This course aims to introduce graduate students to the discipline of history of science, and because the discipline is a historical one, to the discipline of history. Obviously, in a 15-week course, I would not pretend that this is comprehensive or complete. At best, I hope that this points to some directions in which you can go, and encourages you in a life-long acquisition of expertise in the field.

It also aims to introduce you to people and resources on the OU campus. Since many – perhaps all – of you are simultaneously taking HSCI 5990, the graduate survey in premodern science, over the course of the fall semester you will meet half the faculty in the department. To introduce you to the other half of the faculty in the very first semester, I will invite all of them to visit class for about 30 minutes to discuss their background in the discipline, their research specializations and interests, and any other aspects of their professional lives that will help introduce you to our program and the discipline.

While much of the work this semester will focus on theoretical issues, there are practical skills in the discipline that I also hope to address. In the History of Science Collections, the OU Program has a unique resource, and very early in the course, we will have hands-on training in the use of the Collections, so that you make the most of this resource. OU also produces two premier publications in the field, *Technology and Culture* and the *Isis Current Bibliography*. In conjunction with their visits to the class, Pete Soppelsa and Stephen Weldon will discuss how you can get involved in these two enterprises, and how to use them most effectively. There is a considerable amount of reading involved in the first year (and of course this will continue in the future). If you take notes only for the class discussion next week, you miss the opportunity to begin building a collection of materials that will serve you well in future research or teaching, so another session will be devoted to strategies for taking accessible electronic notes and storage. And finally, the course will include some hands-on training in professional activities, including writing and delivering conference presentations, producing book reviews, and writing funding proposals.

**Books for the Course**

As you can see from the course outline, we will be reading all or most of the following books:


I have not placed an order with the OU Bookstore, because the total cost would be prohibitive, and even when they offer used copies, they are much more expensive than books readily available online. I would recommend that you check consolidator websites like AddAll.com, where the seven can be purchased for under $115 (total).
EXPECTATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

As this course is a seminar, the most important element for its success is your participation and discussion. Forty percent of your final grade will be derived from the weekly participation in class. The remaining sixty percent will be based on written exercises, in two forms:

- On many occasions, the week’s reading will be comprised of several articles or book chapters. Each of you will be assigned a specific reading, over which you will write a 2- or 3-page précis, and this will be the basis of your oral introduction of the material during the class. The précis is not meant to be a summary, though it may include a very concise indication of the content of the article or chapter. Instead, it should focus on such things as the strength of the author’s argument and the use (or misuse) of evidence, the structure of the piece and how this contributes to (or detracts from) the author’s argument, the author’s engagement with previous or current scholarship, and – most importantly – an answer to the “so what?” question: why is this important, and what does it contribute to the discipline?

- By the end of the fourth week (that is, by September 17), you should have selected a historian of science, technology or medicine – preferably one who has already died – who will be the focus of a 7- to 10-page historiographical assessment. Part biography, partly literature review, the essay will primarily seek to place the historian in her or his professional context and assess the role of her or his writing (and other professional work) within the development of the discipline.

CLASS MEETINGS

August 20: Introduction

August 27: What is History?
Class activity: Presentations on strategies for note-taking and file-keeping by Kirsty Lawson (Mac platform) and Jared Neumann (PC); presentation on the History of Science Collections procedures and use by Sylvia Patterson, Staff Assistant in the Collections.

September 3: The Problem of the Present Perspective
Faculty visit by Piers Hale.

September 10: The Problem of Objectivity and the Role of History of Science
Faculty visit by Stephen Weldon, who is also History of Science Society Bibliographer.

September 17: Revolutions in Science

September 24: Constructivism in the History of Science

Class visit by Todd Fuller, Associate Director of the Center for Research Program Development and Enrichment (CRPDE): research funding in a broad context, including finding funding sources, OU resources, crafting a proposal, practical advice about what fellowship/grant panels are looking for, post-award procedures, etc.

**October 1: Issues in Ancient Science**


**October 8: Issues in Medieval Science**


**October 15: Issues in Non-Western Science**


**October 22: History of Medicine: Origins and Methods**


Faculty visit: JoAnn Palmeri, Librarian, History of Science Collections
October 29:  Science in Cultural Context: Patronage and Science
Faculty visit: Hunter Heyck, Chair of the department.

November 5:  Religion and Science: the Reformation as Case Study

November 12:  Issues in Contemporary Science and Technology
Thomas So¨derqvist, The Historiography of Contemporary Science and Technology. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 1997. Read the following chapters:
Söderqvist, “Who will sort out the hundred or more Paul Ehrlichs? Remarks on the historiography of recent and contemporary technoscientific debate”
Lindee, “The conversation: History and history as it happens”
De Chadarevian, “Using interviews to write the history of science”
Holmes, “Writing about scientists of the near past”
Faculty visit by Peter Soppelsa, Managing Editor of Technology and Culture.

November 19:  Popular Science
Faculty visit by Katherine Pandora.
November 26: No class (Thanksgiving Week)

December 3: Scientific Instruments and Museums

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please be aware of the seriousness of plagiarism. It is imperative that you acknowledge all sources. Generally, the essays for this course will require no further sources beyond those listed in the syllabus. But this limited base of readings does not free you from the obligation to acknowledge materials. Plagiarism is defined as the unacknowledged use of specific ideas, arguments, or extended passages from any source. It is an extremely serious academic offense (to say nothing of the moral issues involved); you may wish to consult the Student Code [studentconduct.ou.edu] for penalties.

OTHER INFORMATION

1. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.
2. According to the University of Oklahoma Faculty Handbook, “It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays.” Please contact me regarding this policy.
3. Office hours: Chemistry 312 Monday 11:00-12:00, Wednesday 4:00-5:00, and by appointment.