

**GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**HTS 6123/LCC 8803: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES OF BIOMEDICINE**

Semester: Fall 2012

Day/Time: Tuesdays 3-6 PM

Room: Old Civil Engineering Room 104

**Instructor:** Anne Pollock, PhD

**Instructor:** Jennifer S. Singh, PhD, MPH

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a doctoral seminar that explores current scholarship in the social and cultural studies of science, technology and biomedicine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Although many of the themes we will address have a long history, the emphasis will be on recent interdisciplinary scholarship of current conditions, drawn principally from sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies. Objects of attention range in scale from molecules to personhood to environments of risk, and the texts for this course attend to diverse contexts of laboratory practices, clinical encounters, patient social movements and broader social debates. After an introduction to theories of biomedicalization, units will focus on issues raised in key areas: genetics, neuroscience, and circulation and tissues. This graduate seminar will explore what becomes of *power, knowledge, and expertise*, and their relationships to one another, under contemporary transformative conditions.

**Objectives:**

- Deepen awareness of and think critically about social and cultural contexts of contemporary biomedical research;
- Compare and contrast key theoretical engagements in biomedicine from diverse interdisciplinary perspectives;
- Hone skills in communicating about these issues of vital import, orally and in short and long written form.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1: Aug. 21, 2012**

Introduction to the course.

## **UNIT 1: BIOMEDICALIZATION AND BIOLOGICAL CITIZENSHIP**

### **Week 2: Aug. 28, 2012**

Clarke, A. et al. (2010) *Biomedicalization: Technoscience, Health and Illness in the U.S.* Durham: Duke University Press (Part 1 only)

### **Week 3: Sept. 4, 2012**

Rose, N. (2007). *The Politics of Life Itself*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

### **Week 4: Sept. 11, 2012**

Petryna, A. (2001). *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens After Chernobyl*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

## **UNIT 2: GENES**

### **Week 5: Sept. 18, 2012**

Thacker, E. (2005). *The Global Genome: Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

### **Week 6: Sept. 25, 2012**

Montoya, M. (2011). *Making the Mexican Diabetic: Race, Science, and the Genetics of Inequality*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

### **Week 7: Oct. 2, 2012**

Franklin, S. and Celia Roberts (2006) *Born and Made: An Ethnography of Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

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### **Week 8: Oct. 9, 2012**

Paper proposal workshop day

### **Week 9: Oct. 16, 2012**

Fall Break

### **UNIT 3: BRAINS**

**Week 10: Oct. 23, 2012**

Dumit, J. (2004). *Picturing Personhood: Brain scans and Biomedical Identity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

**Week 11: Oct. 30, 2012**

Wilson, E. (2004). *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

**Week 12: Nov. 6, 2012**

Silverman, C. (2012). *Understanding Autism: Parents, Doctors, and the History of a Disorder*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

### **UNIT 4: CIRCULATION AND TISSUES**

**Week 13: Nov. 13, 2012**

Mol, A. (2002). *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*. Durham: Duke University Press.

**Week 14: Nov. 20, 2012**

Pollock, A. (2012). *Medicating Race: Heart Disease and Durable Preoccupations with Difference*. Durham: Duke University Press.

**Week 15: Nov. 27, 2012**

Waldby, C. and Mitchell, R. (2006) *Tissue Economies: Blood, Organs, and Cell Lines in Late Capitalism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

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**Week 16: Dec. 4, 2012**

Final Paper Due

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**1. Participation (20%):** This course is designed as a seminar in which participation from all students is necessary if everyone is to profit; the benefits of this class come from talking as much as listening. It is expected that the readings will be prepared fully and carefully by each participant. A portion of the final grade will be based on the quality and appropriately relevant frequency of participation.

**2. Critical Reviews (one each week) (30%):** All students in the course will share responsibility for preparing critical reviews for each of the required readings, which are intended to help you help each other grasp the ideas and implications of the readings. Each student is required to complete one critical review each week. Components of these reviews must include: (a) a summary of the theoretical position of the author and her/his core points and arguments; (b) brief reflections on how it relates to readings encountered earlier in the course (e.g., theoretically consonant—if so, how; in disagreement—if so, how; elaboration of another’s argument; etc.); (c) two thoughtful questions that you would like to address to the class based on the review. Critical Reviews might also include some reflection about how the reading at hand relates to the student’s larger research project, whether for this class or more broadly. Reviews should be 1-2 pages.

The critical reviews will be written in blog format and are due by 11 am every Tuesday based on the assigned readings. No late blogs accepted. By having prepared a response to the material in advance and sharing your evaluations with the rest of the class, it is our hope that you will be better prepared to engage in productive class discussions and that you will gain more from each other’s analyses than you would otherwise. We will be looking for clear intellectual engagement with the materials, coherent examination of the topic, and thoughtful, relevant discussion questions.

**3. Final Paper (proposal 10%, final paper 40%):** Length of paper should be 12-15 text pages, *excluding* title page, references, and the like. Potential topics can be chosen from the Clarke et al. edited volume Part 2, or another topic according to individual student interest. The focus of the paper will be to address your chosen topic through engagement with the arguments of the readings in the course. The paper must articulate a central question or set of questions that will serve to orient and focus the paper (as opposed to simply doing a literature review on a health topic or theoretical discussion of a general theme). The intent of the paper should be to critically assess the literature, engage it at a theoretical level, and develop and articulate your own theoretical positions and arguments.

For this final paper, students are encouraged to think strategically, to consider whether portions of comprehensive exams, explorations of potential research questions, or sections of dissertation proposals can be worked into a paper for this class.

A 1-2 page proposal for your topic is due during the middle of the semester (Oct. 9, 2012). It should include the topic of your choice and at least three annotated sources that you will be using for your paper. If you choose a topic from Clarke et al., that chapter can be one of your sources.

## COURSE EVALUATION

		<u>Calculate your grade</u>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>(your grade)(.20) = a</b>
<b>Critical Reviews</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>(your grade)(.30) = b</b>
<b>Paper Proposal</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>(your grade)(.10) = c</b>
<b>Final Paper</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>(your grade)(.40) = d</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>(a+b+c+d) = your grade</b>

**Course grade: 90-100=A 80-89=B 70-79=C 60-69=D Lower than 60=F**

## ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

All students are required to abide by the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. Based on the [Graduate Addendum to the Academic Honor Code](#): Scholarly misconduct refers to misconduct that occurs in research and scholarly activities outside of the classroom. The following definitions are taken from the Institute Policy on Scholarly Misconduct:

\* "Misconduct" or "scholarly misconduct" is the fabrication of data, plagiarism, or other practice that seriously deviates from those that are commonly accepted within the academic or research community for proposing, conducting, or reporting research or scholarly activity. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretation or judgments of data.

\* "Plagiarism" is the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages of his or her writings, or language or ideas of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. It involves the deliberate use of any outside source without proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism is scholarly misconduct whether it occurs in any work, published or unpublished, or in any application for funding.

All graduate students are encouraged to become familiar with this policy, which is available from the Office of the Dean of Students.

## ACCOMODATIONS

Students with disabilities needing reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Office of the Dean of Students, ADAPTS Disability Services Program is available to assist us with the reasonable accommodations process. More information at: <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/index.php>.

## **POLICIES FOR WRITTEN WORK**

All written papers are to be typed, double-spaced, using 12-pt. Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins, and must include page numbers, proper use of citations, and bibliographies.

Late assignments: Late assignments will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late, as follows: grades for papers submitted up to 24 hrs late will be reduced by one-third (e.g., from A-to B+); 24-48 hrs late, by two-thirds of a grade (e.g., from A-to B); 48-72 hrs late, by a full grade; and so on.

If you have a personal or family emergency and are unable to complete an assignment, you must speak with us as soon as possible so we can discuss how and when you will complete the assignment. **Do not assume that you may hand in all of your assignments at the end of the course, or that you will be granted an extension.**

### **Research/Writing Resources at Georgia Tech:**

<http://libguides.gatech.edu/research>: This guide will help you learn how to conduct research, how to write well, and how to avoid plagiarism by citing your sources.

The Communication Center at Clough Commons also provides tutoring in communication-related assignments or projects regardless of discipline. The CommLab is located on the 4th floor of the Clough Commons:

<http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/>

For international students, there is a writing center that will help you with your written reports. Please see the Language Institute about writing services:

<http://www.esl.gatech.edu/esl/communication-center>

### **Noteworthy Journals for STS of Biomedicine:**

[Social Studies of Science](#)

[Science, Technology and Human Values](#)

[BioSocieties](#)

[Body & Society](#)

[Science as Culture](#)

[Technology and Culture](#)

[Science and Public Policy](#)