Over the past century, science and technology have increasingly permeated everyday life, while institutionalizing and growing in status domestically and globally. Scientific and technological knowledge has become a dominant form of knowledge, overshadowing and overpowering other authoritative forms. This course will explore fundamental sociological theory of science and technology from Sociology and Science and Technology Studies. It will also introduce students to exemplary research in these domains. All inquiry will analyze science and technology from the perspective of its relationship to race, gender, sexuality, and postcoloniality.

Diversity Statement:

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances.

Learning Goals:

This course will engage the major theoretical debates in Science and Technology Studies, while familiarizing students with equally fundamental debates in the sociology of race, gender, sexuality, and postcoloniality. The course will investigate research methodologies for studying science and technology from a sociological perspective, while providing students with experience conducting their own original research project. The course will also focus on professionalization in the fields of Sociology and Science and Technology Studies, acquainting students with relevant professional societies and sections as well as academic and nonacademic career pathways.

Course Requirements:

Requirements for this class include attending all course meetings, having done the assigned reading. Students will be expected to participate in all discussions. (60% of your grade)
The major piece of required work will be a final paper, 20-25 pages in length, which investigates one aspect of science and technology from a sociological perspective (see Paper Guidelines). Students will be expected in their writings to show that they know how to use theory and empirical studies to support their theses. The paper will be due December 17 at 5pm. (40% of your grade)

Students must purchase the latest edition of each of the assigned books. Many chapters and articles may be found free online. Most books are available in an e-format.

Required Readings:

Week 1.  Introduction to Science and Technology Studies Approaches: Sociology of Science Then and Now

Week 2.  Introduction to Science and Technology Studies Approaches: Sociology of Science as Culture

Week 3.  Introduction to Science and Technology Studies Approaches: Actors, Actants, and Networks

Week 4.  Introduction to Science and Technology Studies Approaches: Biopower and Biosociality
Week 5.  Introduction to Science and Technology Studies Approaches: Biopolitics in the Twenty-first Century

Week 6.  Racial Conceptualization

Week 7.  Racial Bioscience

Week 8.  Racial Innovations

Week 9.  The Science of Sex

Week 10.  Making Sex, Making Gender

Week 11.  Capitalism in Postcolonial, Postgenomic Times

Week 12.  Global Inequalities

Week 13.  Science and Technology Studies Approaches in a Global Context