

**Instructor:**

Eric G. Swedin, PhD

<http://www.swedin.org/>

eswedin@weber.edu

Office on Davis campus: D2-137L

Telephone: 801-395-3553 (w)

Office hours: Tuesday, 3:00-5:30 in D2-137L.

Wednesday, 3:00-5:30 in D2-137L.

Other office hours are available by appointment via email.

**Texts:**James E. McClellan and Harold Dorn, *Science and Technology in World History: An Introduction* (3rd edition; Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015)

ISBN-13: 978-1421417752

Stuart Firestein, *Ignorance: How It Drives Science* (Oxford University Press, 2012)

ISBN-13: 978-0199828074

**Class Description and Objectives:**

The evolution and practice of Western science from origins to contemporary ideas. The goal of this course is to encourage the student to think about science from an historical perspective, and to appreciate how science can inform the study of history.

Participation in the class and class discussions are expected.

**Grading Policies:**

Grades will be determined on the following basis:

Quizzes	50%
Time-line Assignment	20%
Oral Book Report Presentation	20%
Current Science Topic	5%
Class participation	5%

Grades: A: 90 - 100% B: 80 - 89% C: 70 - 79% D: 60 - 69% E: 0 - 59%  
(Grades at the high or low ends of these ranges will earn plus and minus grades.)

**Students with Disabilities:**

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in Room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

**Quizzes:** There will a quiz every day at the beginning of class. Each quiz will be based on the readings that you were given for that day, what we discussed the previous week, or will be given on the content of the previous class's presentations.

**Cheating Policy:** Cheating and deceit are not accepted at Weber State University. *Cheating on an quiz or assignment, or turning in someone else's work as your own, will result in an E for the class.* You may work together on your assignments and papers, but you must turn in your own work. If you quote from a book, article, or web site, you must properly quote and cite your work. **Avoid even the appearance of cheating or plagiarism.**

**Cell Phones, Texting, and Laptops:**

Put your cell phones on vibrate. Try to avoid leaving class to take a call, but an occasional emergency is understandable. There will be NO texting in this class. Laptops or other personal digital tools may be used to take notes or look up material relevant to class discussions. No other uses of laptops will be tolerated.

**Campus Closure:**

In the event of an extended campus closure, please look at your Weber State email for instructions on how we will continue the class via email and the online course system.

**Timeline Exercise:**

Objective: Review of key events of the history of science; gain an increased understanding of historical perspective.

Make a chronological timeline of what you see as the 30 most important events in the history of science from prehistory to the present. Use our textbooks or an encyclopedia or the Internet to find your information. For each entry, include the date and a 2-3 sentence justification for your choice. Timeline MUST be typed; you may email it to me. Grading will be based on three criteria:

- 1) Chronologically identify 30 significant events in the history of science and/or history of technology. Include two or three sentences with each event describing the nature of the event and why it was important.
- 2) Neatness and presentation.
- 3) Grammatical or mechanical errors.

**Current Science Topic:**

Once a semester, each student must make a two minute presentation on a current science or technology issue and be prepared to discuss it.

### **Oral Book Report:**

Each student must select a book that falls into one of the following categories:

- the history of science
- the history of medicine
- history of technology
- the philosophy of science (including ethical issues)
- the philosophy of medicine (including ethical issues)

A list of suggested books is available at <http://www.swedin.org/>. Other books may be used by the student, subject to approval by the instructor. On an assigned date, the student will give a ten minute in-class presentation on their book. No written report is required. No oral book report will go beyond fifteen minutes. Describe the content of the book and explain how it fits within the history and philosophy of science. The purpose of this exercise is to introduce the class to the variety of literature available on the history and philosophy of science.

### **Oral Book Report Suggestions:**

These are suggestions on how to prepare your book report.

- Look up some scholarly reviews of the book, as well as reading it, since the reviews can help you place the book in a larger context. Reviews on Amazon or similar sites are usually not the best reviews for these type of books.
- Ask yourself these questions and answer them during the presentation:
  - Who is the author and why are they qualified to write this book?
  - What is the book about and when was it published?
  - Why was this book written?
  - Summarize the story being told or the arguments being made in the book.
  - What is the main point the author is trying to make?
  - What perspective is the author trying to represent in writing this text?
- When reviewing a novel, don't concentrate on talking about characters or plot, concentrate on its relevance to the history of science.

Scoring rubric:

Read book: Gave a clear description of text in its entirety. (40 points)

Synthesis: Understood bigger picture of text, connected small tidbits together and within larger themes. (20 points)

Presentation: Your manner was clear, organized, and prepared. Could answer questions. (35 points)

Personal insight: Made personal connections to book, could see implications of text. (5 points)

**Definition of Science:**

Science is a method of making observations of the natural world, or conducting experiments within the natural world, with the goal of creating models or theories that can successfully predict future observations or successfully predict the results of future experiments. Successful predictions increase the credibility of that particular scientific model or scientific theory. One can evaluate the reputation of different models or theories in science based on the ability of that model or theory to make accurate predictions.

**Schedule:**

Tuesday	Readings and Class Activities
January 9	Introduction to class; What is Science; Everyday Distances and Astronomical Distances (no readings)
January 16	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Introduction, Chapters 1-3
January 23	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 4-6
January 30	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 7-9
February 6	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 10-12
February 13	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 13-15
February 20	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 16
February 27	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 17
March 6	Spring Break
March 13	Readings: Firestein, Introduction, Chapters 1-2 Students 1-2 book presentations
March 20	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 18 Readings: Firestein, Chapters 3-5 Students 3-4 book presentations
March 27	Guest Lecture (no readings) <b>Timeline assignment due</b>
April 3	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 19 Readings: Firestein, Chapters 6-8 Students 5-6 book presentations
April 10	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 20 and Afterword Students 7-8 book presentations
April 17	Spare Day
April 24	No class; no final exam