Catalog description: Discusses the roles of science and technology as instruments of social control and of social change in development and modernization

This course will deal with the transnational and global circulation of knowledge. It will combine theoretical reflections with case studies. As some of the most important work has been done on knowledge circulation in the British Empire, it will first introduce students to some key texts dealing with the flow of knowledge in that regime. It will then focus on the post-WWII period of modernization, studying how the US implemented science and technology as political weapons to combat communism and shape research agendas among its allies.

When reading texts students need to ask: who are the key actors? What exactly is the knowledge that is circulating 'across borders' and what power relationships are at play in that process i.e. who is passing it on, who are they passing it on to? Is that other an 'empty vessel' or is there some sort of negotiation/reshaping of the knowledge happening? Is it sought by or imposed on the other? What interests do the two poles of the dyad have in knowledge circulation? The most important general learning outcome is that students never again take the circulation and dissemination of knowledge for granted: it is a negotiated process, often embedded in asymmetric power relations that determine what is shared and what denied between nodes in a network.

Evaluation: Class attendance is obligatory. All students are expected to write a term paper of some 12-15 pages (4500-5000 words) submitted by a date to be announced.

To participate in class each student must submit 3-5 bullet points each week at least two hours before class starts. These bullet points are essentially quotes of 3-5 lines from the readings that the student brings to class for further discussion.
IAC Statement on Inclusivity

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology’s commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.

August 21

Sven Beckert, Empire of Cotton, A Global History (Vintage Books, 2015) Read as much as you can

August 28  The Global ‘Diffusion’ of Science and Technology


Warwick Anderson, “Remembering the Spread of Western Science” (provided by JK on Canvas)


September 4 British India. Science


September 11 High Modernism

James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (Yale University Press, 1998), SELECT CHAPTERS
September 18 Colonial medicine and agriculture


Papers from a collection edited by Axel Jansen, John Kringe and Jessica Wang, to be published in *History and Technology* (provided by JK)

Theresa Ventura, “From Prison to Peninsula: Colonial Knowledge and Practice in the Post-War Bataan Rice Enrichment Project, 1910 – 1950”

Jessica Wang, “Plants, Insects, and the Biological Management of American Empire: Tropical Agriculture in Early Twentieth-Century Hawai’i”

Mari K. Webel, “Trypanosomiasis, Tropic Medicine, and the Practice of Inter-colonial Research at Lake Victoria, 1902-1907.”

September 25 Latin America

Ricardo Salvatore, *Disciplinary Conquest: U.S. Scholars in South America, 1900–1945*, (Duke University Press, 2016), Introduction, Chapters 1 -4, any one of chapters 5-8, Chapter 9, Conclusion


October 2


October 9. NO CLASS
October 16  Rostowian Modernization


October 23  Dam Building/Nation Building


Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World. America’s Cold War Battle Against Poverty in Asia* (Harvard University Press, 2010), Chapter 4

October 30. Famine


November 6  Overpopulation


**November 13 Atoms for Peace**


Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War. Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (University Press of Kansas, 2006) chapter 5 (provided by JK)

**November 20**

**NO CLASS**

**November 27**


John Krige, ed., *How Knowledge Moves. Writing the Transnational History of Science and Technology* (University of Chicago Press, 2019), Krige – Introduction and chapter 2; Saraiva, Maher, Siddiqi, Minor, Mateos and Suarez-Dias (provided by JK)

**December 4 Summing up**