Courses

STS 1. The Public Life of Science and Technology. 4 Units.
The course focuses on key social, cultural, and values issues raised by contemporary scientific and technological developments through the STS interdisciplinary lens by developing and applying skills in three areas: (a) The historical analysis of contemporary global matters (e.g., spread of technologies; climate change response); (b) The bioethical reasoning around health issues (e.g., disease management; privacy rights); and (c) The sociological study of knowledge (e.g., intellectual property, science publishing). A discussion section is required and will be assigned the first week of class.

STS 103Q. Reading and Writing Poetry about Science. 4 Units.
Preference to sophomores. Students will study recent poetry inspired by the phenomena and history of the sciences in order to write such poems themselves. These poems bring sensuous human experience to bear on biology, ecology, astronomy, physics, earth science, and medicine, as well as on technological advances and calamities. Poets such as Linda Bierds, Mark Doty, Albert Goldfarb, Sarah Lindsay, W.S. Merwin, Adrienne Rich, Pattami Rogers, Tracy K. Smith, Arthur Sze, and C. K. Williams. Grounding in poetics, research in individually chosen areas of science, weekly analytical and creative writing. Fulfills the Creative Expression requirement. Enrollment limited to 12.

STS 131. Science Technology & Environmental Justice. 4 Units.
The Bay Area is renowned for its technological innovations and progressive politics, including environmental justice activism. This course explores the multifaceted intersections of science, technology, and environmental issues, in the Bay Area and beyond. It also facilitates students' engagement with Wikipedia, as contributors and analysts. Throughout, students investigate the politics of place, with an eye to inequalities of race, class, gender, age, disability, and citizenship. Topics include: Internet and "new economy" geographies; public health and urban planning; food systems; climate change; innovation policy; " undone science.

STS 140. Science, Technology and Politics. 5 Units.
This course will critically interrogate the relationship between science and technology and politics. Politics plays a significant role in the production of scientific knowledge and technological artifacts. Science and technology in turn constitute crucial elements of politics and governance in modern democracy. This course will explore these interactions through (1) key theoretical texts in STS and (2) case studies of such issues as climate change, race and science, urban planning, elections and technology, and information technology in social movements. Preference to juniors and seniors. First class attendance mandatory. Enrollment limited to 16.

STS 160Q. Technology in Contemporary Society. 4 Units.
Preference to sophomores. Introduction to the STS field. The natures of science and technology and their relationship, what is most distinctive about these forces today, and how they have transformed and been affected by contemporary society. Social, cultural, and ethical issues raised by recent scientific and technological developments. Case studies from areas such as information technology and biotechnology, with emphasis on the contemporary U.S. Unexpected influences of science and technology on contemporary society and how social forces shape scientific and technological enterprises and their products. Enrollment limited to 12.

STS 165N. Cars: Past, Present, and Future. 3 Units.
(Formerly COMM 165N.) Preference to freshmen. Focus is on the past, present and future of the automobile, bridging the humanities, social sciences, design, and engineering. Focus on the human experiences of designing, making, driving, being driven, living with, and dreaming of the automobile. A different theme featured each week in discussion around a talk and supported by key readings and media. Course is informed by history, archaeology, ethnography, human-technology interaction, mechanical engineering, and cognitive science.

STS 190. Issues in Technology and the Environment. 4 Units.
Humans have long shaped and reshaped the natural world with technologies. Once a menacing presence to conquer or an infinite reserve for resources, nature is now understood to require constant protection from damage and loss. This course will examine humanity's varied relationship with the environment, with a focus on the role of technology. Topics include: industrialization, modernism, nuclear technology, and biotechnology. Students will explore theoretical and methodological approaches in STS and conduct original research that addresses this human-nature-technology nexus. STS majors must have Senior status to enroll in this Senior Capstone course.

STS 191. Introduction to Research in STS. 4 Units.
This seminar introduces key analytical approaches and methodologies in STS, as well as basic tools for conducting original research in STS. Students will explore a series of influential empirical studies; identify productive questions of their own interest; and explore how to pursue them through strong research design. Research proposal as final assignment. Preference to STS juniors; others require consent of instructor. The final proposal can serve as an honors prospectus for students who seek to participate in the STS honors program.

STS 199. Independent Study. 1-5 Unit.
Every unit of credit is understood to represent three hours of work per week per term and is to be agreed upon between the student and the faculty member. Instructor consent required. Please contact the department for a permission number.

STS 199A. Curricular Practical Training. 1 Unit.
Students obtain internship in a relevant research or industrial activity to enhance their professional experience consistent with their degree program and area of concentration. Prior to enrolling students must get internship approved by the STS Program Director. At the end of the quarter, a one-page final report must be supplied documenting work done and relevance to degree program. Meets the requirements for Curricular Practical Training for students on F-1 visas. Student is responsible for arranging own internship. Limited to declared STS majors only. Course may be repeated twice. Instructor consent required. Please contact the department for a permission number.

STS 199J. Editing a Science Technology and Society Journal. 1-2 Unit.
Entirely operated online, the journal uses a work-flow management to help with the submission process, peer-review, editing, and publication. Students learn by being involved in the publishing process, from soliciting manuscripts to publishing the journal's annual issue, while working in consultation with the instructor. Students will also learn about current practices and institutional frameworks around open access and digital publishing.
STS 200A. Food and Society: Politics, Culture and Technology. 5 Units.
This course will examine how politics, culture, and technology intersect in our food practices. Through a survey of academic, journalistic, and artistic works on food and eating, the course will explore a set of key analytical frameworks and conceptual tools in STS, such as the politics of technology, classification and identity, and nature/culture boundaries. The topics covered include: the industrialization of agriculture; technology and the modes of eating (e.g., the rise of restaurants); food taboos; globalization and local foodways; food and environmentalism; and new technologies in production (e.g., genetically modified food). Through food as a window, the course intends to achieve two broad intellectual goals. First, students will explore various theoretical and methodological approaches in STS. In particular, they will pay particular attention to the ways in which politics, culture, and technology intersect in food practices. Second, student will develop a set of basic skills and tools for their own critical thinking and empirical research, and design and conduct independent research on a topic related to food. First class attendance mandatory. STS majors must have Senior status to enroll in this Senior Capstone course.

STS 200D. Text Technologies: A History. 5 Units.
Beginning with cave painting, carving, cuneiform, hieroglyph, and other early textual innovations, survey of the history of writing, image, sound, and byte, all text technologies employed to create, communicate and commemorate. Focus on the recording of language, remembrance and ideas explicating significant themes seen throughout history; these include censorship, propaganda, authenticity, apocalypticism, technophobia, reader response, democratization and authority. The production, transmission and reception of tablet technology, the scroll, the manuscript codex and handmade book, the machine-made book, newspapers and ephemera; and investigate the emergence of the phonograph and photograph, film, radio, television and digital multimedia. The impact of these various text technologies on their users, and try to draw out similarities and differences in our cultural and intellectual responses to evolving technologies. STS majors must have senior status to enroll in this senior capstone course. Same as: ENGLISH 184H

STS 200E. Technology, Nature, and Environmentalism. 5 Units.
Humans have long shaped and reshaped the natural world with technologies. Once a menacing presence to conquer or an infinite reserve for resources, nature is now understood to require constant protection from damage and loss. Humanity's relationships with the environment have changed over time and differed across societies. In this course, students (1) explore diverse ways in which people in different historical and cultural settings have conceptualized nature and their relationships with it, with a focus on the role of technology; and (2) learn the basics of STS research and conduct an original study that addresses this human-nature-technology nexus. First class attendance mandatory. STS majors must have senior status to enroll in this senior capstone course.

STS 200H. Ethics, Science, & Technology. 4 Units.
Critical analysis of ethical issues raised by recent or emerging advances in science and engineering. Issues: privacy, intellectual property, design equity, the public interest, ethical responsibilities of technical practitioners, research ethics, and freedom of inquiry. Advances from fields such as IT, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neurotechnology, construction technology, and transport technology. Seminar limited to 25 senior STS majors. Prerequisite: a course in ethics or permission of the instructor.

STS 200J. Advanced Topics in Agnotology. 4-5 Units.
Advanced research into the history of ignorance. Our goal will be to explore how ignorance is created, maintained and destroyed, using case studies from topics such as tobacco denialism, global climate denialism, and other forms of resistance to knowledge making. Course culminates in a research paper on the theory and practice of agnotology, the science of ignorance. Same as: HISTORY 204D, HISTORY 304D

STS 200K. Sciences of Learning. 4 Units.
Understanding the process of learning has enticed and eluded scientists for generations. Abetted by the rise of massive open online courses (MOOCs), learning has attracted new cadres of researchers and stars from scientists in adjacent fields, as well as new forms of financial support and visibility. This seminar investigates the recent dynamics of learning science as a case study in the politics of knowledge. Student projects will enable focused empirical inquiry.

STS 200L. Critique of Technology. 3-5 Units.
Informed citizens living in today's world, and especially in Silicon Valley, should be able to formulate their own, articulate positions about the role of technology in culture. The course gives students the tools to do so. Against the trend towards the thoughtless celebration of all things technological, we will engage in critique in the two senses of the term: as careful study of the cultural implications of technology and as balanced, argumentative criticism. Can technology make life more meaningful, society more fair, people smarter, and the world smaller? Selections by fiction writers, philosophers and thinkers (such as Heidegger and Beller), as well as recent popular works of social commentary, such as You are not a Gadget, The Shallows, 24/7, and Present Shock. Same as: ILAC 235

STS 299. Advanced Individual Work. 1-5 Unit.
For students in the STS Honors program. Every unit of credit is understood to represent three hours of work per week per term and is to be agreed upon between the student and the faculty member. May be repeated for credit.