

# HPSC0091 Science, Technology & Identity

## Course Syllabus

2024-25 session | Professor Simon Lock | [simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk)

### Course Information

This module is your opportunity to explore how science and technology are co-constructed alongside the intersections of gender, 'race'/ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability, age and other factors that affect our life chances and our identities via a historical, sociological and politics lens. The module is interdisciplinary, and will draw on wide range of concepts from political philosophy, sociology, education, cultural studies and STS.

**\*\*\* BEWARNED: there is a lot of reading and it IS essential! \*\*\*\***

### Basic course information

Course website:	See Moodle
Moodle Web site:	Search "HPSC0091"
Assessment:	100% Coursework: 50% Group Project, 50% Essay
Timetable:	Term 2, Wednesday, 10am-12pm
Prerequisites:	None
Required texts:	See syllabus & Moodle
Course tutor(s):	Professor Simon Lock
Contact:	<a href="mailto:simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk">simon.lock@ucl.ac.uk</a>
Web:	<a href="https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/people/dr-simon-lock">https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/people/dr-simon-lock</a>
Office location:	22 Gordon Square, room 2.2
Office hours	Tuesday 11am-1pm (in person or online)

### Schedule

Week	Topic	Date	Preparation Activity
1	Intro and Thinking about Science, Technology and Identity	15 Jan 2025	Essential readings

2	Science and Race	22 Jan 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
3	Technology and Race	29 Jan 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
4	Science and Gender	5 Feb 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
5	Technology and Gender	12 Feb 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
<b>READING WEEK</b>			
6	Science and Sexualities	26 Feb 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
7	Technology and Sexualities	5 Mar 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
8	Science and Disability	12 Mar 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
9	Technology and Disability	19 Mar 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
10	Student chosen topic week	26 Mar 2025	Essential readings Assigned students lead discussion
Group project videos due		31 March 2025	
Essay due		29 April 2025	

## Assessments

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### Summary

	Description	Deadline	Word limit	Deadline for Tutors to provide Feedback
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<b>Group project</b>	Video presentation (group)	Monday 31 March 2025, 5pm	10 minutes	
	Academic Essay	Tuesday 29 April 2025 5pm	2500	6 <sup>th</sup> Feb 2023

## Assignments & Specific Criteria for Assessment for this Module:

### Assessment 1: Group Project

The group projects will be carried out in pairs (ish) or threes (ish), and will give you the other 50% of your mark (the essay being also 50%).

**The brief:** Working with the theoretical concepts discussed in the weeks before, you will choose your own specific contemporary case-study concerned with science, technology, identity and social justice and produce a presentation. For the theory 'element' think about how your case study challenges, adds to, or disrupts the theoretical concepts discussed over the course of the module AND how it compares to the other case studies on the reading list. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your familiarity with and use of the key theoretical and critical concepts from the module and apply them to a novel case study.

In your group you will submit a 10 min video presentation of your case study and critical analysis using the ideas and themes and discussion from the class. This will be due on Monday 31 March 2025, 5pm.

Further instructions will follow and there will be opportunities to discuss with the tutor.

### Assessment 2: Research essay

You will need to write a 2500 word essay on your own that will be 50% of your mark, due on the 29 April 2025 at 5pm. The summative assessment will involve both theoretical reflection and research using primary & secondary sources, using course concepts and applying them to an STS issue or case study (if you use the same theme or case study of your group project make sure your thinking has moved on from when you did the project & précis, rather than handing in the exact same thing twice!). The aim of this assignment is for students to critically engage with the theoretical dimensions of a science and/or technology issue. You will write your own essay title/question. If you want formative feedback on your question (along with a rough thematic area and plan for your arguments) and send them to Simon for feedback by the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025. The 2500 words does not include your references.

Please see Moodle for more information about the assessments and specific assessment criteria.

## **AI/ChatGPT Policy 2024-25**

The use of ChatGPT or any other AI platform or tool to generate either ideas or written content, or to produce any other material **is prohibited in this module**. This aligns with [UCL's Category 1 guidance for students here](#).

This policy is for a number of reasons, many of which we encourage you to explore as part of your time studying science and technology studies, as they are all good case studies in the politics, ethics and cultures of technology in society, and how these intersect with social and environmental justice:

- This class is designed to improve your research and writing skills; if you're not learning how to do research for yourself, think for yourself and write for yourself, you're not developing the skills you came here to learn nor improving them.
- Using AI opens up academic honesty issues, both because it raises the question of whether the work is "your" work, and also because tools like ChatGPT rely on taking uncredited material from scholars and writers mostly without their permission.
- Using AI does not produce reliably accurate results. See [here](#).
- ChatGPT has serious negative environmental impacts, particularly in relation to water usage (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for more info).
- Open AI has exploited workers from the global south, especially workers in prisons and refugee camps, and workers in Kenya, the Philippines, Colombia, and elsewhere (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) & for more info).

To put it more bluntly: there are thousands of people in the world who would love to be in your position-getting to be a student at a major UK research university with relatively small class sizes and extremely prestigious faculty. Education like this is not available to everyone. Furthermore, someone is paying for you to be here (whether that's yourself, parents/relatives, scholarships/grants, loans, etc).

If you choose to spend this (both incredible and incredibly expensive) opportunity to learn by trying to avoid doing the work and learning through the use of AI tools, you are only cheating yourself-and contributing to environmental harms, copyright infringement and labour exploitation in the process.

**For these reasons, the use of ChatGPT or any other AI tools is not a part of this classroom community, no exceptions.**

## **Aims & objectives**

### **Aims:**

This module aims to explore how science and technology are co-constructed alongside the intersections of gender, 'race'/ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability, age and other factors that affect our life chances and our identities via a historical, sociological and politics lens. The module is interdisciplinary, and will draw on wide range of concepts from political philosophy, sociology, education, cultural studies and STS.

### **Objectives**

By the end of this module students should be able to:

- Be active & engaged participants in co-constructing their classrooms, responsible for their own learning.
- Demonstrate their understanding of key theoretical concepts from STS and identity theories.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which identities are co-constructed and contested through engagements with science, technology and culture both explicitly (for example, through medical categorisation systems) and implicitly (through media & cultural consumption embedded in everyday life).
- Demonstrate an understanding the roles of structure and agency in the co-construction of identities on one hand and science & technology on the other.
- Apply key theoretical concepts from this course to critically analyse a range of issues (contemporary & historic) in science & technology.
- Analyse closely, interpret and show the exercise of critical judgement in the understanding

**Your participation matters!** This is a participatory, collaborative class where students help to lead their own discussions and activities. On a weekly basis you will have academic homework to do. Each week you will need to read the essential readings (& any of the additional readings that you find interesting). If it is your week to lead the class discussion you will come prepared with questions and critiques to stimulate discussion with the class.

You are expected to attend all classes and to demonstrate active engagement with your learning through taking on teaching & learning activities, participating in discussions, exploring readings and other learning materials, sharing notes & materials as appropriate and sharing your ideas with the group. You can miss up to two classes without upsetting us too much (but please email to let me know). If you miss three we'll need to have a chat about what's going on & what solutions might be available to best support your learning.

## ***Reading list***

This module involves lots of reading & thinking, before you come to class, to form the basis of an informed discussion. See Moodle for the full reading list. There you will also find suggested additional readings to assist you when planning and writing your assessments (again these are broadly themed by weekly topic but they also work well across the whole course)