History 317 Twentieth Century Science
MWF 2:00-2:50
Room TBD

Prof. Cyrus Mody
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Office hours: by appointment

Grading:

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>General in-class participation</td>
<td>one quarter</td>
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<td>Presentations of primary and secondary sources</td>
<td>one quarter</td>
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<td>“Homework”</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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Participation: This course will largely be conducted through in-class discussion, so active participation in discussion is crucial. You should come to each meeting prepared to engage in a scholarly conversation with myself and the other students.

Presentations of primary and secondary sources: I would like to make this course an experimental site for hands-on and semi-directed training in critical reading and presentation skills. To do that, I would like each student to take responsibility for presenting one primary source and one secondary source each week.

For primary sources, I suggest you use an editorial or news item from Science or Nature, the premier general science anglophone journals. These are available online through the Fondren website. You should post your primary source to the course Owl-Space site by 5:00 p.m. the day before we discuss the primary sources for that week. Every student should post a different source, so look through the other submissions before posting yours. Try to look at all the posted sources before coming to class. In class, you should talk about your source for a few minutes; what does your source indicate about the conditions and conduct of science in the years under discussion?

For secondary sources, I have compiled a bibliography of articles from the past thirty years on topics in the history of science. Each week I will distribute a portion of that bibliography dealing with the decade of the twentieth century that we will be discussing the following week. Each student will select an article from the bibliography (or find one on their own, as long as you clear it with me) and present a summary of the article in class the next week.

“Homework”: About every three weeks, I will ask each student to come up with a synthetic question related to the topics for that section of the course. I will then put those questions together in a homework assignment which you will have a week to complete.

Final: There will be a take-home final exam. This will be administered through Owl-Space, due by the end of the exam period. Since it is a take-home, you will be allowed to use the course readings and any notes you have taken.
Note: any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustment or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students with disabilities should also contact Disabled Student Services in the Allen Center.

Learning outcomes: By the end of this course, you should be able to articulate the general contours of science in the 20th century as a human, social, globally-distributed enterprise with complex connections to politics, religion, technology, commerce, warfare, class, race, gender, colonialism, and a variety of other facets of human history. While I don’t expect you to remember most of the specifics of the course once you graduate, I would like you to (A) be able to relearn this material very quickly if you ever have another occasion to study the history of science; (B) be able to dispense with some common myths about science and scientists; and (C) be able to read about current public debates in which science figures with an eye to the broad points we discuss in this course.

You should also pick up some practical skills during this semester, if you have not done so already. In particular, you will need to know how to listen and take notes, summarize an argument, find and read closely primary historical documents, and present your own thoughts for discussion.

Plagiarism and the Honor Code: Every assignment in this course is covered by Rice’s Honor Code. I won’t ask you to check off the Honor Code box on your regular homeworks, but you are still required to abide by it. That means that you must adhere to standard US academic practice when it comes to originality of work and citation of sources. Any time you quote from a source, you must cite that source and you must indicate that you are quoting rather than paraphrasing. Any time you paraphrase a source, you must acknowledge it. If you rely on an idea borrowed from someone else, you should indicate that. I am not a stickler for any particular citation style, but whatever style you choose should be (A) consistent and (B) clear enough that your reader can track down your source and verify it.
Schedule:

Monday, January 13: Introduction to class

Wednesday, January 15: Lecture: 20th Century overview

Friday, January 17: Lecture (online): pre-1900 up to the Great War

Wednesday, January 22: Article discussion: 1900-1914

Friday, January 24: Primary source discussion: 1900-1914

Monday, January 27: Article discussion: 1914-1918

Wednesday, January 29: Article discussion: 1914-1918

Friday, January 31: Primary source discussion: 1914-1918

Monday, February 3: Article discussion: 1918-1929

Wednesday, February 5: Article discussion: 1918-1929

Assignment 1a: formulate a synthetic question covering pre-1900 to 1929

Friday, February 7: Primary source discussion: 1918-1929

Assignment 1b: answer your and the other students’ synthetic questions from 1a

Monday, February 10: Article discussion: 1929-1939

Wednesday, February 12: Article discussion: 1929-1939

Friday, February 14: Primary source discussion: 1929-1939

Monday, February 17: Article discussion: 1939-1945

Wednesday, February 19: Article discussion: 1939-1945

Friday, February 21: Primary source discussion: 1939-1945

Monday, February 24: Article discussion: 1945-1949

Wednesday, February 26: Article discussion: 1945-1949

Assignment 2a: formulate a synthetic question covering 1929 to 1949

Friday, February 28: Primary source discussion: 1945-1949

Assignment 2b: answer your and the other students’ synthetic questions from 2a

Monday, March 10: Article discussion: 1949-1957
Wednesday, March 12: Article discussion: 1949-1957

Friday, March 14: Primary source discussion: 1949-1957

Monday, March 17: Article discussion: 1957-1967

Wednesday, March 19: Article discussion: 1957-1967

Friday, March 21: Primary source discussion: 1957-1967


Wednesday, March 26: Article discussion: 1967-1973

Assignment 3a: formulate a synthetic question covering 1949-1973

Friday, March 28: Primary source discussion: 1967-1973

Assignment 3b: answer your and the other students’ synthetic questions from 3a

Monday, March 31: Lecture: 1967-1973

Wednesday, April 2: Lecture: 1973-1980

Monday, April 7: Article discussion: 1973-1980

Wednesday, April 9: Article discussion: 1973-1980

Friday, April 11: Primary source discussion: 1973-1980

Monday, April 14: Article discussion: 1980-1989

Wednesday, April 16: Article discussion: 1980-1989

Assignment 4a: formulate a synthetic question covering 1973-2000

Friday, April 18: Primary source discussion: 1980-1989

Assignment 4b: answer your and the other students’ synthetic questions from 4a


Wednesday, April 23: Article discussion: 1989-2000

Friday, April 25: Primary source discussion: 1989-2000