

HPSC2008 The Human Sciences in Society

Course Syllabus

2012-13 session
Dr Simon J Lock | simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk
Dr Inga Kroener | i.kroener@ucl.ac.uk

This course provides a collective activity for an otherwise dispersed group of students. It allows them to develop their knowledge of a topic of their choice in the human sciences; to gain some insights in the social relations of science; to develop the interpersonal and organisational skills required for working in groups; to develop skills in research, argument and communication; and to understand values that they may not share.

This course is different from every other course you have so far undertaken at university. You may find it surprising, or even disturbing – and if so, you can be sure that you are learning something. Responsibility for learning will lie very largely with the student, as you will organise your work yourselves. Because it involves group work, the course also requires students to act as teachers, sharing their knowledge and expertise with other group members. Because the course expects you to take responsibility for your own learning, you will not be given detailed instructions. Instead, you will be given goals to be reached. There are very many good ways to reach those goals, and your group will decide which ways to choose. A significant proportion of your thought and energy for this course will be consumed by the organisational and interpersonal demands of the group environment.

Basic course information

Moodle Web site:	search 'HPSC2008'
Assessment:	2 x 2000 word reports on debate motions, 2 x debate performances, 1 x 2000 word individual debate write up
Timetable:	www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/hpsc
Prerequisites:	No prerequisites
Required texts:	No required texts
Course tutors:	Dr Simon J Lock and Dr Inga Kroener

Contact:	simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk t: 020 7679 3763 / i.kroener@ucl.ac.uk t: 020 7679
Web:	www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/staff/lock www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/staff/kroener
Office location:	22 Gordon Square, Room 1.2 (Simon) and Room 3.2 (Inga)
Office hours:	Simon's office hours: Mon 3-4pm and Wed 10am -11am Inga's office hours: Tuesdays 3pm-4pm and Wed 11am – 12pm

Course Schedule

Schedule Term 1 (4-5pm Tuesdays)

UCL Week	Activity	Date	Activity
6	Introduction to course and groups	2 Oct	
7	Risk, Regulation and ethics	9 Oct	
8	Seminar	16 Oct	
9	Science, Publics and Media	23 Oct	
10	Seminar	30 Oct	Bring newspapers to class
11	Reading Week	6 Nov	
12	Groups 1 and 2	13 Nov	
13	Groups 3 and 4	20 Nov	
14	Groups 5 and 1	27 Nov	
15	Groups 2 and 3	4 Dec	
16	Groups 4 and 5	11 Dec	Proposing debate topics submitted

Schedule Term 2 (3-4pm Tuesdays)

UCL Week	Activity	Date	Activity
20	All writing managers to attend	8 Jan	Group proposition report due 11 Jan
21	All proposers to attend	15 Jan	
22	All opposers to attend	22 Jan	
23	All seconders to attend	29 Jan	Group opposition report due 1 Feb
24	All chairs to attend	5 Feb	
25	Reading Week	12 Feb	
26	Debate 1: Group 1 Proposing, Group 3 opposing, Group 5 Chair	19 Feb	

27	Debate 2: Group 2 Proposing, Group 4 opposing, Group 1 Chair	26 Feb	
28	Debate 3: Group 3 Proposing, Group 5 opposing, Group 2 Chair	5 Mar	
29	Debate 4: Group 4 Proposing, Group 1 opposing, Group 3 Chair	12 Mar	
30	Debate 5: Group 5 Proposing, Group 2 opposing, Group 4 Chair	19 Mar	Individual Debate write-up due 22 Mar

Assessments

Summary

	Deadline	Word limit
Group Proposition Report	11.59 pm Friday 11 Jan 2013	2000
Group Opposition Report	11.59 pm Thursday 14 Feb 2013	2000
Debate (Proposition)		n/a
Debate (Opposition)		n/a
Individual Debate Write up	11.59pm Friday 19 Mar 2013	2000

Further details

Group debate reports

Each group will submit a **briefing paper of no more than 2000 words for each of their two cases**. The aim of this exercise is to produce a document that conveys the key information, arguments, data and presentation of this material that will form the basis of the debate presentations. It is up to the groups to decide how to present their document. Each paper counts for 20% of overall marks. Please make sure you clearly identify which group's work it is and include all group members' names on the submitted paper.

Group marks will also be allocated for the debates, considering preparedness, quality of argument and communication skills. Each of the two performances counts for 20% of overall marks.

Individual write-up

Each student will write a critical commentary of no more than 2000 words on one debate in which they were not involved in a format that would be useful e.g. to an MP facing a similar issue or to a journalist preparing an article on the topic. Note this should not simply be a blow-by-blow account of the debate but should be written in the style of your choosing and content tailored for a specific audience and context. The commentary counts for 20% of overall marks.

All coursework must be submitted via Moodle

In order to be deemed 'complete' on this module students must attempt all assessments.

Criteria for assessment

The departmental marking guidelines for individual items of assessment can be found in the STS Student Handbook.

Course Outline

The course begins with a taught introduction to studies of the social relations of the human sciences, lasting five weeks.

This section of the course can be seen in two ways. Firstly, it is about the key social issues that confront working scientists in their careers, and should be of value to you in the long term. Secondly, it serves to highlight for the aspects of the social relations of science that the examiners will be looking for when they mark your coursework.

Short readings for this part of the course will be available as appropriate. Should students wish to build upon the grounding offered in theoretical issues in STS, useful books are:

Massimiano Bucchi, 2002, *Science in Society: An Introduction to Social Studies of Science* (London: Routledge) – a good general introduction to social studies of science

Steve Yearley, 2005, *Making Sense of Science: Understanding the Social Study of Science* (London: Sage) – a little bit more theoretical than Bucchi, but chapters in Part III are especially relevant background material to this course.

Jane Gregory and Steve Miller, 1998, *Science in Public* (New York: Plenum/Perseus) – a survey of issues around public understanding of science.

Mark Erikson, 2005, *Science, Culture and Society – Understanding Science in the 21st Century* (London: Polity) – a very readable general overview of STS

Lupton, D. (1999) *Risk* (Routledge) – a very accessible introduction to the concept of risk.

Students then work in groups. Group work is difficult: it requires many different strategies and a degree of tolerance for differences among group members. Groups will have different problems and will need to develop their own solutions.

The groups research a contentious topic with a view to developing a motion that they will propose in a debate such as might be held e.g. in a local council chamber or alongside a public inquiry. The topics should be chosen to allow ample scope for the discussion of values, and impinge on a range of areas outside science such as the economy, education, human rights or the law. Motions proposed in the past have included:

'This house believes that ...:

GM crops should not be given as aid to developing countries
Prospective parents should have the right to choose the sex of their baby
Patients with self-induced diseases are entitled to the full extent of NHS care
Heroin should replace methadone in the in the treatment of addicts
Cod fishing should be suspended immediately
The use of placebos in double-blind drug trials is not immoral
Surrogate motherhood should be professionalised

The examiners will expect to see the content of the taught introduction to this course reflected in your choice of topic and in your treatment of it.

Within each group, each student will take on one of the following roles: proposer; seconder to the proposition; opposer; seconder to the opposition; diary manager; research manager; writer; editor; debate chair and communications manager. The communications manager will serve as the primary point of contact for all group members and between the course tutor and the group.

The particular responsibilities of each role will be described in class, and particular skills will be discussed and developed in tutorials. It is the responsibility of any student who attends a tutorial to report back to the rest of his or her group. Information communicated in tutorials attended by one group member will be considered to have been communicated to the whole group.

Roles should be allocated by agreement within the group, and be reported to the course tutor as soon as possible. These roles serve to distribute responsibility only: they do not distribute workload. Your job title means that you oversee a task or ensure that it is done – it does not mean you do all the work yourself; nor does it mean that you do not contribute in other roles. Everybody will be contributing in several different ways to the group effort.

It is the responsibility of all group members to see that workload is distributed fairly among group members. Strategies for encouraging participation will be discussed in class. Please note:

- Non-contribution by any student can result in a mark penalty.
- It is the responsibility of the group to ensure that non-participation is addressed at a point when the non-contributor can still make good their contribution.
- The course tutor will intervene to ensure participation if asked to do so.
- People work in different ways, and contributions may be of equal value even if they take different amounts of time or involve different challenges.
- No one group member can set either the standard or the pace of work: these must be arrived at collectively.

Students should keep a course log-book or diary. You may choose the format of this document.

You may be asked to present it at any time, as a record of your contribution to your group's work. It might contain notes from meetings, print-outs of emails, research materials and so on. Any student who can not produce a log-book when asked to do so will be deemed not to have participated and will incur a mark penalty to be decided by the examiners. You may consider asking other group members to sign your log-book when you meet. This log-book is not assessed.

At the end of term 1, each group will be informed of the topic that they will oppose in their second debate. They will do this irrespective of their personal point of view on the issue.

The course will conclude with a series of debates, each lasting one hour. Each group will provide two speakers, the proposer or opposer and the seconder, on each of two occasions: when they propose and when they oppose the motion. Prepared contributions will last around 20 minutes from each side. Groups take responsibility for ensuring that their speakers are confident, well-informed and rehearsed. The audience will then discuss the issue and vote on the motion. In previous years, students have made very similar judgements about the quality of the debates to those made by the examiners. You should therefore consider yourselves well-qualified critics when you develop your team's speeches.

History of, and rationale for, this course

This course was developed in response to comments, over a number of years, from the external and internal examiners on the Human Sciences Board of Examiners. It exercises and develops skills that were often missing from the rest of the Human Sciences degree, but which the Board of Examiners has now decided are essential for Human Sciences graduates. The Human Sciences degree syllabus is largely selected by the individual students, who tend to choose courses that they are interested in and good at. So we can imagine that at least some of the missing skills that ones that students routinely chose to exclude, perhaps because they don't enjoy them or are not good at them. Finding these skills lumped together in a compulsory course is therefore understandably not a welcome experience for some students. However, by designing a single course that includes all of these missing elements, and making it compulsory, the Board can thereby allow you the freedom you still enjoy to choose the rest of your syllabus.

'Will I enjoy it?'

This course is one of those experiences where your attitude and commitment will make a big difference to how you feel about it. In general, students on this course start out rather skeptical of it; they feel a bit down about it towards the middle of the course; and they perk up when the start to get marks back for their coursework. The debates at the end are usually the high point – worth the wait!

Course expectations

All students are expected to attend all sessions except for role specific session in the first five weeks of term 2 where they will go to those session relating to their role in the debates.

Additional information

This course requires students to work in a group for the whole year. Group work can be tricky, but learning to work with others and manage shared discussions and workloads is part of the learning objective for this module. If groups find that their workload is suffering from difficult group dynamics they should make every effort to resolve this themselves in the first instance. However, if any problems persist please notify the course tutors.

Important policy information

Below are listed some important points of policy. Further details of all these policies can be found in the STS Student Handbook www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/handbook

Late submission of coursework

Penalties for late coursework submission are as follows:

- loss of 5 marks for work submitted less than 24 hours late
 - loss of 15 marks for work submitted between 1 and 7 days late
 - loss of all marks (i.e. work is graded 0) if submitted more than 7 days late
- These rules are statutory and non-negotiable.

Coursework word limits

Penalties for over-length coursework are as follows:

- Assessed work should not be more than 10% longer than the prescribed word count. Assessed work with a stated word count above this maximum cannot be accepted for submission, but will be immediately returned to the student with instructions to reduce the word length. The work may then be resubmitted, except insofar as penalties for late submission may apply.
- If submitted work is subsequently found to have an inaccurately stated word count, and to exceed the upper word limit by at least 10% and by less than 20%, the mark will be reduced by ten percentage marks, subject to a minimum mark of a minimum pass assuming that the work merited a pass.
- For work which exceeds the upper word limit by 20% or more, a mark of zero will be recorded.
- Footnotes and endnotes **do** count as part of the word limit
- Bibliography, tables, pictures and graphs **do not** count as part of the word limit.

Extensions

If unforeseeable circumstances prevent the completion of a piece of coursework, students may request an extension to the set deadline. Please consult the STS Student Handbook for further guidance on acceptable grounds for requesting an extension. Extensions must be negotiated in advance with the course tutor. Students to whom STS is parent department may also request an extension from their Personal Tutor. No extension is considered official without written approval.

The request for extension form can be found at: www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/study

Plagiarism

The *UCL Student Handbook* defines plagiarism as “the presentation of another person’s thoughts or words or artefacts or software as though they were [your] own”. Students are expected to know the College and Department policies in detail and to avoid even the appearance of inappropriate behaviour. In the first demonstrated instance of plagiarism or other irregularities in this course, students normally will receive a 0 F for the course and will be referred to the department and College officials for further action. All course work is subject to scrutiny against past papers and other materials for irregularities. Electronic and other checks will be conducted; see the *STS student handbook* for additional information.

Attendance

Regular attendance is mandatory.

Requirements to complete modules

Students are required to be ‘complete’ in all modules. Normally all assignments must be attempted in order for students to be considered complete. This is different from ‘passing’ a module which requires a minimum overall module mark of 40%.

Assessment and additional examiners

Assessed materials are marked by the course tutors. These provisional marks will be distributed to students at the first opportunity. To ensure fairness, materials subsequently are scrutinised by a second examiner within the Department, and a consensus is reached on these separate assessments. All assessed materials and the consensus marks are made available for scrutiny by an examiner external to UCL. Marks are considered final only after the Board of Examiners for Science and Technology Studies has approved them in their annual meeting near the close of Term three.

Disputed marks

Students must endeavour to discuss any grievances over marks informally with the course tutor in the first instance. If informal discussion fails to resolve the matter satisfactorily and there appears to be genuine and substantive grounds for appeal, the student should submit a written explanation of their grievance to the chair of the board of examiners. A final formal written appeal can be made to the College Registrar.

Mechanisms for student feedback

Students have a variety of means for commenting on the module and module tutor. These include written module evaluations at the end of term, regular lecture assessments offered by the module tutor, and in-session opportunities. Students are welcome to bring comments and criticisms to the module tutor in the first instance, by anonymous note if necessary, then to their personal tutor or the STS undergraduate tutor. The department schedules regular meetings of the Undergraduate Student Staff Consultative Committee to which all students are invited.

What will happen at the Debates

Standard debating rules are based on Parliamentary practice – you'll see this reflected in some of the terms used. Your arguments will not be taken necessarily to reflect your personal view, but they should be delivered with conviction.

We will do our best to start promptly at 3.05pm. The four speakers and the Chair will sit at the front of the lecture theatre. Other group members may decide to sit near their speakers or among the audience.

3.05 pm The Chair will state the motion, which will also be displayed on an overhead which the proposing group should bring along. It is usual to introduce the motion with the phrase: 'Our motion today is that This House believes that...'. **After stating the motion, the Chair will introduce by name the first speaker, the Proposer of the Motion.** 'To propose the motion, NAME'.

The Proposer speaks for no more than ten minutes. They set out the case for the motion. The task for all speakers is to be emphatic, assertive, persuasive, clear and accurate about their case. It is the Chair's job to silence any speaker who overruns.

3.15 pm The Chair then introduces the Opposer, who sets out the case against the motion. The 10-minute limit applies.

During the Opposition and Proposition speeches, group members may pass information to their Secunder. This should be done in complete silence and with the absolute minimum disruption or distraction for the speakers.

3.25pm Then the Chair introduces the Secunder of the Proposition, who speaks for 10 minutes. They should be reacting to the Opposition speech and reminding the audience of the key arguments of the proposition.

3.35pm The Chair introduces the Secunder of the Opposition, who has 10 minutes in which to respond to arguments already made and to sum up the Opposition case.

3.45pm The Chair opens the debate to The Floor – the audience. This is NOT a question and answer session after a talk. The audience should make new points, demand justification of stupid arguments, insist on confirmatory evidence, mock the speakers' rationales, point out omissions and expose flaws in logic. Raise your hand and the Chair will invite you to make your point, but you may also feel the need to just interrupt. Group members may wish to pose as ordinary members of the audience in order to make certain points or to steer the argument in particular directions. A key message of this course is: arguments are about more than just the facts.

3.55pm The Chair silences the mob and conducts the Vote. Referring to the Motion, votes are invited for and against. The Chair then declares the motion either upheld or defeated, and states what This House believes.

HPSC 2008 Human Sciences & Society Groups for 2012-13

Group 1

Pek Im
Laura Krannich
Sorcha Bradford
Matilda Mayne
Robyn Easton
Jennifer Bath
Ziqi Chen
Chinua Ilobi

Group 2

Hannah James
Heather Fuller
Caroline Dubois
Ashley Ali
Hannah Sargeant
Koray Yilmaz
Anna Earle
Zack Bond

Group 3

Siti Binte Mohd Ikhsan
Manon Puls
Sasha Seddon
Oran Maguire
Sigourney Waibel
Peter-Paul Brenninkmeijer
Olivia Norris

Group 4

Henry Cullis
Mimmi Södermark
Jessica Fox
George Heaton
Sarah Rayment
Leo Polchar
Andrew Fei

Group 5

Albane Sautory
Danielle Murray
Sami Mason
Nina Goodyear
Andrianna Christodoulou
Hugh Hennessy Holland
Sophia Gordon

Jobs in each group

Please would one group member add the names of the student undertaking each role, and return the form to Simon or Inga.

Group number:

		Name and email address
1	Proposer	
2	Secunder to the proposition	
3	Opposer	
4	Secunder to the opposition	
5	Debate chair	
6	Writer/s	
7	Diary and communications manager	
8	Research manager/s	