork of your own by studying scientific culture in action. You have two options, both of which entail an initial survey followed by a more in-depth analysis of particular issues.

Option 1: Produce an ethnography of a laboratory.
Engage in at least one extended observation-participation session (1-2 hours) of a scientific laboratory. In addition to answering the basic questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how, try also to replicate key bits of conversations by taking careful notes on what people say. You should also follow up with at least one individual member of the group, in order to get a sense of this individual’s sense of identity and relationship with his/her chosen laboratory.

Option 2: Produce a life history of a scientist (or scientist-in-training).
Examine the role of science in your chosen scientist’s life. What narrative does your scientist tell about his or her life, and how does science figure in this life story? You
should do at least one extended interview (1-2 hours) with your scientist, and follow up with an additional session to probe deeper into issues raised in the first interview.

For both options, an initial page of field notes or interview notes is due September 17. A rough draft of your mini-ethnography is due October 1 for peer review. The final version (7-10 pages) is due October 22.

Peer Review (worth 5% of overall grade)

Each of you will be assigned the mini-ethnography of another student to review critically. The reviews will be double blind, meaning that neither the identities of the reviewers nor the authors will be revealed. You will be provided a manuscript review form to help guide your analysis. Your peer review is due on October 8.

Mini-Ethnography 2: Virtual Worlds (worth 25% of overall grade)

In this assignment, you will conduct participant-observation of an online virtual community. You should first survey your chosen group in their online virtual spaces of gathering (whether this is an online discussion forum, massively multiple online role-playing game [MMORPG], chat room, location in Second Life, etc.). In this initial survey, you should answer the basic questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how, paying particular attention to how the community creates and renews a distinct identity for itself as a coherent group. After determining what aspect of the community is most interesting to you (whether this entails the group’s hierarchical structure, the members’ dating practices, a culture of competitiveness, etc.), you should pursue this particular social aspect in greater depth by asking follow up questions with individual members or tracing the issue through several online spaces. A preliminary proposal is due at the beginning of class on November 5. A rough draft is due at the beginning of class on November 19. The final version (7-10 pages) is due December 10.

Class Presentation (worth 5% of overall grade)

Each student will prepare a 5 minute multimedia presentation to be given during the Class Conference on December 3. The presentation should summarize key data, arguments, and methodology of your second mini-ethnography on virtual worlds. Following your presentation, you will have 5 minutes to respond to questions and critiques from your instructor and classmates.
COURSE POLICIES

- **Late Policy**: All assignments (including response posts and drafts) are due on the scheduled day and time. Because the success of this course depends on prompt and mutual feedback at specific stages in the writing process, the rough drafts of the mini-ethnographies, the peer review, and presentation assignments must be completed on time in order to receive credit. For the other assignments, each day late without a pre-approved extension will result in the reduction of your grade by 1/3 of a letter.

- **Academic Integrity**: Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Undergraduate Student Academic Integrity Policy. The university's policy is available on the internet at [http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html](http://www.wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html). This includes explicit guidelines on avoiding plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work, words, or ideas without attribution. In all of your assignments, including your response posts and paper drafts, you must always make clear where you have borrowed from others by identifying the original source and extent of your use of another's work. This obligation holds whether the sources are published or unpublished and whether they are in print or on the internet. Plagiarism or other breaches of academic integrity will be reported to the academic integrity officer of the College of Arts and Sciences and can result in a failing grade for the course.

- **Academic Support Services and Disability Resources**: Cornerstone: The Center for Advanced Learning ([http://cornerstone.wustl.edu/](http://cornerstone.wustl.edu/)) is Washington University's official site for academic support services, including disability resources, writing help, and study skill workshops. Students seeking disability-related accommodations and guidance from the University must notify the Disability Resources staff at Cornerstone to make specific request for accommodation. Eligibility for accommodations is determined on an individual basis, must be supported by professional documentation, and must be renewed each semester.

- **PLEASE NOTE**: This syllabus is subject to change. Topics, readings, and assignments may be adjusted depending on class interest. It is your responsibility to check the course website and Ares regularly for announcements, guidelines, and updates.
SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSION TOPICS AND READINGS

Part I: Technoscientific Cultures

Session 1 (Aug 27): Introduction: Ethnographic Approaches to Technoscience

Session 2 (Sept 3): Becoming a Scientist
- Good, Byron. 1994. "How Medicine Constructs Its Objects." Ch. 3 in Medicine, Rationality, and Experience, pp. 65-87. [22 pp]

Session 3 (Sept 10): Laboratory Cultures

MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 1: Initial fieldnotes due at the beginning of class on Sept 17.

Session 4 (Sept 17): The Social Uses of DNA
- Computer Lab Session: Investigating Genetic Ancestry Testing Online

**Recommended for further study:**


**Session 5 (Sept 24): Technologies of Repair**


**Optional readings on the Bosnian community in St. Louis:**


**MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 1: Rough draft due at the beginning of class on Oct 1.**

**Session 6 (Oct 1): Biological Citizens and Social Suffering in the Aftermath of Catastrophe**


**Recommended for undergraduates, required for graduate students:**

MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 1: Peer review due at the beginning of class on Oct 8.

Session 7 (Oct 8): Transnational Circuits of Biomedical Technologies [~60 pp]

Please choose at least one of the following articles to read in addition to the above:

Session 8 (Oct 15): Indigenizing New Reproductive Technologies

Please choose at least one of the following articles to read in addition to the above:
MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 1: Final version due at the beginning of class on Oct 22.

Session 9 (Oct 22): The Anthropology of Science Fiction: Speculative Futures, Fan Cultures

Read at least 3 of the following selections:


MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 2: Proposal due at the beginning of class on November 5.

Session 10 (Oct 29): Virtual Ethnography and Online Research

Computer Lab Session: Constructing an Avatar in Second Life


Recommended for undergraduates, required for graduate students:


MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 2: Proposal due at the beginning of class on November 5.

Session 11 (Nov 5): Ethics, Privacy, and Accountability Online

Markham, Annette and Elizabeth Buchanan. 2012. "Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Recommendations from the Association of Internet Researchers"


FILM: Terms and Conditions May Apply. 2013. Directed by Cullen Hoback.

Session 12 (Nov 12): Cybersociality, Informatic Subjecthood, and Intimacy Online


 MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 2: Rough draft due at the beginning of class on November 19.

Session 13 (Nov 19): Second Lives and Virtual Economies


November 25-29: Thanksgiving Break – No Classes

Session 14 (Dec 3): Class Conference [STUDENT PRESENTATIONS]

 MINI-ETHNOGRAPHY 2: Final version due by 4:00pm on December 10.