

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

The Program in Science, Technology, and Society (STS) focuses on the ways in which scientific, technological, and social factors interact to shape modern life. The program brings together humanists, social scientists, engineers, and natural scientists, all committed to transcending the boundaries of their disciplines in a joint search for new insights and new ways of reaching science and engineering students. The goal of the program is to set up a forum to explore the relationship between what scientists and engineers do and the constraints, needs, and responses of society.

Located in a major university where most people study science and engineering, STS is dedicated to understanding the context of science and engineering.

Undergraduate Study

MIT students are increasingly seeking to understand the social and historical contexts in which they will work and the social consequences of what they will do in their professional careers. STS subjects help them think realistically and creatively about the intellectual, moral, political, and social issues raised by the rapid growth of science and technology in the 20th century and beyond.

STS contributes to undergraduate education at MIT in several ways. It offers general subjects to introduce students to broad social and intellectual perspectives on science and engineering fields. It also offers more specialized subjects in the history of science and technology and in social and cultural studies of science and technology. Within each of these categories, students can choose both introductory and more advanced subjects.

STS as a Second Major

Students who wish to integrate their professional study of engineering or science with a rigorous treatment of its relation to social and historical forces may pursue STS as a second major (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/science-technology-society-sts>) in cooperation with the Schools of Engineering and Science. The object of this program is to give those students the full technical and scientific education provided by a science or engineering major, balanced with intensive study of the historical and social contexts of science and technology. Double major applications from students in other schools (e.g., Architecture and Planning; Management; Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences) will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students in the double major program must complete all the requirements of both majors. The STS requirements include 13 subjects as follows:

- STS.004 Intersections: Science, Technology, and the World
- At least one STS Tier I subject (<http://sts-program.mit.edu/academics/undergraduate/tier-i-subjects>), in addition to STS.004
- At least one STS Tier II subject (<http://sts-program.mit.edu/academics/undergraduate/tier-ii-subjects>)
- Four other STS subjects
- Four subjects related to the historical and social study of science and technology
- STS.THT Undergraduate Thesis Tutorial
- STS.THU Undergraduate Thesis

If a student's other major also requires a thesis, students may coordinate their thesis effort, pending approval of undergraduate officers in both majors. Further details on the requirements of the STS program may be obtained from the STS undergraduate academic officer and the STS academic administrator.

Joint Degree Programs

Students who wish to integrate studies in STS and science or engineering in the context of a single degree should consider this program. It leads to one degree, either a Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Science or a Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Engineering. The STS requirement for either degree is 9 subjects as follows:

- STS.004 Intersections: Science, Technology, and the World
- At least one STS Tier I subject (<http://sts-program.mit.edu/academics/undergraduate/tier-i-subjects>), in addition to STS.004
- At least one STS Tier II subject (<http://sts-program.mit.edu/academics/undergraduate/tier-ii-subjects>)
- Four other STS subjects
- STS.THT Undergraduate Thesis Tutorial
- STS.THU Undergraduate Thesis

Consult the 21E (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/humanities-engineering-course-21e>) and 21S (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/humanities-science-course-21s>) degree charts for details on the requirements for these joint degrees. Further details may be obtained from the SHASS Dean's Office (hass-www@mit.edu), Room 4-240, and the STS academic administrator.

Minor in Science, Technology, and Society

The goal of the minor program is to give students a broad social perspective on the fields of engineering and science: how they have evolved and how they fit into the wider context of society, culture, politics, and values.

The Minor in Science, Technology, and Society consists of six STS subjects, including STS.004, at least one additional subject from the Tier I list, and at least one subject from the Tier II list.

Tier I		
STS.004	Intersections: Science, Technology, and the World ¹	12
<i>Select one of the following:</i>		12
STS.001	Technology in American History	
STS.002	Finance and Society	
STS.003	Ancient Greeks to Modern Geeks: A History of Science	
STS.005[J]	Data and Society	
STS.006[J]	Bioethics	
STS.008	Technology and Experience	
STS.009	Evolution and Society	
STS.011	Engineering Life: Biotechnology and Society	
STS.012[J]	Science in Action: Technologies and Controversies in Everyday Life	
STS.014	Embodied Education: Past, Present, Future	
Tier II ²		
Select one subject from the list of Tier II subjects		9-12
Electives		
Select three additional subjects from among Tiers I and II		27-36
Total Units		60-72

¹ Substitution with a similar subject may be permitted by petition to the STS Undergraduate Officer.

² See list of Tier II subjects (<http://sts-program.mit.edu/academics/undergraduate/tier-ii-subjects>).

Graduate Study

In collaboration, STS, the History Faculty, and the Anthropology Program offer a doctoral program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society (HASTS).

The objective of the program is to develop advanced competence in the study of science and technology from a historical and social scientific perspective. Students are expected to develop professional mastery of a field of history or one of the social sciences. They must also master the underlying concepts in science and engineering that relate to their special field of interest.

Graduate students are required to take at least 10 subjects and usually complete them within their first two years. In addition, students must complete STS.840 HASTS Professional Perspective. Normally, all students take the following required introductory seminars in their first year:

21A.859[J]	Social Theory and Analysis	12
21H.991	Theories and Methods in the Study of History	12
STS.260	Introduction to Science, Technology, and Society	12

Students are encouraged to take 21A.809 Designing Empirical Research in the Social Sciences or 21A.819 Ethnographic Research Methods at some point in their program. To fulfill the remaining subject requirement, students choose from among several departmental seminars designed to offer more in-depth study of particular topics. They may also take subjects offered by other MIT departments and through cross-registration with Harvard.

Students enrolled in the PhD program have the option to earn a SM in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Society (HASTS) en route to the PhD by satisfactorily completing first year requirements, submitting a master's thesis, and completing six subjects (72 units) including the three required seminars above.

Upon the satisfactory completion of coursework, program milestones, and general examinations — normally all to be completed by the third year — students proceed to independent dissertation research and dissertation writing with the mentorship and guidance of a multidisciplinary dissertation committee.

Students from any academic discipline are invited to apply to the doctoral program.

Inquiries

Visit the website for additional information about the HASTS graduate program (<http://web.mit.edu/hasts>) or contact the STS academic administrator (<https://sts-program.mit.edu/contact>), Room E51-163, 617-253-9759.

Faculty and Teaching Staff

Kate Brown, PhD

Thomas M. Siebel Distinguished Professor in the History of Science
Interim Head, Program in Science, Technology, and Society

Professors

Michael M. J. Fischer, PhD

Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities
Professor of Science and Technology Studies
Professor of Anthropology

David I. Kaiser, PhD

Germeshausen Professor of the History of Science
Professor of Physics
(On leave, spring)

Jennifer S. Light, PhD
Bern Dibner Professor of the History of Science and Technology
Professor of Urban Studies and Planning

Kenneth R. Manning, PhD
Thomas Meloy Professor of Rhetoric
Professor of Science, Technology, and Society

Chakanetsa Mavhunga, PhD
Professor of Science, Technology, and Society

Eden Medina, PhD
Professor of Science, Technology, and Society

David A. Mindell, PhD
Frances and David Dibner Professor in the History of Engineering and
Manufacturing
Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics

Merritt Roe Smith, PhD
Leverett Howell Cutten '07 and William King Cutten '39 Professor of
the History of Technology
Professor of History

Sherry R. Turkle, PhD
Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor of the Social Studies of Science
and Technology

Associate Professors

Dwaipayan Banerjee, PhD
Associate Professor of Science, Technology, and Society
Associate Professor of Anthropology
(On leave, fall)

William Deringer, PhD
Associate Professor of Science, Technology, and Society

Robin Scheffler, PhD
Associate Professor of Science, Technology, and Society

Assistant Professors

Eli Nelson, PhD
Ford Career Development Assistant Professor of Science, Technology,
and Society

Oliver E. Rollins, PhD
Assistant Professor of Science, Technology, and Society

Ishani Saraf, PhD
Assistant Professor of Science, Technology, and Society

Professors of the Practice

Michael John Gorman, PhD
Professor of the Practice of Science, Technology, and Society

Professors Emeriti

Louis L. Bucciarelli Jr, PhD
Professor Emeritus of Engineering and Technology Studies

Deborah K. Fitzgerald, PhD
Professor Emerita of Science, Technology, and Society

Loren Graham, PhD
Professor Emeritus of the History of Science

Theodore A. Postol, PhD
Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology, and National Security
Policy

Eugene B. Skolnikoff, PhD
Professor Emeritus of Political Science
Professor Emeritus of Science, Technology, and Society

Rosalind H. Williams, PhD
Professor Emerita of Science, Technology, and Society

Undergraduate Subjects

Tier I Subjects

STS.001 Technology in American History

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

A survey of America's transition from a rural, agrarian, and artisan society to one of the world's leading industrial powers. Treats the emergence of industrial capitalism: the rise of the factory system; new forms of power, transport, and communication; the advent of the large industrial corporation; the social relations of production; and the hallmarks of science-based industry. Views technology as part of the larger culture and reveals innovation as a process consisting of a range of possibilities that are chosen or rejected according to the social criteria of the time.

D. A. Mindell

STS.002 Finance and Society

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Examines finance as a social technology intended to improve economic opportunity by moving capital to where it is most needed. Surveys the history of modern finance, from medieval Italy to the Great Depression, while addressing credit, finance and state (and imperial) power, global financial interconnection, and financial crises. Explores modern finance (since about 1950) from a variety of historical and social-scientific perspectives, covering quant finance, financialization, the crisis of 2007-2008, and finance in the digital age. Enrollment limited.

*W. Deringer***STS.003 Ancient Greeks to Modern Geeks: A History of Science**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Covers the development of major fields in the physical and life sciences, from 18th-century Europe through 20th-century America. Examines ideas, institutions, and the social settings of the sciences, with emphasis on how cultural contexts influence scientific concepts and practices.

*W. Deringer, D. I. Kaiser***STS.004 Intersections: Science, Technology, and the World**

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Exposes students to multidisciplinary studies in Science, Technology, and Society (STS), using four case studies to illustrate a broad range of approaches to basic principles of STS studies. Case studies vary from year to year, but always include a current MIT event. Other topics are drawn from legal and political conflicts, and arts and communication media. Includes guest presenters, discussion groups, field activities, visual media, and a practicum style of learning. Enrollment limited.

*D. Fitzgerald***STS.005[] Data and Society**

Same subject as 11.155[], IDS.057[]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Introduces students to the social, political, and ethical aspects of data science work. Designed to create reflective practitioners who are able to think critically about how collecting, aggregating, and analyzing data are social processes and processes that affect people.

*E. Medina, S. Williams***STS.006[] Bioethics**

Same subject as 24.06[]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 24.06[].

*R. Scheffler***STS.008 Technology and Experience**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Introduces the "inner history" of technology: how it affects intimate aspects of human experience from sociological, psychological and anthropological perspectives. Topics vary, but may include how the internet transforms our experience of time, space, privacy, and social engagement; how entertainment media affects attention, creativity, aesthetics and emotion; how innovations in wearable and textile technologies reshape notions of history and identity; how pharmaceuticals reshape identity, mood, pain, and pleasure. Includes in-class discussion of readings, short written and multimedia assignments, final project. Enrollment limited.

Staff

STS.009 Evolution and Society

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Provides a broad conceptual and historical introduction to scientific theories of evolution and their place in the wider culture. Embraces historical, scientific and anthropological/cultural perspectives grounded in relevant developments in the biological sciences since 1800 that are largely responsible for the development of the modern theory of evolution by natural selection. Students read key texts, analyze key debates (e.g. Darwinian debates in the 19th century, and the creation controversies in the 20th century) and give class presentations.

*J. Durant, R. Scheffler***STS.011 Engineering Life: Biotechnology and Society**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Provides instruction in the history of humanity's efforts to control and shape life through biotechnology, from agriculture to gene editing. Examines the technologies, individuals and socio-economic systems that are associated with such efforts, as well as the impact that these efforts have on society and science as a whole. Explores these issues with particular attention to the development of the modern biotechnology industry in the Greater Boston area. Includes a field trip.

*R. W. Scheffler***STS.012[J] Science in Action: Technologies and Controversies in Everyday Life**

Same subject as WGS.120[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores a range of controversies about the role of technology, the nature of scientific research and the place of politics in science: debates about digital piracy and privacy, the role of activism in science, the increasingly unclear boundaries between human and non-human, the role of MRIs as courtroom evidence, the potential influence of gender on scientific research, etc. Provides exposure to science in a dynamic relation with social life and cultural ideas. Materials draw from humanities and social science research, ethnographic fieldwork, films and science podcasts, as well as from experimental multimedia. Enrollment limited.

*D. Banerjee***STS.014 Embodied Education: Past, Present, Future**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Discusses recent scientific and educational research that finds that the human body in motion is a medium for learning. Explores how and why physical education was integrated into the US educational system while remaining separate from academic subjects — and how and why 21st-century institutions might combine the two. Weekly in-lecture labs demonstrate how exercise can inform academic instruction and invite students to create future curricula. Students who enroll in this class may receive both HASS-S credit for it and may enroll to earn two Physical Education and Wellness (PE&W) points. Limited to 20.

*J. S. Light, DAPER Instructors***Tier II Subjects****STS.021[J] Science Activism: Gender, Race, and Power**

Same subject as WGS.160[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-E

See description under subject WGS.160[J].

*E. Bertschinger***STS.022[J] Gender, Race, and Environmental Justice**

Same subject as 21A.407[J], 21G.057[J], WGS.275[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Provides an introduction to the analysis of gender in science, technology, and environmental politics from a global perspective. Familiarizes students with central objects, questions, and methods in the field. Examines existent critiques of the racial, sexual and environmental politics at stake in techno-scientific cultures. Draws on material from popular culture, media, fiction, film, and ethnography. Addressing specific examples from across the globe, students also explore different approaches to build more livable environments that promote social justice. Taught in English. Limited to 18.

B. Stoetzer

STS.023[J] Science, Gender and Social Inequality in the Developing World

Same subject as WGS.226[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

See description under subject WGS.226[J].

*A. Sur***STS.024[J] Thinking on Your Feet: Dance as a Learning Science (New)**

Same subject as CMS.524[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Explores the past, present, and future of dance as a learning science. Combines readings and discussion with experiential learning. Readings span the science of movement and learning, studies of educational dance, and research on school reform. Lab exercises led by guest artists introduce the rich possibilities of dance for teaching subjects across the curriculum. For their final project, students choreograph a lesson on a topic of their choosing. This is an introductory class; no dance background is required. Limited to 20 students.

*J. S. Light***STS.025[J] Making the Modern World: The Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective**

Same subject as 21H.285[J]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Global survey of the great transformation in history known as the "Industrial Revolution." Topics include origins of mechanized production, the factory system, steam propulsion, electrification, mass communications, mass production and automation. Emphasis on the transfer of technology and its many adaptations around the world. Countries treated include Great Britain, France, Germany, the US, Sweden, Russia, Japan, China, and India. Includes brief reflection papers and a final paper.

*M. R. Smith***STS.026 History of Manufacturing in America**

Subject meets with STS.425

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Introductory survey of fundamental innovations and transitions in American manufacturing from the colonial period to the mid-twentieth century. Primary emphasis on textiles and metalworking, with particular attention to the role of the machine tool industry in the American manufacturing economy. Students taking graduate version are expected to explore the material in greater depth.

*M. R. Smith***STS.027[J] The Civil War and the Emergence of Modern America: 1861-1890**

Same subject as 21H.205[J]

Subject meets with STS.427

Prereq: Permission of instructor

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Using the American Civil War as a baseline, considers what it means to become "modern" by exploring the war's material and manpower needs, associated key technologies, and how both influenced the United States' entrance into the age of "Big Business." Readings include material on steam transportation, telegraphic communications, arms production, naval innovation, food processing, medicine, public health, management methods, and the mass production of everything from underwear to uniforms – all essential ingredients of modernity. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

*M. R. Smith***STS.028 Seven Wonders of the Engineering World**

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Uses case studies to take a broad-ranging look at seven major engineering achievements in world history. Examines the nature of engineering as a source of knowledge production/application, how it reflects the cultural settings in which it emerges, and how it changes as it enters different cultural and economic settings. Includes weekly reflection papers. Achievements covered vary from term to term. Limited to 20.

M. R. Smith

STS.030 Forensic History: Problem Solving into the Past

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores new pathways to use the latest science and technologies to understand the past. Working like detectives, students draw on research methods from such fields as climate science, geology, molecular biology, proteomics, DNA testing, carbon dating and big data analysis to invent their own forensic historical research techniques. They also study new narrative forms to accompany novel research techniques. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication provided. Enrollment limited.

*K. Brown***STS.031[] Environment and History**

Same subject as 12.386[], 21H.185[]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

See description under subject 21H.185[]. Enrollment limited.

*K. Brown, S. Solomon***STS.032 Energy, Environment, and Society**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Uses a problem-solving, multi-disciplinary, and multicultural approach that takes energy beyond the complex circuits, grids, and kilojoules to the realm of everyday life, with ordinary people as practitioners and producers of energy knowledge, infrastructures, and technologies. The three main objectives are to immerse students in the historical, cultural, multi-cultural, and entrepreneurial aspects of energy across the world to make them better energy engineers; to introduce them to research and analytical methods; and to deploy these methods and their various skills to solve/design a solution, in groups, to a specific energy problem chosen by the students. Each cohort tackles a different energy problem. Provides instruction on how to be active shapers of the world and to bring students' various disciplinary skills and cultural diversity into dialogue as conceptual tools for problem-solving. Enrollment limited.

*C. Mavhunga***STS.033[] People and the Planet: Environmental Histories and Engineering**

Same subject as 11.004[]

Subject meets with 11.204[], IDS.524[]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-3-6 units. HASS-E

See description under subject 11.004[].

*A. Slocum, R. Scheffler, J. Trancik***STS.034 Science Communication: A Practical Guide**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Develops students' abilities to communicate science effectively in a variety of real-world contexts. Covers strategies for dealing with complex areas like theoretical physics, genomics and neuroscience, and addresses challenges in communicating about topics such as climate change and evolution. Projects focus on speaking and writing, being an expert witness, preparing briefings for policy-makers, writing blogs, giving live interviews for broadcast, and influencing public dialogue through opinion-editorials. Enrollment limited.

*B. Venkataraman***STS.035 Exhibiting Science**

Prereq: One CI-H/CI-HW subject and permission of instructor

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

2-2-8 units. HASS-A

Project-based seminar covers key topics in museum communication, including science learning in informal settings, the role of artifacts and interactives, and exhibit evaluation. Students work on a term-long project, organized around the design, fabrication, and installation of an original multimedia exhibit about current scientific research at MIT. Culminates with the project's installation in the MIT Museum's Mark Epstein Innovation Gallery. Limited to 20; preference to students who have taken STS.034.

J. Durant

STS.036 Science in American Life: 1920-2020

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Assesses the place of science in American public life from the 1920s to the present. Takes a historically inflected approach to examine the social relations of science in the modern United States. Examines science and (in turn) religion, warfare, health, education, the environment, and human rights to explore how an international leader in science is also home to some of the developed world's most persistent forms of "science denialism." Examples include the denial of evolution, human-induced climate change, and particular medical-scientific aspects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

*J. Durant***STS.038 Risky Business: Food Production, Environment, and Health**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

2-1-9 units. HASS-H

Follows the shifts in food production between small-holder, local production to large-scale industries and back again to "localvore" food production in the 19th and 20th centuries. Tracks how people grew anxious about health risks associated with modern food over time. In a weekly lab, students build a compost production facility and/or a segment of a perennial food forest. Discusses food politics, food security and justice, food sustainability and safety, and first steps in growing one's own food. Limited to 25.

*K. Brown***STS.040 A Global History of Commodities**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Inspires students to think about production chains in ways that reflect their impact on the environment, labor practices, and human health. Examines how commodities connect distant places through a chain of relationships, and link people, e.g., enslaved African producers with middle-class American consumers, and Asian factory workers with Europeans taking a holiday on the beach. Studies how mass production and mass demand for commodities, such as real estate, bananas, rubber, corn, and beef, in the 20th century changed the way people worked, lived, and saw themselves as they adopted new technologies to produce and consume in radically different ways from their parents and grandparents. Assignments include creation of a board game for buying and selling real estate in Boston, a two-minute mini-documentary, and an article on a commodity and country. Limited to 25.

*K. Brown***STS.041 Exercise is Medicine: From Ancient Civilizations to Modern Health Care Systems**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores the history of exercise in preventing and curing physical and mental illness. Combines readings and discussion with experiential learning. Doing Yoga and Qigong alongside readings on Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine enables students to viscerally experience concepts in medical history such as prana and chi; activities including Pilates and High Intensity Interval Training deepen students' understanding of the challenges integrating scientific discovery into everyday life. Students who enroll in this class may receive both HASS-S credit for it and may enroll to earn two Physical Education and Wellness (PE&W) points.

J. S. Light

STS.042[J] Einstein, Oppenheimer, Feynman: Physics in the 20th Century

Same subject as STS.425[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Explores the changing roles of physics and physicists during the 20th century. Topics range from relativity theory and quantum mechanics to high-energy physics and cosmology. Examines the development of modern physics within shifting institutional, cultural, and political contexts, such as physics in Imperial Britain, Nazi Germany, US efforts during World War II, and physicists' roles during the Cold War. Enrollment limited.

D. I. Kaiser

STS.043 Technology and Self: Science, Technology, and Memoir

Subject meets with STS.443

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

2-0-7 units. HASS-S

Focuses on the memoir as a window onto the relationship of creative people (scientists, engineers, designers, and others) to their work. Examines how class, race, ethnicity, family history, and trauma shape the person who shapes artifacts, experiments, and ideas. Readings explore the connection between material culture, identity, and personal development. Offers the opportunity, if desired, to examine personal experiences and write memoir fragments. Students taking graduate version write a longer final paper. Limited to 15; no listeners.

S. Turkle

STS.044 Technology and Self: Things and Thinking

Subject meets with STS.444

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

2-0-7 units. HASS-S

Explores emotional and intellectual impact of objects. The growing literature on cognition and "things" cuts across anthropology, history, social theory, literature, sociology, and psychology and is of great relevance to science students. Examines the range of theories, from Mary Douglas in anthropology to D. W. Winnicott in psychoanalytic thinking, that underlies "thing" or "object" analysis. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15; no listeners.

S. Turkle

STS.046[J] The Science of Race, Sex, and Gender

Same subject as 21A.103[J], WGS.225[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject WGS.225[J].

A. Sur

STS.047 Quantifying People: A History of Social Science

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Historical examination of the quest to understand human society scientifically. Focuses on quantification, including its central role in the historical development of social science and its importance in the 21st-century data age. Covers the political arithmetic of the 17th century to the present. Emphasizes intensive reading of primary sources, which represent past attempts to count, calculate, measure, and model many dimensions of human social life (population, wealth, health, happiness, intelligence, crime, deviance, race).

Limited to 25.

W. Deringer

STS.048 African Americans in Science, Technology, and Medicine

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

A survey of the contributions of African Americans to science, technology, and medicine from colonial times to the present. Explores the impact of concepts, trends, and developments in science, technology, and medicine on the lives of African Americans. Examples include the eugenics movement, the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, the debate surrounding racial inheritance, and IQ testing.

K. Manning

STS.049 The Long War Against Cancer

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Examines anticancer efforts as a critical area for the formation of contemporary biomedical explanations for health and disease. Begins with the premise that the most significant implications of these efforts extend far beyond the success or failure of individual cancer therapies. Considers developments in the epidemiology, therapy, and politics of cancer. Uses the history of cancer to connect the history of biology and medicine to larger social and cultural developments, including those in bioethics, race, gender, activism, markets, and governance.

*R. W. Scheffler***STS.050 The History of MIT**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines the history of MIT, from its founding to the present, through the lens of the history of science and technology. Topics include William Barton Rogers; the modern research university and educational philosophy; campus, intellectual, and organizational development; changing laboratories and practices; MIT's relationship with Boston, the federal government, and industry; and notable activities and achievements of students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Includes guest lecturers, on-campus field trips, and interactive exercises. Enrollment limited.

*D. Douglas***STS.051 Documenting MIT Communities**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

2-0-7 units. HASS-H

Researches the history and culture of an MIT community to contribute to its documentation and preservation. Through the practice of doing original research, students learn about the history of an MIT community. Provides instruction in the methods historians use to document the past, as well as methods from related fields. Enrollment limited.

*E. Nelson***STS.053 Multidisciplinary Interactive Learning Through Problem-Solving**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-E

Interdisciplinary problem-solving at the intersection of humanities, science, engineering, and business. Team-taught face-to-face classes at multiple US and African universities connected live via Zoom. Divided into four sections/assessments: US and African histories, cultures, politics, and development relations; HASS as a problem-solving tool; STEM applications to real-life problem-solving; and introduction to summer field-class sites or exchange programs. Goal is to equip students with skills for team-based trans-disciplinary and cross-cultural problem-solving.

*C. C. Mavhunga***STS.055[] Living Dangerously: Environmental Problems from 1900 to Today**

Same subject as 12.384[]

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 12.384[]. Limited to 18.

*S. Solomon, K. Brown***STS.060[] The Anthropology of Biology**

Same subject as 21A.303[]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.303[].

*S. Helmreich***STS.064[] DV Lab: Documenting Science through Video and New Media**

Same subject as 21A.550[]

Subject meets with 21A.559

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-3-6 units. HASS-A; CI-H

See description under subject 21A.550[]. Limited to 12.

C. Walley, C. Boebel

STS.065[J] The Anthropology of Sound

Same subject as 21A.505[J], CMS.406[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.505[J].

*S. Helmreich***STS.074[J] Art, Craft, Science**

Same subject as 21A.501[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Credit cannot also be received for 21A.509[J], STS.474[J]

See description under subject 21A.501[J].

*H. Paxson***STS.075[J] Technology and Culture**

Same subject as 21A.500[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall, Spring)

2-0-7 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.500[J]. Limited to 50.

*H. Paxson***STS.080[J] Youth Political Participation**

Same subject as 11.151[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Surveys youth political participation in the US since the early 1800s. Investigates trends in youth political activism during specific historical periods, as well as what difference youth media production and technology use (e.g., radio, music, automobiles, ready-made clothing) made in determining the course of events. Explores what is truly new about "new media" and reviews lessons from history for present-day activists based on patterns of past failure and success. Some mandatory field trips may occur during class time. Limited to 40.

*J. S. Light***STS.081[J] Innovation Systems for Science, Technology, Energy, Manufacturing, and Health**

Same subject as 17.395[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

2-0-7 units. HASS-S

Examines science and technology innovation systems, including case studies on energy, computing, advanced manufacturing, and health sectors. Emphasizes public policy and the federal government's role in that system. Focuses on the US but uses international examples. Reviews foundations of economic growth theory, innovation systems theory, and the basic approaches to science and technology policy. Explores the organization and role of energy and medical science R&D agencies, as well as gaps in those innovation systems. Also addresses the science and technology talent base as a factor in growth, and educational approaches to better support it. Class meets for nine weeks; in the remaining weeks, students work on a final paper due at the end of the term. Limited to 25.

*W. B. Bonvillian***STS.082[J] Science, Technology, and Public Policy**

Same subject as 17.309[J], IDS.055[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

4-0-8 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Credit cannot also be received for 17.310[J], IDS.412[J], STS.482[J]

See description under subject 17.309[J].

*N. Selin***STS.083 Computers and Social Change**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Provides instruction on how people have historically connected computers to ideas on social, economic, and political change and how these ideas have changed over time. Based on a series of case studies from different parts of the world. Explores topics such as how computers have intertwined with ideas on work, freedom, governance, and access to knowledge. Limited to 25.

E. Medina

STS.o84[J] Social Problems of Nuclear Energy

Same subject as 22.04[J]

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 22.04[J]. Limited to 18.

*R. S. Kemp***STS.o85[J] Foundations of Information Policy**

Same subject as 6.4590[J]

Subject meets with STS.487

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 6.4590[J]. Enrollment limited.

*H. Abelson, M. Fischer, D. Weitzner***STS.o86[J] Cultures of Computing**

Same subject as 21A.504[J], WGS.276[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.504[J].

*H. Beltrán***STS.o87 Biography in Science**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: U (Fall)

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

An examination of biography as a literary genre to be employed in the history of science. The use of biography in different historical periods to illuminate aspects of the development of science. A critical analysis of autobiography, archival sources, and the oral tradition as materials in the construction of biographies of scientists. Published biographies of scientists constitute the major reading, but attention is given to unpublished biographical sources as well. Comparison is drawn between biography as a literary form in the history of science and in other disciplines.

*K. Manning***STS.o88 Africa for Engineers**

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Covers historical, cultural, and ethical dimensions of engineering in Africa. Focuses on construction of big projects like cities, hydroelectricity dams, roads, railway lines, ports and harbors, transport and communication, mines, industrial processing plant, and plantations. Explores the contributions of big capital, engineers, politicians, and ordinary people. Emphasizes how local culture, politics, labor, and knowledge affect engineering. Also focuses on environmental and cultural impact assessment. Prepares students who wish to work or study in Africa and the Global South. Enrollment limited.

*C. Mavhunga***STS.o95, STS.o96 Independent Study in Science, Technology, and Society**

Prereq: None

U (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

For students who wish to pursue special studies or projects with a member of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society. STS.o95 is letter-graded; STS.o96 is P/D/F.

*Staff***Special Subjects****STS.S20, STS.S21 Special Subject: Science, Technology and Society**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: U (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Addresses subject matter in Science, Technology and Society that is not offered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

Research**STS.095, STS.096 Independent Study in Science, Technology, and Society**

Prereq: None

U (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

For students who wish to pursue special studies or projects with a member of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society. STS.095 is letter-graded; STS.096 is P/D/F.

*Staff***STS.UR Undergraduate Research**

Prereq: None

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Undergraduate research opportunities in the STS Program.

*Staff***STS.URG Undergraduate Research**

Prereq: None

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Undergraduate research opportunities in the STS Program.

*Staff***STS.THT Undergraduate Thesis Tutorial**

Prereq: None

U (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Definition and early-stage work on thesis project leading to STS.THU. Taken during first term of student's two-term commitment to thesis project. Student works closely with STS faculty tutor. Required of all candidates for an STS degree.

*Staff***STS.THU Undergraduate Thesis**

Prereq: STS.THT

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Completion of work of the senior major thesis under the supervision of a faculty tutor. Includes gathering materials, preparing draft chapters, giving an oral presentation of thesis progress to faculty evaluators early in the term, and writing and revising the final text. Students meet at the end of the term with faculty evaluators to discuss the successes and limitations of the project. Required of all candidates for an STS degree.

*Staff***Graduate Subjects****Required Introductory Subjects****STS.250[.] Social Theory and Analysis**

Same subject as 21A.859[.]

Prereq: None

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 21A.859[.]

*M. Fischer***STS.260 Introduction to Science, Technology, and Society**

Prereq: None

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Intensive reading and analysis of major works in historical and social studies of science and technology. Introduction to current methodological approaches, centered around two primary questions: how have science and technology evolved as human activities, and what roles do they play in society? Preparation for graduate work in the field of science and technology studies and introduction to research resources and professional standards.

Staff

Advanced Seminars**STS.310 History of Science**

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)
 3-0-9 units

Intensive reading and analysis of key works in the history and historiography of science. Introduces students to basic interpretive issues, bibliographic sources, and professional standards. Topics change from year to year.

R. W. Scheffler

STS.320[J] Environmental Conflict

Same subject as 21A.429[J]
 Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)
 3-0-9 units

Explores the complex interrelationships among humans and natural environments, focusing on non-western parts of the world in addition to Europe and the United States. Use of environmental conflict to draw attention to competing understandings and uses of "nature" as well as the local, national and transnational power relationships in which environmental interactions are embedded. In addition to utilizing a range of theoretical perspectives, subject draws upon a series of ethnographic case studies of environmental conflicts in various parts of the world.

C. Walley

STS.330[J] History and Anthropology of Medicine and Biology

Same subject as 21A.319[J]
 Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)
 3-0-9 units

See description under subject 21A.319[J].

S. Helmreich

STS.340 Introduction to the History of Technology

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Introduction to the consideration of technology as the outcome of particular technical, historical, cultural, and political efforts, especially in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. Topics include industrialization of production and consumption, development of engineering professions, the emergence of management and its role in shaping technological forms, the technological construction of gender roles, and the relationship between humans and machines.

M. R. Smith, D. Mindell

STS.360[J] Ethnography

Same subject as 21A.829[J]
 Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Practicum style course introduces students to ethnographic methods and writing in global health research. Organized around interviewing and observational assignments. Students develop a bibliography of anthropological and ethnographic writing relevant to their project, and write a short paper about integrating ethnographic methods into a future research project. Preference to HASTS students; open to others with permission of instructor.

M. Fischer

STS.412 Quantification

Prereq: None
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Surveys research on quantification, the practice of using numerical data and calculation to analyze, order, and control. Begins by examining historical accounts of the rise of quantitative methods and values since c. 1600. Goes on to explore the dynamics and consequences of quantification across a range of modern domains, including science, politics, governance, health, education, crime, law, economic development, finance, and environmental regulation. Readings drawn from STS, history, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy.

W. Deringer

STS.414[J] Risk, Fortune, and Futurity

Same subject as 21H.984[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 21H.984[J]. Open to undergraduates with permission of instructor; consult department for details.

W. Deringer, C. Horan

STS.417 STS Seminar on the Global South

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Covers Africa and its diaspora, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Asia, and Oceania. Seeks to explore meanings of science and technology from traditions, experiences, and literatures of these regions; to understand encounters and outcomes of endogenous and inbound ideas, artifacts, and practice; and to engage European and North American science, technology, and society (STS) in dialogue with these literatures. Provides a global view of STS in an increasingly interconnected world. Focuses on peoples of the Global South as innovative intellectual agents, not just victims of technology or its appropriators.

D. Banerjee

STS.421 Graduate Super-Seminar on Global South Cosmologies and Epistemologies

Prereq: None

G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Team-taught subject that centers Global South cosmologies and epistemologies marginalized by colonization, slavery, and racism across the world. Explores how different societies make sense of and develop knowledges of the physical and animate world, and what it means to be human(e) within it. Opens up trans-hemispheric conversations between constituencies that seldom talk to each other, each bringing its ways of seeing, thinking, knowing, and doing to the matrix to mutually inform one another. Goal is to build qualitative — not just quantitative — diversity (i.e., diversity as method of learning and thinking).

C. C. Mavhunga

STS.424[J] Race, History, and the Built Environment

Same subject as 11.244[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 11.244[J]. Limited to 14 students.

Erica James

STS.425 History of Manufacturing in America

Subject meets with STS.026

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Introductory survey of fundamental innovations and transitions in American manufacturing from the colonial period to the mid-twentieth century. Primary emphasis on textiles and metalworking, with particular attention to the role of the machine tool industry in the American manufacturing economy. Students taking graduate version are expected to explore the material in greater depth.

M. R. Smith

STS.427 The Civil War and the Emergence of Modern America: 1861-1890

Subject meets with 21H.205[J], STS.027[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Using the American Civil War as a baseline, considers what it means to become "modern" by exploring the war's material and manpower needs, associated key technologies, and how both influenced the United States' entrance into the age of "Big Business." Readings include material on steam transportation, telegraphic communications, arms production, naval innovation, food processing, medicine, public health, management methods, and the mass production of everything from underwear to uniforms — all essential ingredients of modernity. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

M. R. Smith

STS.430 Multi-Species Histories of Plant People, Wild and Cultivated

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Examines how centering plants changes our understanding of what it means to be human. Considers how, in response to the naming of the Anthropocene and anxieties over ecological crises, researchers in various fields have turned to plants as central players. Using this as a starting point, explores how researchers have described and re-calibrated relations among plants, humans, and environment, between life and non-life, action and being, subjectivity and autonomy in ways that radically altered ruling epistemologies in a range of disciplines. Looks at how philosophers, farmers, foresters, eco-critics, geographers, botanists, and popular science writers adapted research questions and narratives to incorporate not only plant uses, but plant intelligence and sentience.

*K. Brown***STS.432[J] Narrating the Anthropocene: Understanding a Multi-Species Universe**

Same subject as 21H.990[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Examines human concern about the planet and how that fixation shapes concepts of time & space, knowledge-production, understandings of what it means to be human and non-human, as well as trends in scholarship, art, culture & politics. Indexes the way numerous actors and institutions came to understand, debate & narrate the Anthropocene, a geological epoch defined by human-induced climate change. Explores how it as a concept has opened up new ways of understanding relations within the planet, including care, accountability & multi-species mutualism. Considers narrative registers as well, how scholars, writers, artists & working people narrate the Anthropocene. Students undertake an original project in research &/or experimental narrative forms inspired by the reading. Limited to 12.

*K. Brown, M. Black***STS.434 Postapocalyptic Science and Technology Studies**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Fall)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Examines how science fiction is deployed as a political tool for enacting change in the present and how it has emerged as a privileged symbolic field for the expression of hopes and anxieties that drive both culture and tech industries. Explores how societies around the globe — both mainstream and in the periphery — are confronting a triple crisis that threatens not only civil order but also the very existence of certain forms of life: financial collapse which increased the awareness of mass inequality; climate change and loss of biodiversity; and the rise of ethno-nationalisms, which threaten representative democracies.

*E. Nelson***STS.436 Cold War Science**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Examines the history and legacy of the Cold War on science and the environment in the US and the world. Explores scientists' new political roles after World War II, ranging from elite policy makers in the nuclear age to victims of domestic anti-Communism. Also examines the changing institutions in which various scientific fields were conducted during the postwar decades, investigating possible epistemic effects on forms of knowledge. Subject closes by considering the places of science in the US during the post-Cold War era.

*K. Brown, D. I. Kaiser***STS.441 Technology and Self: Technology and Conversation**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

2-0-10 units

Explores the relationship between technology and conversation, with an emphasis on conversation in our digital age when so many say they would rather text than talk. Topics center on the psychology of online life, such as the way in which we both share and withhold information about the self. Discussion about the ways new kinds of online conversation are playing out in education, the workplace, and in families and what the changes in conversation mean for collaboration, innovation, and leadership. Readings include works in history, literature, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. Open to undergraduates by permission of instructor. Limited to 15; no listeners.

S. Turkle

STS.443 Technology and Self: Science, Technology, and Memoir

Subject meets with STS.043
 Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 2-0-7 units

Focuses on the memoir as a window onto the relationship of creative people (scientists, engineers, designers, and others) to their work. Examines how class, race, ethnicity, family history, and trauma shape the person who shapes artifacts, experiments, and ideas. Readings explore the connection between material culture, identity, and personal development. Offers the opportunity, if desired, to examine personal experiences and write memoir fragments. Students taking graduate version write a longer final paper. Limited to 15; no listeners.

S. Turkle

STS.444 Technology and Self: Things and Thinking

Subject meets with STS.044
 Prereq: Permission of instructor
 Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Spring)
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 2-0-7 units

Explores emotional and intellectual impact of objects. The growing literature on cognition and “things” cuts across anthropology, history, social theory, literature, sociology, and psychology and is of great relevance to science students. Examines the range of theories, from Mary Douglas in anthropology to D.W. Winnicott in psychoanalytic thinking, that underlies “thing” or “object” analysis. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15; no listeners.

S. Turkle

STS.454 Museums, Science and Technology

Prereq: Permission of instructor
 G (Spring)
 Not offered regularly; consult department
 3-0-9 units

Examines science, technology and museums. Includes regular readings and discussions about the evolution of museums of science and technology from (roughly) 1800 to the present. Students undertake special projects linked to the MIT Museum's re-location to a new building under construction in Kendall Square. Students act as informal consultants to the MIT Museum, offering proposals for innovative elements that will be seriously considered for inclusion in the new Museum.

J. Durant

STS.458 Science, Technology, and Human Rights

Prereq: None
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)
 3-0-9 units

Explores the relationship of science and technology to ideas about human rights over time, including how science and technology have been mobilized historically in the defense of human rights and to assist in the pursuit of truth and justice after atrocity. Discusses literature in history, anthropology, law, and related fields to address how science and technology have historically shaped understandings of human rights and the ways that human rights frameworks have shaped the creation and use of scientific and technological capabilities.

E. Medina

STS.461 History and Social Study of Computing

Prereq: None
 Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Fall)
 Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered
 3-0-9 units

Examines the history and social study of computers. Introduces students to the core and canonical literature in this area while also providing the opportunity to read and discuss more recent works from multiple disciplines.

E. Medina

STS.464 Computing from the Global South

Prereq: None
 Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered
 Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)
 3-0-9 units

Examines the rise and development of computing technologies in the global south. Surveys the effects of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century on the imagination of computational technologies in places such as South America, Africa, and Asia. Covers the failures and defeats of postcolonial projects when faced with the challenge of asymmetric access to global markets and capital. Identifies contemporary forms of resistance and imaginations of innovation that still endure and flourish in the global south, challenging perspectives from the global north.

D. Banerjee

STS.465[J] Research Seminar on Technology and the Work of the Future

Same subject as 11.652[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Spring)

3-0-9 units

Examines the past, present and future of work from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing from the humanities, social sciences, and cognitive science and engineering. Integrates perspectives from history, philosophy, sociology, economics, management, political science, brain and cognitive science and other relevant literatures, creating a solid foundation from which to interpret current public discourse on the subject. Discussion focuses primarily on the US; comparative perspectives from other countries incorporated into discussions and analysis. Limited to 15.

*D. Mindell, E. B. Reynolds***STS.468[J] Entrepreneurship in Aerospace and Mobility Systems**

Same subject as 16.445[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

See description under subject 16.445[J].

*D. A. Mindell***STS.471[J] Engineering Apollo: The Moon Project as a Complex System**

Same subject as 16.895[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Detailed technical and historical exploration of the Apollo project to fly humans to the moon and return them safely to Earth as an example of a complex engineering system. Emphasizes how the systems worked, the technical and social processes that produced them, mission operations, and historical significance. Guest lectures by MIT-affiliated engineers who contributed to and participated in the Apollo missions. Students work in teams on a final project analyzing an aspect of the historical project to articulate and synthesize ideas in engineering systems.

*D. Mindell***STS.474[J] Art, Craft, Science**

Same subject as 21A.509[J]

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Credit cannot also be received for 21A.501[J], STS.074[J]

See description under subject 21A.509[J].

*H. Paxson***STS.477[J] Writing: Science, Technology, and Society**

Same subject as 21W.820[J]

Prereq: 21H.991

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

3-0-9 units

Examination of different "voices" used to consider issues of scientific, technological, and social concern. Students write frequently and choose among a variety of non-fiction forms: historical writing, social analysis, political criticism, and policy reports. Instruction in expressing ideas clearly and in organizing a thesis-length work. Reading and writing on three case studies drawn from the history of science; the cultural study of technology and science; and policy issues.

*K. Manning***STS.482[J] Science, Technology, and Public Policy**

Same subject as 17.310[J], IDS.412[J]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

4-0-8 units

Credit cannot also be received for 17.309[J], IDS.055[J], STS.082[J]

See description under subject 17.310[J].

N. Selin

STS.487 Foundations of Information Policy

Subject meets with 6.4590[[]], STS.085[[]]

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall)

3-0-9 units

Studies the growth of computer and communications technology and the new legal and ethical challenges that reflect tensions between individual rights and societal needs. Topics include computer crime; intellectual property restrictions on software; encryption, privacy, and national security; academic freedom and free speech. Students meet and question technologists, activists, law enforcement agents, journalists, and legal experts. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication provided. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Enrollment limited.

H. Abelson, R. David Edelman, M. Fischer, D. Weitzner

Special Subjects**STS.S91 Special Subject: Science, Technology and Society**

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: Not offered

Acad Year 2025-2026: G (Fall)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Addresses a special topic in Science, Technology and Society which is not offered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

STS.S92 Special Subject: Science, Technology and Society

Prereq: None

Acad Year 2024-2025: G (Spring)

Acad Year 2025-2026: Not offered

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Addresses subject matter in Science, Technology and Society that is not offered in the regular curriculum.

Staff

Research and Teaching**STS.800 Teaching Science, Technology and Society**

Prereq: None

G (Fall, Spring)

Not offered regularly; consult department

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

For qualified graduate students serving as either a teaching assistant or instructor for subjects in Science, Technology and Society (STS). Enrollment limited by availability of suitable teaching assignments.

Staff

STS.840 HASTS Professional Perspective

Prereq: Permission of advisor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

0-1-0 units

Required for doctoral students in the doctoral program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Society (HASTS) to explore and gain professional perspective through academic, non-profit, government, or industry experiences. Professional perspective options include, but are not limited to, internships, teacher training, professional development for entry into academia, or public academic engagement. For an internship experience, an offer from a company or organization is required prior to enrollment. A written narrative or report is required upon completion of the experience. Proposals subject to departmental approval in consultation with advisor.

Staff

STS.850 Practical Experience in HASTS Fields

Prereq: None

G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

For HASTS students participating in curriculum-related off-campus professional internship experiences. Before registering for this subject, students must have an offer letter from a company or organization and must receive written prior approval from their advisor. Upon completion of the experience, students must submit a substantive final report, approved by their advisor. Subject to departmental approval. Consult departmental graduate office. Permission of advisor.

Staff

STS.86o[JJ] HASTS Dissertation Writing Workshop (New)

Same subject as 21A.989[JJ], 21H.960[JJ]

Prereq: None

G (Fall)

1-0-5 units

Can be repeated for credit.

Bi-weekly seminar for students in the doctoral program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology & Society (HASTS) who have completed research and are in the process of writing their dissertations. Each class focuses on a particular element of the writing: organizing chapters, engaging the secondary literature, the art of the vignette, etc. Depending on student needs, some classes may be tailored to anthropological writing or to historical writing. Students are given ample opportunity to workshop draft passages and chapters. For PhD students only. PhD students outside the HASTS program require permission of instructor.

Staff

STS.88o Proposal Writing in HASTS

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

For students in the doctoral program in History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Society (HASTS) who are working on their dissertation proposal and/or research grant proposal program requirement. Work is done in consultation with the student's advisor, in accordance with the guidelines in the HASTS Student Handbook. Restricted to HASTS PhD students.

Staff

STS.901-STS.904 Independent Study in Science, Technology, and Society

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

For students who wish to pursue special studies or projects at an advanced level with a faculty member of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society.

Staff

STS.THG Graduate Thesis

Prereq: Permission of instructor

G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Program of graduate research leading to the writing of a PhD thesis, to be arranged by the student with an appropriate MIT faculty member, who is the thesis advisor.

Staff