

Comparative Studies 367.02
Autumn 2004

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Instructor: Alana Kumbier
Mailbox: Dulles 308
Phone: 292-2559 | Email: kumbier.1@osu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment;
Please email me to set up a meeting time

Purpose of the Course

This course is designed to help you further develop critical thinking, writing and information literacy skills through the careful consideration and discussion of course texts, and through the completion of critical writing exercises and assignments. In meeting these objectives, we will survey provocative sites in the field of cultural studies of science and technology, focusing on integrated analyses of the following issues:

- The relationships between American scientific practices and cultural understandings of racial difference
- The deployment of eugenic and genetic arguments in American scientific and cultural contexts & the ramifications of these arguments
- The ways in which Americans are using enhancement technologies, the relationships between these technologies and our sense of identity (national and personal), as well as the moral, ethical, and philosophical issues that are posed by the application of these technologies.

Course Requirements

1. **Participation.** For the purpose of this class, participation is defined as the practice of making productive, relevant contributions to class discussion *while also* listening to and respecting others' contributions. Talking a lot without engaging with the readings will not raise your participation grade; demonstrating your engagement with course texts and issues, with your fellow classmates, and practicing attentive listening to others will result in a strong participation grade.
2. **Reading/Preparing for discussion.** In order to participate meaningfully in class discussion, you will need to **complete the reading(s) for each class *before* coming to class.** As you read, try to articulate an opinion, a question, or a response to the reading(s) under consideration. Expect the readings to challenge you. Many of the essays and books we will read are written for academic audiences, and will use terminology with which you may be unfamiliar. I expect you to notify me or raise questions in class if there are aspects of the reading that you do not understand.

3. **Attendance.** Because participation is integral to the success of our class, attendance is mandatory. For the purpose of this class, “attendance” means coming to class on time and remaining in class for the duration of the class meeting. You are allowed two unexcused absences (no questions asked). After that, each absence will result in the deduction of 5% of your final grade. If you have a documented reason for missing class, please let me know, and I will excuse your absence.
4. **Focus group presentation (1).** Once during the quarter, you will work with a small group to facilitate discussion about a specific section of the Eugenics Archive web site. Your group will be responsible for presenting your section to the class. You will be evaluated based upon the following criteria: your preparedness; evidence of your collaboration; the significance of your discussion to the course themes and issues; and the (brief) individual evaluation you will write after the presentation.
5. **Exercises (3).** These short (1-2 page) exercises are designed to allow you to practice specific composition skills like summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and developing a thesis statement for your critical response paper.
6. **WebCT Response Posts (3).** Three times during the quarter, you will be expected to write an informal response to one or more of the course texts, to class discussion, and/or to a current event or an example drawn from a relevant personal experience and to post that response on the WebCT discussion boards. Each post should be approximately 250 words long. *I encourage you to use these posts to converse with each other and to respond to each other’s thoughts, ideas, and opinions.*
7. **Papers (2).** There will be one midterm paper and one final paper. The first paper (4-5 pages) will be based on course texts, the second (8-10 pages) will be a research paper on a topic of your choice that is also relevant to the course themes.
8. **Proposal and Annotated Bibliography.** I will ask you to submit a one-paragraph proposal for your final research paper, as well as a list of five potential sources (with annotations)

Final grade breakdown

Grades will be determined using the following criteria and percentages:

Participation and attendance: 15%

Group Facilitation: 5%

Three short exercises: 15% (total)

WebCT response posts: 15% (total)

Critical response paper: 15%

Proposal & Annotated Bibliography: 10%

Final research paper: 25%

Disabilities

If you feel you need an accommodation based on the impact of an impairment or disability, please contact me privately as soon as possible. I will be happy to work with the office of Disability Services to coordinate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you want to contact the office of Disability Services, you can visit 150 Pomerene Hall or call 292-3307.

Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own, and/or the undocumented, unacknowledged use of quoted or paraphrased work by another person. In accordance with university policy, all cases of suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. Please ask me for clarification if you have questions about plagiarism, and/or read chapter X of *Everything's An Argument*.

Required Texts

Course texts are available at SBX; you might check the OhioLINK and Columbus public library system for the Bérubé and Elliott books if you don't want to purchase them. All books should be available used at online booksellers as well.

* Articles are available on WebCT for you to download & print out

Bérubé, Michael. *Life As We Know It: A Father, A Family, and an Exceptional Child*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

Elliott, Carl. *Better Than Well: American Medicine Meets the American Dream*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003.

Lunsford, Andrea A. and John J. Ruskiewicz. *Everything's an Argument*. 3rd Ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004. [Noted as EAN in schedule]

Daily Schedule

9/23 R	Introduction to the course; syllabus review
9/28 T	* Orwell, "What is Science?" Recommended: Start reading for Thursday.
9/30 R	<i>Everything's An Argument</i> (EAN), ch. 1, 2
Arguments about race and difference	
10/5 T	Exercise 1 due in class *Gould, "American Polygeny and Craniometry Before Darwin"
10/7 R	Screening: <i>Race: The Power of an Illusion</i> , Episode 2

10/12 T	<p>Exercise 2 due in class</p> <p>*Teslow, “Reifying Race”</p>
10/14 R	<p>Class cancelled – I will be at a conference in Chicago</p> <p>Please take this opportunity to get a start on the reading for next week, or to start working on your critical response paper.</p>
10/19 T	<p>Exercise 3 due in class</p> <p>*Hammond, “New Technologies of Race”</p> <p>*Duster, “Buried Alive: The Concept of Race in Science”</p>
10/21 R	<p>Screening: <i>Race: The Power of an Illusion</i>, Episode 1</p> <p>Please browse the media postings on the RaceSci website, choose an article or two to read, and be prepared to discuss your readings with the class.</p> <p>URL: http://www.racesci.org/in_media/index.html</p>
10/26 T	<p>Peer editing session: Bring your paper draft to class</p>
10/28 R	<p>Library instruction (no readings assigned)</p>
10/29 FRI	<p>CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER DUE, 12 p.m., Dulles 308</p>
<p>Eugenic/Genetic Arguments</p>	
11/2 T	<p>* Gould, “Carrie Buck’s Daughter”</p>
11/4 R	<p>Eugenics Archive presentations – Groups 1, 2, 3</p>
11/9 T	<p>Eugenics Archive presentations – Groups 4, 5, 6</p>
11/11 R	<p>Holiday – no class</p>

11/16 T	Bérubé, <i>Life as We Know It</i> Chapters 1 & 2: “Genetic Destiny,” “Humans Under Construction”
11/18 R	Bérubé, <i>Life as We Know It</i> Chapter 5: “Bragging and Rights”
11/23 T	Proposal & Annotated Bibliography due in class Screening: <i>Sound and Fury: The Communication Wars of the Deaf</i>
11/25 R	Holiday – no class
Enhancement Technologies	
11/30 T	Elliott, <i>Better Than Well</i> Chapters 1 & 2
12/2 R	Elliott, <i>Better Than Well</i> Chapters 8, 9, 10, Conclusion (choose 2 of 4 to read for class)
12/3 F	Optional peer editing session Wexner Center Café, 2 – 3 p.m.
12/7 T	FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE, 12 Noon, Dulles 308