

Assignment 2

Works-in progress presentation

The idea of this is to move your project on the Werskey case (see below) forward. It's definitely not supposed to be a dry run for next week implying that your inquiry should be finished by tomorrow and just get touched up in the following week. And any visual aids should be prepared without diverting too much time from your inquiry (see suggestions below). Please send them to PT by email so we can have them loaded on the laptop and ready to go when we get to the classroom.

How can a W-I-P presentation move your project ahead? When you prepare to give a presentations, when you hear yourselves speak your presentations, and when you get feedback, it usually leads to self-clarification of the overall argument underlying your inquiry and the eventual written product. This, in turn, influences your research priorities for the remaining time. Presentations 2/3 of the way through this project must necessarily be on work-in-progress, so you'll have to indicate where additional research is needed and where you think it might lead you. There may or may not be time for extensive discussion, but you can learn from the rest of the group writing notes to provide appreciations, suggestions, questions, contacts, and references. You can also learn from compare-contrast with the other students' W-I-P presentations.

Ways to prepare visual aids without diverting your time away from your ongoing inquiry? These days I use pdf's not powerpoint for all my talks, in part because of bad experiences with some images not showing up when ppt files got shown on a different operating system. But mostly because I can write and revise outlines in word and then when I'm ready, I change the font size, "print" as a pdf, and I'm ready to go live. I don't get distracted by animations, backgrounds, fade-ins and other non-essential features of a talk. Even if you don't take this tip, try to make one introductory slide that captures the overall structure and logic of your inquiry. This might be enough of a visual aid that you can talk to that slide and not have to prepare many others. If time is short and you print clearly, you might make that "slide" as a handout and skip the electronic version altogether.

Werskey Case

Werskey, Gary. "[The Marxist Critique of Capitalist Science: A History in Three Movements?](#)" 2007.

“Case-based learning as a productive approach to generating wider engagement in the production of science and technology”

Preamble: This case has a longer gestation period than the first, rapid-immersion case.

It is designed to take you into the heart or belly of the field of science and technology studies, although, as always, the path you take will reflect your specific interests. A sequence of between-class and in-class activities will help you identify, revise, and pursue those interests, then report on what you find out.

In this case the instructors are the sponsors of the inquiry. We want you, the students, to note that the GCWS Course Proposal Guidelines are very pointed about including systematic attention to race, class, and culture with gender as categories of analysis as well as the requirement that courses reflect a social and cross cultural dimension. Note also that, in response to an initial sketch of the course, a GCWS board member suggested that the instructors “make those inclusions transparent (beyond the mention of subverting these barriers).” We were asked to explain how the process would work to cover important ideas and authors. Now, the fact that you’re reading this case in the context of the course means that we answered well enough to get the course approved. Nevertheless, we would like to be able to give faculty colleagues an experience that makes the teaching approach seem more concrete and worthy-of-support, where this teaching approach is one in which students and instructors respond to provocative cases and put into play diverse resources that we bring and that we subsequently develop.

The specific provocation is Gary Werskey’s historical account of account of (male, white, UK) Marxist scientists that gained influence in England in the 1930s and the (mostly male, white, UK) radical science movement in the 1970s and his claim that “epistemological disputes within [science and technology studies since the 1970s have distracted attention from] the social relations of science [which] were being transformed and more closely yoked than ever to sustaining the power and profitability of global and, more specifically, American capitalism.” The help we need—in light of the GCWS guidelines and advice—is for you to build on—or against—Werskey’s account and show how access to the production of scientific knowledge and technology has been and could be widened in ways that subvert the barriers of expertise, gender, race, class, and place.

A panel of interested faculty will visit class in week 6 to hear your reports, ask questions concerning both the process and products, and make suggestions about ways to enhance “systematic attention to race, class, and culture with gender as categories of analysis” and the course’s “social and cross cultural dimension.” Their comments and a podcast of the presentations will be made available to the GCWS board. The form of what you present to them remains for you to determine, but it might include alternative histories or case studies, dialogues with Werskey, grant proposals, units in a syllabus, annotated reading lists, compilations of activist efforts visible on the web, and further provocative cases for this or related courses. You might also include reflection on how your engagement with the problem-based learning process is evolving.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

WGS.693 Gender, Race, and the Complexities of Science and Technology: A Problem-Based Learning Experiment

Spring 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.