Undergraduate Subjects

Tier I Subjects

STS.001 Technology in American History
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

A survey of America's transition from a rural, agrarian, and artisan society to one of the world's leading industrial powers. Treats the emergence of industrial capitalism: the rise of the factory system; new forms of power, transport, and communication; the advent of the large industrial corporation; the social relations of production; and the hallmarks of science-based industry. Views technology as part of the larger culture and reveals innovation as a process consisting of a range of possibilities that are chosen or rejected according to the social criteria of the time.

M. R. Smith

STS.002 Finance and Society
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H

Examines finance as a social technology intended to improve economic opportunity by moving capital to where it is most needed. Surveys the history of modern finance, from medieval Italy to the Great Depression, while addressing credit, finance and state (and imperial) power, global financial interconnection, and financial crises. Explores modern finance (since about 1950) from a variety of historical and social-scientific perspectives, covering quant finance, financialization, the crisis of 2007-2008, and finance in the digital age. Enrollment limited.

W. Deringer

STS.003 The Rise of Modern Science
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Covers the development of major fields in the physical and life sciences, from 18th-century Europe through 20th-century America. Examines ideas, institutions, and the social settings of the sciences, with emphasis on how cultural contexts influence scientific concepts and practices.

Staff

STS.004 Intersections: Science, Technology, and the World
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Exposes students to multidisciplinary studies in Science, Technology, and Society (STS), using four case studies to illustrate a broad range of approaches to basic principles of STS studies. Case studies vary from year to year, but always include a current MIT event. Other topics are drawn from legal and political conflicts, and arts and communication media. Includes guest presenters, discussion groups, field activities, visual media, and a practicum style of learning. Enrollment limited.

D. Fitzgerald

STS.006[J] Bioethics
Same subject as 24.06[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

See description under subject 24.06[J].

A. Jaques, R. Scheffler

STS.007 Technology in History
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Covers theories of the interactions between historical and technological change; relations between the histories of science and of technology; purported turning points such as the Neolithic, Industrial, and Information Revolutions; case studies from a wide range of times and places; and connections across time and space. Lectures supplemented by student presentations. Frequent writing, rewriting, and small group work. Enrollment limited.

R. H. Williams
**STS.008 Technology and Experience**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-S; CI-H  
Introduces the “inner history” of technology: how it affects intimate aspects of human experience from sociological, psychological and anthropological perspectives. Topics vary, but may include how the internet transforms our experience of time, space, privacy, and social engagement; how entertainment media affects attention, creativity, aesthetics and emotion; how innovations in wearable and textile technologies reshape notions of history and identity; how pharmaceuticals reshape identity, mood, pain, and pleasure. Includes in-class discussion of readings, short written and multimedia assignments, final project. Enrollment limited.  
*Staff*

**STS.009 Evolution and Society**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
Provides a broad conceptual and historical introduction to scientific theories of evolution and their place in the wider culture. Embraces historical, scientific and anthropological/cultural perspectives grounded in relevant developments in the biological sciences since 1800 that are largely responsible for the development of the modern theory of evolution by natural selection. Students read key texts, analyze key debates (e.g. Darwinian debates in the 19th century, and the creation controversies in the 20th century) and give class presentations.  
*J. Durant, R. Scheffler*

**STS.011 Engineering Life: Biotechnology and Society**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Spring)  
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  
Provides instruction in the history of humanity’s efforts to control and shape life through biotechnology, from agriculture to gene editing. Examines the technologies, individuals and socio-economic systems that are associated with such efforts, as well as the impact that these efforts have on society and science as a whole. Explores these issues with particular attention to the development of the modern biotechnology industry in the Greater Boston area. Includes a field trip.  
*R. W. Scheffler*

**STS.012 Science in Action: Technologies and Controversies in Everyday Life**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-S  
Explores a range of controversies about the role of technology, the nature of scientific research and the place of politics in science: debates about digital piracy and privacy, the role of activism in science, the increasingly unclear boundaries between human and non-human, the role of MRIs as courtroom evidence, the potential influence of gender on scientific research, etc. Provides exposure to science in a dynamic relation with social life and cultural ideas. Materials draw from humanities and social science research, ethnographic fieldwork, films and science podcasts, as well as from experimental multimedia.  
*D. Banerjee*

**Tier II Subjects**

**STS.022[J] Gender, Race, and Environmental Justice**  
Same subject as 21G.057[J], WGS.275[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  
See description under subject 21G.057[J]. Limited to 18.  
*B. Stoetzer*

**STS.023[J] Science, Gender and Social Inequality in the Developing World**  
Same subject as WGS.226[J]  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  
See description under subject WGS.226[J].  
*A. Sur*
**STS.025[J] Making the Modern World: The Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective**

Same subject as 21H.285[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Global survey of the great transformation in history known as the "Industrial Revolution." Topics include origins of mechanized production, the factory system, steam propulsion, electrification, mass communications, mass production and automation. Emphasis on the transfer of technology and its many adaptations around the world. Countries treated include Great Britain, France, Germany, the US, Sweden, Russia, Japan, China, and India. Includes brief reflection papers and a final paper.

*M. R. Smith*

**STS.026 History of Manufacturing in America**

Subject meets with STS.425
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Introductory survey of fundamental innovations and transitions in American manufacturing from the colonial period to the mid-twentieth century. Primary emphasis on textiles and metalworking, with particular attention to the role of the machine tool industry in the American manufacturing economy. Students taking graduate version are expected to explore the material in greater depth.

*M. R. Smith*

**STS.027[J] The Civil War and the Emergence of Modern America: 1861-1890**

Same subject as 21H.205[J]
Subject meets with STS.427
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Using the American Civil War as a baseline, considers what it means to become "modern" by exploring the war’s material and manpower needs, associated key technologies, and how both influenced the United States’ entrance into the age of "Big Business." Readings include material on steam transportation, telegraphic communications, arms production, naval innovation, food processing, medicine, public health, management methods, and the mass production of everything from underwear to uniforms – all essential ingredients of modernity. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

*M. R. Smith*

**STS.028 Seven Wonders of the Engineering World**

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Uses case studies to take a broad-ranging look at seven major engineering achievements in world history. Examines the nature of engineering as a source of knowledge production/application, how it reflects the cultural settings in which it emerges, and how it changes as it enters different cultural and economic settings. Includes weekly reflection papers. Achievements covered vary from term to term. Limited to 20.

*M. R. Smith*

**STS.032 Energy, Environment, and Society**

Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Examines national and global energy debates, namely energy security, climate change, and energy access. Explores technological, market, environmental, cultural and political "fixes" to the energy question, as well as a wide variety of energy forms and stakeholders. Evaluates development, nuclear security, environment ethics, and conflicts between energy and food security. Includes debates, presentations, group projects (in class and in the Cambridge community), grant-writing, and individual written assignments. Enrollment limited.

*C. Mavhunga*

**STS.033[J] People and the Planet: Environmental Histories and Engineering**

Same subject as 11.004[J]
Subject meets with 11.204[J], IDS.524[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-3-6 units. HASS-E

See description under subject 11.004[J].

*A. Glasmeier, J. Knox-Hayes, A. Slocum, R. Scheffler, J. Trancik*
STS.034 Science Communication: A Practical Guide
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Develops students’ abilities to communicate science effectively in a variety of real-world contexts. Covers strategies for dealing with complex areas like theoretical physics, genomics and neuroscience, and addresses challenges in communicating about topics such as climate change and evolution. Projects focus on speaking and writing, being an expert witness, preparing briefings for policymakers, writing blogs, giving live interviews for broadcast, and creating a prospectus for a science exhibit in the MIT Museum. Enrollment limited.
B. Venkataraman

STS.035 Exhibiting Science
Prereq: One CI-H/CI-HW subject and permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
2-2-8 units. HASS-A

Project-based seminar covers key topics in museum communication, including science learning in informal settings, the role of artifacts and interactives, and exhibit evaluation. Students work on a term-long project, organized around the design, fabrication, and installation of an original multimedia exhibit about current scientific research at MIT. Culminates with the project’s installation in the MIT Museum’s Mark Epstein Innovation Gallery. Limited to 20; preference to students who have taken STS.034.
J. Durant

STS.042[J] Einstein, Oppenheimer, Feynman: Physics in the 20th Century
Same subject as 8.225[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Explores the changing roles of physics and physicists during the 20th century. Topics range from relativity theory and quantum mechanics to high-energy physics and cosmology. Examines the development of modern physics within shifting institutional, cultural, and political contexts, such as physics in Imperial Britain, Nazi Germany, US efforts during World War II, and physicists’ roles during the Cold War. Enrollment limited.
D. I. Kaiser

STS.043 Technology and Self: Science, Technology, and Memoir
Subject meets with STS.443
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)
2-0-7 units. HASS-S

Focuses on the memoir as a window onto the relationship of the scientist, engineer, and technologist to his or her work. Studies the subjective side of technology and the social and psychological dimensions of technological change. Students write about specific objects and their role in their lives - memoir fragments. Readings concern child development theory and the role of technology in development. Explores the connection between material culture, identity, cognitive and emotional development. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15; no listeners.
S. Turkle

STS.044 Technology and Self: Things and Thinking
Subject meets with STS.444
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)
2-0-7 units. HASS-S

Explores emotional and intellectual impact of objects. The growing literature on cognition and “things” cuts across anthropology, history, social theory, literature, sociology, and psychology and is of great relevance to science students. Examines the range of theories, from Mary Douglas in anthropology to D. W. Winnicott in psychoanalytic thinking, that underlies “thing” or “object” analysis. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15; no listeners.
S. Turkle

STS.046[J] The Science of Race, Sex, and Gender
Same subject as 21A.103[J], WGS.225[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

Explores the changing roles of physics and physicists during the 20th century. Topics range from relativity theory and quantum mechanics to high-energy physics and cosmology. Examines the development of modern physics within shifting institutional, cultural, and political contexts, such as physics in Imperial Britain, Nazi Germany, US efforts during World War II, and physicists’ roles during the Cold War. Enrollment limited.
D. I. Kaiser

See description under subject WGS.225[J].
A. Sur
**STS.047 Quantifying People: A History of Social Science**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Spring)  
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered  
3-0-9 units. HASS-S  

Historical examination of the quest to understand human society scientifically. Focuses on quantification, including its central role in the historical development of social science and its importance in the 21st-century data age. Covers the political arithmetic of the 17th century to the present. Emphasizes intensive reading of primary sources, which represent past attempts to count, calculate, measure, and model many dimensions of human social life (population, wealth, health, happiness, intelligence, crime, deviance, race). Limited to 25.  
W. Deringer

**STS.048 African Americans in Science, Technology, and Medicine**  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  

A survey of the contributions of African Americans to science, technology, and medicine from colonial times to the present. Explores the impact of concepts, trends, and developments in science, technology, and medicine on the lives of African Americans. Examples include the eugenics movement, the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment, the debate surrounding racial inheritance, and IQ testing.  
K. Manning

**STS.049 The Long War Against Cancer**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  

Examines anticancer efforts as a critical area for the formation of contemporary biomedical explanations for health and disease. Begins with the premise that the most significant implications of these efforts extend far beyond the success or failure of individual cancer therapies. Considers developments in the epidemiology, therapy, and politics of cancer. Uses the history of cancer to connect the history of biology and medicine to larger social and cultural developments, including those in bioethics, race, gender, activism, markets, and governance.  
R. W. Scheffler

**STS.050 The History of MIT**  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  

Examines the history of MIT, from its founding to the present, through the lens of the history of science and technology. Topics include William Barton Rogers; the modern research university and educational philosophy; campus, intellectual, and organizational development; changing laboratories and practices; MIT’s relationship with Boston, the federal government, and industry; and notable activities and achievements of students, alumni, faculty, and staff. Includes guest lecturers, on-campus field trips, and interactive exercises. Limited to 20.  
D. Douglas

**STS.052 Living with Risk: Threats, Accidents, and Disasters in a Technological Age (New)**  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H  

Uses a set of case studies to develop an analytical framework for understanding complex scientific and technical systems and their occasional failures. Addresses topics such as nuclear power and weapons, marine shipping, cybersecurity, and rising sea levels.  
D. Fitzgerald

**STS.058 Space Exploration and Interplanetary Habitation (New)**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Spring)  
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered  
3-0-9 units. HASS-E  

Engages with historical, contemporary and emerging practices in sciences, design, architecture, arts, and technology to examine how the study of the histories of colonialism, capitalism, racism, and sexism offers critical means and methods for (re)envisioning outer space exploration, life under extreme conditions, and planetary habitation. Instruction offers tools of analysis issued from Science and Technology Studies (STS) and Feminist Sciences Studies to assess the social, political and anthropological impact of outer space science and technology on Earth-based societies.  
M-P. Boucher
STS.060[J] The Anthropology of Biology
Same subject as 21A.303[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.303[J].
S. Helmreich

STS.062[J] Drugs, Politics, and Culture
Same subject as 21A.305[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.305[J]. Limited to 25.
A. Moran-Thomas

STS.064[J] DV Lab: Documenting Science through Video and New Media
Same subject as 21A.550[J]
Subject meets with 21A.559
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-3-6 units. HASS-A; CI-H

See description under subject 21A.550[J]. Limited to 12.
C. Walley, C. Boebel

STS.065[J] The Anthropology of Sound
Same subject as 21A.505[J], 21G.069[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: U (Spring)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.505[J].
S. Helmreich

STS.071[J] Cross-Cultural Investigations: Technology and Development
Same subject as EC.702[J], 21A.801[J]
Subject meets with EC.792[J], 21A.839[J], STS.481[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.801[J].
C. Walley

STS.074[J] Art, Craft, Science
Same subject as 21A.501[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S
Credit cannot also be received for 21A.509[J], STS.474[J]

See description under subject 21A.501[J].
H. Paxson

STS.075[J] Technology and Culture
Same subject as 21A.500[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
2-0-7 units. HASS-S

See description under subject 21A.500[J]. Limited to 40.
S. Helmreich

STS.080[J] Youth Political Participation
Same subject as 11.151[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Surveys youth political participation in the US since the early 1800s. Investigates trends in youth political activism during specific historical periods, as well as what difference youth media production and technology use (e.g., radio, music, automobiles, ready-made clothing) made in determining the course of events. Explores what is truly new about "new media" and reviews lessons from history for present-day activists based on patterns of past failure and success. Some mandatory field trips may occur during class time. Limited to 40.
J. S. Light
STS.081[J] Innovation Systems for Science, Technology, Energy, Manufacturing, and Health
Same subject as 17.395[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)
2-0-7 units. HASS-S
Examines science and technology innovation systems, including case studies on energy, computing, advanced manufacturing, and health sectors. Emphasizes public policy and the federal government’s role in that system. Focuses on the US but uses international examples. Reviews foundations of economic growth theory, innovation systems theory, and the basic approaches to science and technology policy. Explores the organization and role of energy and medical science R&D agencies, as well as gaps in those innovation systems. Also addresses the science and technology talent base as a factor in growth, and educational approaches to better support it. Class meets for nine weeks; in the remaining weeks, students work on a final paper due at the end of the term. Limited to 25.
W. B. Bonvillian

STS.082[J] Science, Technology, and Public Policy
Same subject as 17.309[J], IDS.055[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
4-0-8 units. HASS-S; CI-H
Credit cannot also be received for 17.310[J], IDS.412[J], STS.482[J]
See description under subject 17.309[J].
K. Oye, N. Selin

STS.084[J] Social Problems of Nuclear Energy
Same subject as 22.04[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S
See description under subject 22.04[J]. Limited to 18.
R. S. Kemp

STS.085[J] Foundations of Information Policy
Same subject as 6.805[J]
Subject meets with STS.487
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S
See description under subject 6.805[J]. Enrollment limited.
H. Abelson, M. Fischer, D. Weitzner

STS.086[J] Cultures of Computing
Same subject as 21A.504[J], WGS.276[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-S
See description under subject 21A.504[J].
Staff

STS.087 Biography in Science
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
An examination of biography as a literary genre to be employed in the history of science. The use of biography in different historical periods to illuminate aspects of the development of science. A critical analysis of autobiography, archival sources, and the oral tradition as materials in the construction of biographies of scientists. Published biographies of scientists constitute the major reading, but attention is given to unpublished biographical sources as well. Comparison is drawn between biography as a literary form in the history of science and in other disciplines.
K. Manning

STS.088 Africa for Engineers
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Covers historical, cultural, and ethical dimensions of engineering in Africa. Focuses on construction of big projects like cities, hydroelectricity dams, roads, railway lines, ports and harbors, transport and communication, mines, industrial processing plant, and plantations. Explores the contributions of big capital, engineers, politicians, and ordinary people. Emphasizes how local culture, politics, labor, and knowledge affect engineering. Also focuses on environmental and cultural impact assessment. Prepares students who wish to work or study in Africa and the Global South. Enrollment limited.
C. Mavhunga
Special Subjects

STS.S20, STS.S21 Special Subject: Science, Technology and Society
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Addresses subject matter in Science, Technology and Society that is not offered in the regular curriculum.
Staff

Research

STS.095, STS.096 Independent Study in Science, Technology, and Society
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

For students who wish to pursue special studies or projects with a member of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society. STS.095 is letter-graded; STS.096 is P/D/F.
Staff

STS.UR Undergraduate Research
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Undergraduate research opportunities in the STS Program.
Staff

STS.URG Undergraduate Research
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Undergraduate research opportunities in the STS Program.
Staff

STS.THT Undergraduate Thesis Tutorial
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Definition and early-stage work on thesis project leading to STS.THU. Taken during first term of student’s two-term commitment to thesis project. Student works closely with STS faculty tutor. Required of all candidates for an STS degree.
Staff

STS.THU Undergraduate Thesis
Prereq: STS.THT
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Completion of work of the senior major thesis under the supervision of a faculty tutor. Includes gathering materials, preparing draft chapters, giving an oral presentation of thesis progress to faculty evaluators early in the term, and writing and revising the final text. Students meet at the end of the term with faculty evaluators to discuss the successes and limitations of the project. Required of all candidates for an STS degree.
Staff

Graduate Subjects

Required Introductory Subjects

STS.250[J] Social Theory and Analysis
Same subject as 21A.859[J]
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-o-9 units
See description under subject 21A.859[J].
M. Fischer
**STS.260 Introduction to Science, Technology, and Society**  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Spring)  
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered  
3-0-9 units

Intensive reading and analysis of major works in historical and social studies of science and technology. Introduction to current methodological approaches, centered around two primary questions: how have science and technology evolved as human activities, and what roles do they play in society? Preparation for graduate work in the field of science and technology studies and introduction to research resources and professional standards.  
D. I. Kaiser

**Advanced Seminars**

**STS.310 History of Science**  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)  
3-0-9 units

Intensive reading and analysis of key works in the history and historiography of science. Introduces students to basic interpretive issues, bibliographic sources, and professional standards. Topics change from year to year.  
R. W. Scheffler

**STS.320[J] Environmental Conflict**  
Same subject as 21A.429[J]  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Spring)  
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered  
3-0-9 units

Explores the complex interrelationships among humans and natural environments, focusing on non-westen parts of the world in addition to Europe and the United States. Use of environmental conflict to draw attention to competing understandings and uses of “nature” as well as the local, national and transnational power relationships in which environmental interactions are embedded. In addition to utilizing a range of theoretical perspectives, subject draws upon a series of ethnographic case studies of environmental conflicts in various parts of the world.  
C. Walley

**STS.330[J] History and Anthropology of Medicine and Biology**  
Same subject as 21A.319[J]  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units

See description under subject 21A.319[J].  
S. Helmreich

**STS.340 Introduction to the History of Technology**  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Spring)  
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered  
3-0-9 units

Introduction to the consideration of technology as the outcome of particular technical, historical, cultural, and political efforts, especially in the United States during the 19th and 20th centuries. Topics include industrialization of production and consumption, development of engineering professions, the emergence of management and its role in shaping technological forms, the technological construction of gender roles, and the relationship between humans and machines.  
M. R. Smith, D. Mindell

**STS.360[J] Ethnography**  
Same subject as 21A.829[J]  
Prereq: None. Coreq: 21A.859[J]; permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units

Practicum-style course in anthropological methods of ethnographic fieldwork and writing. Depending on student experience in ethnographic reading and practice, subject combines reading ethnographies in anthropological and science studies with formulating and pursuing ethnographic work in local labs, companies, or other sites. Preference to HASTS, CMS, HTC and Sloan graduate students.  
M. Fischer
STS.412 Quantification  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units  
Surveys research on quantification, the practice of using numerical data and calculation to analyze, order, and control. Begins by examining historical accounts of the rise of quantitative methods and values since c. 1600. Goes on to explore the dynamics and consequences of quantification across a range of modern domains, including science, politics, governance, health, education, crime, law, economic development, finance, and environmental regulation. Readings drawn from STS, history, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy.  
W. Deringer

STS.414[J] Risk, Fortune, and Futurity (New)  
Same subject as 21H.984[J]  
Prereq: None  
G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units  
See description under subject 21H.984[J]. Open to undergraduates with permission of instructor; consult department for details.  
W. Deringer, C. Horan

STS.417 STS Seminar on the Global South  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units  
Covers Africa and its diaspora, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Asia, and Oceania. Seeks to explore meanings of science and technology from traditions, experiences, and literatures of these regions; to understand encounters and outcomes of endogenous and inbound ideas, artifacts, and practice; and to engage European and North American science, technology, and society (STS) in dialogue with these literatures. Provides a global view of STS in an increasingly interconnected world. Focuses on peoples of the Global South as innovative intellectual agents, not just victims of technology or its appropriators.  
C. Mavhunga

STS.418 Science and Technology in South Asia: Perspectives from History and Anthropology  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)  
3-0-9 units  
Surveys transformations of science and technology in colonial and postcolonial South Asia, 19th-21st centuries. Explores colonial science paradigms, the colony as an experimental space, the scientifically planned postcolonial state, alternative science movements, genetic experimentations for food sovereignty, and most recently, the region’s role as a node in a global regimes of biotech and IT. Discussions address the scholarly and practical constructions of western, global, non-western and indigenous science, and the analytic limits and salience of such categories. Readings include works in history, anthropology and literature.  
D. Banerjee

STS.419 Global Science, Technology and Society  
Prereq: Permission of instructor  
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered  
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)  
3-0-9 units  
Going beyond issues of brain drain and brain circulation, explores how contemporary science and technology innovations look from, and are being created in, parts of the world other than the US and Europe. Examines new forms of science and technology institutions, harmonization and intellectual property constraints, and distributed knowledge. Discusses MIT’s role in global STS issues and challenges students to think about how they can effectively apply their expertise in their home countries. Open to upperclassmen with permission of instructor.  
M. Fischer

STS.425 History of Manufacturing in America  
Subject meets with STS.026  
Prereq: None  
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Spring)  
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered  
3-0-9 units  
Introductory survey of fundamental innovations and transitions in American manufacturing from the colonial period to the mid-twentieth century. Primary emphasis on textiles and metalworking, with particular attention to the role of the machine tool industry in the American manufacturing economy. Students taking graduate version are expected to explore the material in greater depth.  
M. R. Smith
STS.427 The Civil War and the Emergence of Modern America: 1861-1890
Subject meets with 21H.205[J], STS.027[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Fall)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units

Using the American Civil War as a baseline, considers what it means to become "modern" by exploring the war's material and manpower needs, associated key technologies, and how both influenced the United States' entrance into the age of "Big Business." Readings include material on steam transportation, telegraphic communications, arms production, naval innovation, food processing, medicine, public health, management methods, and the mass production of everything from underwear to uniforms – all essential ingredients of modernity. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

M. R. Smith

STS.429 Food and Power
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Anthropological and historical analysis of food production, processing, and consumption in the US and globally. Emphasizes the social and technical practices of raising crops and livestock; efforts to preserve as well as create new foods; the industrialization and de-industrialization of food; the relation between food supply and safety and the state; the role of ethnicity and gender in consumption patterns; and the historical and cultural act of eating. STS.250[J] recommended.

D. Fitzgerald

STS.441 Technology and Self: Technology and Conversation
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)
2-0-10 units

Explores the relationship between technology and conversation, with an emphasis on conversation in our digital age when so many say they would rather text than talk. Topics center on the psychology of online life, such as the way in which we both share and withhold information about the self. Discussion about the ways new kinds of online conversation are playing out in education, the workplace, and in families and what the changes in conversation mean for collaboration, innovation, and leadership. Readings include works in history, literature, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics. Open to undergraduates by permission of instructor. Limited to 15; no listeners.

S. Turkle

STS.443 Technology and Self: Science, Technology, and Memoir
Subject meets with STS.043
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)
2-0-7 units

Focuses on the memoir as a window onto the relationship of the scientist, engineer, and technologist to his or her work. Studies the subjective side of technology and the social and psychological dimensions of technological change. Students write about specific objects and their role in their lives - memoir fragments. Readings concern child development theory and the role of technology in development. Explores the connection between material culture, identity, cognitive and emotional development. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15; no listeners.

S. Turkle
STS.444 Technology and Self: Things and Thinking
Subject meets with STS.044
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)
2-0-7 units
Explores emotional and intellectual impact of objects. The growing literature on cognition and “things” cuts across anthropology, history, social theory, literature, sociology, and psychology and is of great relevance to science students. Examines the range of theories, from Mary Douglas in anthropology to D.W. Winnicott in psychoanalytic thinking, that underlies “thing” or “object” analysis. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Limited to 15; no listeners.
S. Turkle

STS.450 The Global History of Medicine and Public Health
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Surveys recent and canonical scholarship on the history of medicine and public health as a global set of events starting in the 15th century. Examines themes including race, gender, class, imperialism, warfare, religion, governance, indigenous knowledge, disciplinarily, the body, and citizenship. Emphasizes the development of methods and historiographic approaches for studying these themes.
R. W. Scheffler

STS.454 Museums, Science and Technology
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
3-0-9 units
Examines science, technology and museums. Includes regular readings and discussions about the evolution of museums of science and technology from (roughly) 1800 to the present. Students undertake special projects linked to the MIT Museum’s re-location to a new building under construction in Kendall Square. Students act as informal consultants to the MIT Museum, offering proposals for innovative elements that will be seriously considered for inclusion in the new Museum.
J. Durant

STS.460 Histories of Information, Communication, and Computing Technologies
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Introduction to the historical study of information, communication, and computing technologies with a focus on the United States. Pairs analysis of a multidisciplinary reading list with in-depth discussions of research methods and writing for academic publications. Later weeks of the course adapt to student interests and are determined by students in consultation with the instructor. Limited to 15.
J. S. Light

STS.462 Social and Political Implications of Technology
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units
Historical and contemporary studies are used to explore the interaction of technology with social and political values. Emphasis on how technological devices, structures, and systems influence the organization of society and the behavior of its members. Examples drawn from the technologies of war, transportation, communication, production, and reproduction.
M. R. Smith

STS.463[J] Technocracy
Same subject as 11.461[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Survey of the history of efforts to apply scientific methods and technological tools to solve social and political problems, with a focus on the United States since 1850. Topics include: city planning, natural resource management, public education, economic development, quantification and modeling in the social and policy sciences, technology transfer, and political economies of expertise.
J. S. Light
STS.467[J] The History of Aviation
Same subject as 16.707[J]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

Reading course in the history of aviation, focusing on science and technology and cultural and political context. Themes include: the science of aeronautics, pilots and piloting, control systems and electronics, engineering epistemology, infrastructure, industry, government and politics, evolution of aeronautics research, culture and experience, automation and autonomy, role of MIT, literature and film. Case studies of specific systems and engineering projects. Emphasis is on book-length texts, close reading, historical methods of analyzing technological change. Study of social and political dimensions of engineering projects, examination of aviation institutions. Students prepare weekly response papers to readings, make extended presentations to class twice per semester, and submit a final research paper.

D. Mindell

Same subject as 16.440[J]
Prereq: 16.400, 16.453[J], or permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

See description under subject 16.440[J].

D. A. Mindell

STS.471[J] Engineering Apollo: The Moon Project as a Complex System
Same subject as 16.895[J]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Spring)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
4-0-8 units

Detailed technical and historical exploration of the Apollo project to fly humans to the moon and return them safely to Earth as an example of a complex engineering system. Emphasizes how the systems worked, the technical and social processes that produced them, mission operations, and historical significance. Guest lectures by MIT-affiliated engineers who contributed to and participated in the Apollo missions. Students work in teams on a final project analyzing an aspect of the historical project to articulate and synthesize ideas in engineering systems.

D. Mindell

STS.474[J] Art, Craft, Science
Same subject as 21A.509[J]
Prereq: None
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units
Credit cannot also be received for 21A.501[J], STS.074[J]

See description under subject 21A.509[J].

H. Paxson

Same subject as 21W.820[J]
Prereq: 21H.991
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Examination of different "voices" used to consider issues of scientific, technological, and social concern. Students write frequently and choose among a variety of non-fiction forms: historical writing, social analysis, political criticism, and policy reports. Instruction in expressing ideas clearly and in organizing a thesis-length work. Reading and writing on three case studies drawn from the history of science; the cultural study of technology and science; and policy issues.

K. Manning

STS.481[J] Cross-Cultural Investigations: Technology and Development
Same subject as EC.792[J], 21A.839[J]
Subject meets with EC.702[J], 21A.801[J], STS.071[J]
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: Not offered
Acad Year 2019-2020: G (Spring)
3-0-9 units

See description under subject 21A.839[J].

C. Walley

STS.482[J] Science, Technology, and Public Policy
Same subject as 17.310[J], IDS.412[J]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Spring)
4-0-8 units
Credit cannot also be received for 17.309[J], IDS.055[J], STS.082[J]

See description under subject 17.310[J].

K. Oye, N. Selin
STS.487 Foundations of Information Policy
Subject meets with 6.805[J], STS.085[J]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall)
3-0-9 units

Studies the growth of computer and communications technology and the new legal and ethical challenges that reflect tensions between individual rights and societal needs. Topics include computer crime; intellectual property restrictions on software; encryption, privacy, and national security; academic freedom and free speech. Students meet and question technologists, activists, law enforcement agents, journalists, and legal experts. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication provided. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Enrollment limited.
H. Abelson, M. Fischer, D. Weitzner

Special Subjects

STS.S91 Special Subject: Science, Technology and Society
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (Fall)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Addresses a special topic in Science, Technology and Society which is not offered in the regular curriculum.
Staff

STS.S92 Special Subject: Science, Technology and Society
Prereq: None
Acad Year 2018-2019: G (IAP)
Acad Year 2019-2020: Not offered
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Addresses subject matter in Science, Technology and Society that is not offered in the regular curriculum.
Staff

Research and Teaching

STS.800 Teaching Science, Technology and Society
Prereq: None
G (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

For qualified graduate students serving as either a teaching assistant or instructor for subjects in Science, Technology and Society (STS). Enrollment limited by availability of suitable teaching assignments.
Staff

STS.901-STS.904 Independent Study in Science, Technology, and Society
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

For students who wish to pursue special studies or projects at an advanced level with a faculty member of the Program in Science, Technology, and Society.
Staff

STS.THG Graduate Thesis
Prereq: Permission of instructor
G (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Program of graduate research leading to the writing of a PhD thesis, to be arranged by the student with an appropriate MIT faculty member, who is the thesis supervisor.
Staff