

Sep 29

- 1. Administrative**
- 2. Student-submitted discussion questions**
- 3. Institutional analysis and science**
- 4. Reading discussion**

Group discussion 2 due tomorrow

- ∴ Today is last day of this batch of group discussions
- ∴ Discussion worksheets due *tomorrow* (Sep 30) at 5:00pm (17h)
(*Not due Feb 3 at 1pm, despite what the document says*)

Next class

- ∴ No group discussion next class — intro to social construction and realism

A note on Perusall comments

- ∴ If you quote an outside resource in your comments on Perusall, you should *include a reference or link to the source*
- ∴ E.g. when defining a term (which is great!), say where you got the definition from

Discussion questions

Discussion questions

Assignments

- ⋮ Everyone should have received an email that looks like this:

Your assignments for discussion question submission are as follows:

- Class of **Thursday, Oct 14, 2021** (*question due on Teams by 11:59pm **Tuesday, Oct 05, 2021***)
- Class of **Wednesday, Oct 27, 2021** (*question due on Teams by 11:59pm **Sunday, Oct 24, 2021***)
- Class of **Monday, Nov 29, 2021** (*question due on Teams by 11:59pm **Sunday, Nov 28, 2021***)

If any of these dates pose a conflict for you, please let me know as soon as possible so we can reschedule.

- ⋮ These list the date of the *class period* that your question should relate to and the *due date* for submitting the question.
- ⋮ E.g. the question for the class of **Oct 14** (Haraway 1988 and Martin 1991) is due on **Oct 5**.
- ⋮ Turn these in on the “Assignments” tab on Teams (three “Discussion question” assignments)
Ignore the due dates listed on teams

Discussion questions

Two-part submissions:

1. Prompt

- ∴ One (broad) idea, described in a few sentences
- ∴ Can contain multiple, related “questions”
- ∴ Can contain quotes from text
- ∴ Should use in-text (parenthetical) citations

2. Motivation

- ∴ A few sentences describing where the question is coming from and where I hope it may lead
- ∴ Counts toward score, but will *not* be published if your question is chosen for inclusion

Example submission

Prompt:

Merton wrote *The normative structure of science* early in his career in 1942 (during World War II) and included it in a collection of his work on the sociology of science in 1973 (during the Cold War). How might the political climate of this time span in America have influenced his work? Do his theories cast science in a particular light? How does this work look through the lens of Wolfe's (2018) depiction of science during the Cold War?

Motivation:

I was thinking about the age of Merton's piece, (published almost 80 years ago!) in the context of the course theme “history of science is a social history.” Rather than just understanding the reading as an *example* of the sociology of science, I thought it would be interesting to treat it as the *object* of our inquiry. In addition to helping us understand Merton's arguments in context, I hope this will raise the larger issue of whether we can apply the tools of the sociology of science to the sociology of science itself.

Institutional analysis and science

What is institutional analysis?

What is an “institution”?

- ∴ “*Institution*” is a very broad term in sociology.
- ∴ An institution is a set of persistent regularities in behavior that has some sense of durability.
E.g. Religions, legal systems, companies, industries, family, ...
- ∴ In this sense, science is an institution.

Institutional analysis

- ∴ IA is a perspective in sociology that aims to explain the forms and structures of institutions in society.
- ∴ Institutional analysts examine the ways that institutions shape the behavior of their individual participants.
- ∴ IA focusses on the aggregate outcomes of institutional rules, structures, and norms.

Institutional analysis and science

Three institutional analyses of science

Merton

- ∴ Explaining the *function* of the institution of science (certified knowledge).
- ∴ Sets of *institutional norms* induce individual behavior.
- ∴ Aggregating this behavior ensures rational and beneficial outcomes.

Kuhn

- ∴ Explaining *change* in the institution of science.
- ∴ How are implicit assumptions about the world (*institutional paradigms*) maintained, and how do they change?

van den Brink & Benschop

- ∴ Explaining the *unexamined consequences* of institutional practices.
- ∴ How do institutionalized norms (merit / excellence) *work against* their stated ideals?
- ∴ How do institutional structures interact with *culture at large*?

Lecture:

Social construction and the real

Required reading:

- **Sismondo (2009)**

Chapter 6: The social construction of scientific and technical realities

Discussion