HIST 624: Technology, Environment and Medicine in The Americas, 1500-1900

A map of the Panama Canal, ca. 1900—1914. (National Archives, 106-RC-129)

Class Time  | Tuesdays 6-9pm ET, Synchronous, Online on Zoom
Instructor  | Rosanna Dent
Pronouns   | She/her/hers
E-mail     | rdent@njit.edu
Office      | Zoom
Office Hours| Thursday 4-6pm and by appointment. Please sign up on my Google Cal to assure a spot.
Overview    | This course examines the relationship between the emerging modern world system and changes in technology, environment, and medicine, with particular emphasis on European overseas expansion and its impact in non-Western regions. This semester, we will focus specifically on the intimate links of knowledge and power in the history of the Americas. Science, technology, and medicine have had broad social and political implications for colonial formations. Using the rubrics of history, science and technology studies, and social theory, we will ask how different ways of knowing have related to the evolving social, political, and economic realities of the Western Hemisphere. Through the analysis of the circulation of commodities—e.g. chocolate, silver, and guano—we will inquire into the labor and technologies that built the Atlantic world, as well as their dire costs. We will ask whose knowledge made science and medicine as we know them through historians’ treatment of objects such as maps, specimens, and materia medica.
Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will:

• Raise new questions regarding the political and social implications of science, technology, and medicine in Global History;

• Identify and summarize key approaches to the history of science, race, nation, and technology in the Americas;

• Apply conceptual frameworks from science and technology studies and other areas of social theory to historical analysis;

• Communicate summaries, questions, and analyses in clear written and oral form;

• Critically assess method and evidence in historiography.

Readings

All required readings will be available online on Canvas. You may wish to purchase some of the books assigned, but we will not be reading whole books in this course so as to ensure exposure to a wider range of authors.

Zoom Class Meetings

Our class will meet synchronously at our scheduled time on Zoom. The Zoom details will be available on Canvas. In-class participation matters— it is our chance to work through challenging texts, close-read together, practice collegial debate and discussion. I also recognize we are living in uncertain times. If you are having difficulty attending class, please get in touch early and proactively so we can come up with a plan.

Please mute yourselves when not speaking. Sharing video is strongly encouraged if bandwidth permits as it will provide us with more visual cues and a better sense of who we are thinking with. For privacy concerns, you may wish to put up a background.

Classroom recordings of students are educational records under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the U.S. federal law that governs access to educational records. Both instructor and students must provide notification if any part of online sessions are to be recorded, and such recordings cannot be circulated outside the course.

Academic Integrity

NJIT’s policy is as follows: “Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.”
Most importantly, you are here to learn, grow, practice, make mistakes, exchange ideas, take risks, debate, discuss, and so on. **Academic integrity is about being committed to these learning processes and taking responsibility for your own learning.** I am here to answer questions and help with this process. If in doubt, ask.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation Expectations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Scholars communicate their intellectual connections through citation. This is a <strong>generative practice</strong> that allows you to join a broader conversation with those you read and those who read you. It is also a way to <strong>credit others</strong> for their work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any words taken directly from a written source (assigned reading, website, book, article...) or from another individual (interview, podcast, youtube...) must be in quotation marks and cited. ALWAYS. I will work with you to learn how to do this. This matters a lot, both to <strong>avoid plagiarism</strong> and to <strong>learn how research works</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In this class we will use Chicago Manual of Style format for citations.</td>
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<th>Disability Services</th>
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<td>Students who have special needs should contact NJIT’s Student Disability Services to help procure accommodations in completing coursework. The center can be found at <a href="http://www.njit.edu/counseling/services/disabilities.php">http://www.njit.edu/counseling/services/disabilities.php</a>.</td>
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<th>University Education in Pandemic Times</th>
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<td>Even if we may be more used to online interactions, social distancing, and life-through-masks than a few months ago, these are still stressful and uncertain times. We are facing many serious issues that will impact different members of our class differently, including COVID-19, but also racism, state violence, climate change, and a highly charged political climate. Part of what we will do in this class is learn about the historical roots of many of the problems we now face. Please be compassionate to others who may be facing different challenges from you. Make an extra effort to get to know your classmates. Read, discuss, and work together if you can.</td>
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<td>If you are struggling with the course for whatever reason, please contact me. I may be able to help. I want you to succeed and will help you do so. I also strongly encourage students to seek support in different forms, including from the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services, and Health Services depending on the challenge.</td>
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<td>Furthermore, I urge any student who faces challenges securing food or housing and believes this may affect their learning to contact the Dean of Students. And let me know if you’re comfortable doing so, because there are ways I may be able to help.</td>
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<td><strong>Please see additional Rutgers resources for support and assistance at the end of the syllabus.</strong></td>
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| Note: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus that I deem necessary. |
Assignments and Grading

**Submission:** All assignments should be submitted electronically through Canvas.

**Late Submissions:** Assignments in this course are (1) designed to prepare you for class participation and to make class interesting, or (2) scaffolded towards the final projects. I encourage you to meet deadlines so that you can get the most out of class work and receive timely feedback. I understand we are living in very difficult times, and will be flexible within reason, but there may be deductions in grades due to late submission particularly if it becomes a pattern. Please talk to me if you’re struggling so I can help you.

**Exceptional Circumstances:** If there are medical, family, or other pressing issues affecting your ability to complete class work, please get in touch with me. I don’t expect you to share details with me, but I can help most effectively if you contact me early. I also strongly encourage you to reach out proactively to the Dean of Students’ office.

**Participation** (60%)
Weekly Think-Sheets (40%)
Participation (10%)
Class Facilitation (10%)

**Final Assignment** (40%)
Annotated Bibliography (10%)
Final Assignment Part 1 (10%)
Final Assignment Part 2 (20%)

**Grading Scale**
A= 90 to 100
B+= 88 to 89
B= 80 to 87
C+= 78 to 79
C= 70 to 77
D= 60 to 69
F= 59 to 0

**Participation (60%)**
Attendance and participation are central to your success in this course. Participation includes speaking, listening, and demonstrating careful preparation for class including completing assigned readings. Full participation in this class includes:

(a) All students will be required to post a one page single spaced “Think Sheet” on canvas discussion board by 11:59pm on Monday of each week. Your “Think Sheet” should address the following questions: What are the authors’ main points or arguments? What types of evidence do they use and where does it come from? Does the evidence support the main arguments, why or why not? What do the authors do well? What is lacking? How do these readings relate to other course materials?

You may miss up to two Think Sheets without penalty. For a high grade, your Think Sheet should be thoughtful, address the readings specifically and comprehensively, include quotations (Author-Date citation without bibliography is fine for these), and relate the readings to the course. Some readings will be very challenging – the Think Sheet is a place to work through the readings, so you don’t need to understand everything to write a good Think Sheet.

(b) **In-class participation** can take many forms, such as speaking during full-class discussion, group work and leadership during class activities, pre-prepared questions or comments, in-class writing assignments, among other options. It is about quality of engagement with the materials and your classmates, not simply quantity.
(c) **Office hours:** All students must meet with me once during the first six weeks of the course either in my scheduled office hours or by appointment. This is a chance for us to talk one-on-one and get to know each other a bit more. It is also a chance to ask questions about the course material, broader questions about academia, history, anthropology, or the latest Netflix series you are watching (though I probably won’t be very helpful on the last topic!)

(d) **Class facilitation:** Students will sign up to help lead one class session. You will prepare a guide to the reading, a set of discussion questions, and an opening activity that you will help to lead. Guidelines for this assignment will be distributed.

(e) **Attendance and Absences:** We are living in particularly difficult times. Now more than ever, it’s important to nurture scholarship developed in community through discussion and engagement. As such your attendance in class is important both for your own learning and for your peers’ and my experience of the course. You grade may be affected if you miss 3 classes, and if you miss 4 or more classes (approx. 1/3 of the course) you will fail the class unless you take proactive measures to arrange accommodations due to extenuating circumstances.

If you are concerned about your participation, speak with me during office hours as early as possible in the semester.

**Final Project (40%)**
- Annotated Bibliography (10%) (due Friday March 5)
- Final Project Proposal (10%) (due Friday March 26)
- Final Project (20%) (due Friday May 7)

The final project for this course will be a “choose-your-own-adventure” assignment along one of four tracks: (1) research, (2) teaching, (3) public scholarship, or (4) your choice. In each option, you will begin by building an annotated bibliography on a topic of your own interest that is (broadly) related to the course. (This could be along geographic, topical, or temporal lines) You will research in peer reviewed secondary sources to develop a strong grounding in the literature. You will then develop a proposal for (1) a more traditional research essay; (2) a proposal for a course-module (4 weeks, any level of instruction); a pitch for an exhibit; or, another proposal of your choosing (in consultation with me). In the final part of the project, you will prepare (1) an essay (8-12 pages); (2) a mini-syllabus and set of lesson plans, (3) a detailed plan for a public exhibit (in person or online); or (4) a product of your choosing (again, in consultation with me).

If you choose option 4, you could consider something that directly contributes to another ongoing scholarly pursuit (thesis or future dissertation, grant funding application, publication… etc), or to your broader scientific community (if you don’t primarily identify as a student of history). Any project will have to engage meaningfully with scholarly sources that you identify. This assignment is developed based on a model provided by Prof. Courtney Thompson.
### Schedule of Topics and Assigned Readings

**Think Sheets for the listed readings are due on MONDAY of the week listed**

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introduction: Knowledge and Colonialism</th>
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**no think sheet** |

**Additional Recommended Resources:**

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<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Knowledge of the Human (part 1)</th>
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**NOTE:** Monday January 25 is the last day to add or drop a course.

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Bureaucratic Knowledge and Race Thinking (part 1)</th>
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**Additional Recommended Resources:**
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Bureaucratic Knowledge and Race Thinking (part II)</th>
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|          | Additional Recommended Resources:  

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<tr>
<th>Week 5</th>
<th>The Body, The Senses, and Sciences of Healing</th>
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|          | Additional Recommended Resources:  

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<th>Week 6</th>
<th>Colonizing Technologies</th>
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|          | Additional Recommended Resources:  
### Week 7

**Knowledge of the Human (part II)**

**Tues, Mar. 2**


**Additional Recommended Resources:**


**Final Project Annotated Bibliography Due Friday Mar 5**

### Week 8

**Circulation**

**Tues, Mar. 9**


**Additional Recommended Resources:**


**SPRING BREAK**
## Week 9

**Collection and Classification**

Tues, Mar. 23


Additional Recommended Resources:


**Final Project Proposal Due Friday March 26**

## Week 10

**Visual Epistemologies**

Tues, Mar. 30


Additional Recommended Resources:


NOTE: Monday April 5th is the last day to withdraw from a course.

## Week 11

**Commodities and Commodification**

Tues, Apr. 6


Week 12

Quantification and Accounting

Tues, Apr. 13


Additional Recommended Resources:


Week 13

Technology and “Engineering” Modernity

Tues, Apr. 20


Additional Recommended Resources:


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<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Class Wrap Up</th>
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<td>Tues, Apr. 27</td>
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<th>Week 15</th>
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<td>Tues, May 4</td>
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<td>May 7</td>
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Accommodation and Support Statement:

**Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services):**
Room 140, Bradley Hall. You can contact them at (973) 353-5608, or check their website: https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center

**Rutgers Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops):**
Room 126, Conklin Hall (973) 353-5847. The Writing Center has remote tutoring available this semester. You can email them at nwc@rutgers.edu, or check their website: http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

Covid-related Resources: These two links provide a comprehensive list of available resources: https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/covid-19-operating-status#SupportingOurStudents; and https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid19 .

**For Individuals with Disabilities:**
The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Individuals who are Pregnant:**
The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Absence Verification:**
The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to
University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries:
The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

For English as a Second Language (ESL):
The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:
The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does not have this reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973)-353-1918, or at run.vpva@rutgers.edu. Learn more about the office here: http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/vpva

For support related to interpersonal violence:
The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns:
The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being:
The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.