This course is an advanced graduate STS/SOC seminar designed to rethink the role of science and technology in everyday life. For the most part, it consists of a survey of theoretical approaches to understanding relations between science/technology and everyday life. Depending upon student interests, the course will also explore selected pathways of flow in and out of everyday life, e.g., science textbook writing, popular science and science journalism, science education and the selves of scientists, science use as consumption, science as entertainment, code-switching between academic and popular theorizing in scientific discourse.

A working hypothesis to provoke discussion:

Truth lives in everyday, popular theorizing rather than in academic theory. New academic knowledge becomes true only once it makes it into popular knowledge. The main function of the academy is pedagogical, convincing popular arenas to accept and integrate new knowledge.

Popular science writing, including textbook writing, is a positive act of re-organizing proposed scientific truths to fit or replace existing truths, rather than a watering-down of new knowledge for low-brow consumption. A key question concerns the productive work through which people, including scientists, locate science in their lives and selves.

Inside the academy, research is downstream of teaching rather than the other way around, as researchers go off to locate new knowledge to address issues in popular theory.

In short, the longstanding model of knowledge creation, diffusion, and utilization can be turned upside down. Academic theorizing remains the crucial site of cultural imagination, but popular theorizing is the site of authority and truth.

Requirements for class participants: (1) help shape the course around your research interests; (2) read and be prepared to discuss 175-200 pages per week; (3) lead class discussion at least twice; and (4) complete a semester-long project that fits both course material and your research interests.

Course readings:

*establishes and outlines the problem of science and selfhood

*selfhood as a problem of identity

*the diffusion of new knowledge as flow of metaphors; concept of ‘saturation’

*theorizes resistance and reformulation of dominant images in the everyday

*thinking through the concept of hegemony
*what can we learn from the concept of ‘nomad’ thought?

*focuses on quality of life in the everyday

*does their argument depend on code-switching between academic and popular theorizing?

**Schedule of Topics**

**August 29**
Introductory discussion

**September 5**
The problem of science and selfhood:
Stone, Sandy: *The War of Desire and Technology*

**September 12**
Approaches to identity 1:
Gergen, Kenneth: *The Saturated Self*

**September 19**
Approaches to identity 2:
Gergen, Kenneth: *The Saturated Self*

**September 26**
Following flows of metaphors in both directions
Martin, Emily: *Flexible Bodies*

**October 3**
Shifting focus from producer to consumer
de Certeau: *The Practice of Everyday Life*

**October 10**
How the weak make use of the strong
de Certeau: *The Practice of Everyday Life*

**October 17**
Approaches to ideology
Forgacs: *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*

**October 24**
Might hegemony be an issue of scale?
Forgacs: *The Antonio Gramsci Reader*

**October 31**
Nomad thought does not live in an edifice of ordered interiority
Deleuze and Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

**November 7**
A plateau is when circumstances bring an activity to a pitch of intensity that is not immediately dissipated.
Deleuze and Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

**November 14**
What can we draw from this pragmatic philosophy?
Deleuze and Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

**November 21**
A focus on quality of life in everyday life
Lefebvre: *Everyday Life in the Modern World*
November 28
Case study of flow: Is this a case of code switching?
Gross and Levitt: *Higher Superstition*

December 5
Case study of flow: TBA

December 12
Case study of flow: TBA

Some possible concepts for describing the everyday in relation to science and technology
- **Everyday life:** de Certeau: "everyday life does provide an area which imaginative intellectual analysis and description may produce liberating effects"
- **Folk understandings, folk wisdom, folk ideology:** note how this concept tends to privilege scientific theorizing
- **Sites of resistance:** do people reproduce power through resistance, e.g., dropping out, or is it creative?
- **Ideology:** must it be only an accusation? Might we see it as simply an organized model, or is it one that desires to attain universal or foundational status, and so is uncompromising?
- **Active audiences:** Through polysemy, audiences can latch onto other meanings as vehicles of resistance
- **Stories:** central stories vs. peripheral stories
- **Discourses, narrative conventions, discursive fields of power and meaning:** What is a discourse? How to link these to large-scale processes?
- **Codes**
- **Myths:** myth of language, for example, is transparency and universality (Barthes)
- **Common sense:** devalued by logical empiricism
- **Cultural stereotypes:** a good way to describe dominance without accepting dominance
- **Styles:** Adorno and Horkheimer: "style is the record of tradition"
- **National vernaculars:**
- **Deeply held values and cultural themes, dominant cultural assumptions, cultural idioms:** all traditional concepts in cultural anthropology
- **Dominant images:** a newer approach to culture
- **Subcultures:** not a piece of a culture but a subordinate culture; hence there can be tremendous overlap
- **Identity, identities:** note how it is often understood in essential terms, vs. attempts to understand it as the product of relationships
- **Performance in different registers**
- **Site for pleasures:** attending to pleasures is often an important part of investigating the popular;
  - cultural studies concept
- **Carnival:** contrasted with the spectacle
- **Popular theorizing:** located in relation to and on equal footing with academic theorizing
- **Hegemony:** Gramsci: "involves not coercion but consent on the part of the dominated"
- **Multiplicity of selves, selves in the plural:** Spivak: "one is not just one thing"
- **Embodied subjects, subjectivities:** subjectivity is the product of a process of embodiment
- **Governmentality:** Foucault: producing conforming or docile citizens through education

How have different intellectual traditions approached the question of the everyday?
What different methodologies are used to explore the everyday?
What counts as successful intervention in dominant images?