

## **Social Theory**

Fall 2017: *STS 250/ 21A.859*

E-53-354, Tuesdays 1-4 pm.

<https://stellar.mit.edu/S/course/STS/fa17/STS.250/materials.html>

[+ means available on the Stellar course site]

Overview:

### **A. Contemporary Issues in Social Theory and STS**

1. Risk Society: Disaster Studies, Late Industrialism, Postmodernities, Anthropocene: (Irma, Harvey, Katrina; Fukushima, Chernobyl; Bhopal)
2. Gaia and Planetary STS: Companion Species, Pandemics, Human/Wild Interfaces: (Avian Flu, SARS, Bacteria and Viruses)
3. Vernacular, Class, Race/ Indigeneity, & Intersectional Discourses: Climate Change
4. Citizen Science, Public Sphere, and its Colonization: Fracking
5. Rise of Biosensibilities: Biomedicine, Biocapital, Biopolitics, Bioeconomics (Race/Genetics, Genomics, Synthetic Biology, GM Crops, and Safety)
6. Digital-Cyber Worlds: Colonizing the Internet, University Performativity
7. Object-Relations, ArtScience and Affect
8. Global Traditions in STS: (SSK, ANT, AnthrSTS, EASTS, Germanistik, India, Latin America, Africa)

### **B. Basic STS**

1. Epistemes, paradigms, controversies, coproduction, obligatory points, alterities
2. Disciplines, discourses, and domains: scientific revolution (17<sup>th</sup> c.? Shapin & Shafer), bacteriology (Latour), biology-linguistics-economics (Foucault)
3. Object relations, technosubjectivities, affect, neuroscience

### **C. Basic Social Theory: (1<sup>st</sup> , 2<sup>nd</sup> , 3<sup>rd</sup> indus. rev.s; 1968, 1984-94, 2016)**

1. Utilitarianism to Cybernetics, and Biopolitics (1<sup>st</sup> industrial revolution)
2. Solidarities, Divisions of Labor, Dual Economies and Market Rules (2<sup>nd</sup> Indus. rev.)
3. Cultural Meaning, Hegemony, Legitimacy, Imaginaries [1968]
4. Digital Revolutions? – 1979, 1984 [Apple], 1994 [Web], 2016

### **D. Basic Ethnographic and Empirical Methods in Building Theory**

1. Holism, functionalism, cybernetics, the ecological rule: you cannot change only one thing (structural-functionalism, Dumezil, structural ling., L-S, Tambiah, Sahlins)
2. Comparative structures and Multi-causality (enunciatory communities, civic epistemologies, networks juxtaposition)
3. Interpretive methods (symbolic, performative, processual, contestatory)
4. Cultural critique (critique versus criticism; multi-locale/sited, multi-scale)
5. Experimental (artscience, performance, role-play, para, visual, multi-media)

Session 1. Introduction I:

3/11 *Healing Fukushima* (2017, Dir. Sulfikar Amir);  
*Furusatu* (2016, dir. Thorsten Trimpop)  
Hurricanes: Katrina (Mississippi 1927), Harvey (Houston 1935),  
Irma (

## Session 2. Introduction II.

### Introduction to Social Theory:

Malthus, Thomas. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition on.

Mauss, M. *The Gift*: pp 1-45 & conclusion.

Foucault – *The Order of Things*

Fischer, MMJ - 2003. “Las Meninas & Virtual Robotic-Surgical  
Systems” EFL pp 309-28

Beck, *Risk Society*

### Introduction to STS

Fleck

Shapin and Shaffer. 1985. *Leviathan & the Air Pump*. Intro, ch. 1.

Latour. *Pasteurization of France*

Landecker, Hanna - *Henrietta Lacks*

Jasanoff, S. 2005. *Designs on Nature*, Intro

Felt, Ulrike. 2015. “Keeping Technologies Out”

### Introduction to Ethnography/Anthropology

Fischer, MMJF. “Prologue: Changing Modes of Ethnographic Authority”

## Session III. Industrial Revolutions, Companion Species, Pandemics, Human/Wild Interfaces

Feanley, Lyle. *The Pandemic Epicenter*.

Haraway, Donna. *The Companion Species Manifesto*.

(complete Session II?).

Marx

## Session IV. Climate Change, Indigeneity, and Vernacular Discourses

Callison, Candis. *How Climate Change Comes to Matter: The Communal Life of Facts*  
+Lahsen, Myanna.

+2005. “A Science Policy Interface in the Global South: The politics of carbon  
sinks and science in Brazil. *Climatic Change*.

2007 “Trust through Participation? Problems of Knowledge in Climate  
Decision Making” in Pettinger, Mary E. *The Construction of Climate  
Change: Power, Knowledge, Norms, Discourses*. Ashgate.

2012. “Anatomy of Dissent: A Cultural Analysis of Climate Skepticism.

- American Behavior Scientist*, 20(10):1-12.
- + "The Social Status of Climate Knowledge." *Wiley's Interdisciplinary Reviews (WIREs) Climate Change* .
- Whittington, Jerome. 2015. "Carbon as a Metric of the Human." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Rev.*