

**Instructor:**

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**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 class, or will be given on the content of the previous class's presentations.

**Recording Classes:** Video or audio recording of any portion of lectures is only permitted in this class upon my authorization. If you would like to request authorization to record, please contact me. Unauthorized recording is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, for which a student may be subjected to disciplinary action under PPM 6-22, Student Code. Students who seek to record for purposes of accommodating a disability should contact the Disability Services Office at (801) 626-6413 or [dsc@weber.edu](mailto:dsc@weber.edu). See more info at <https://www.weber.edu/disabilityservices>.

**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.

**Learning Outcomes:** These are the learning outcomes for this course:

1. Identify the key events which express/define change over time in a broad range of places and regions.
2. Identify how change occurs over time.
3. Explain historical continuity and change.
4. Describe the influence of political ideologies, economic structures, social organization, cultural perceptions, and natural environments on historical events.

**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 your student email address and the Campus online course system.

**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 or 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)

## 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.

An example of an important event:

1687 - Isaac Newton publishes the *Principia*. The three universal laws of motion are described, as well as calculus and the universal force of gravity. Arguably the most important science book ever published, which helped define the scientific method and the importance of mathematical laws that could accurately predict future observations and the results of experiments. The book became a model of what future scientists aspired to develop.

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.

## **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 articulating 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. This is more than recognizing cause and effect, an articulated model or theory must be created that avoids supernatural explanations. 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.

## **Psychology of Science:**

Foundational assumptions that scientists make:

- understanding nature is desirable (as opposed to those who think that science destroys nature in the mystical sense)
- nature is consistent (nature follows laws that can be described both by axioms and mathematically)
- nature is comprehensible (human brain and senses are adequate to understand nature)

All science is tentative by its nature, based on our best current knowledge, and strives to be predictive. All science is provisional.

Stephen Hawking: "We physicists have to believe that the universe makes sense, in order to go on working . . . Hopefully the universe is not merely capricious."

J.B.S. Haldane: "My own suspicion is that the universe is not only queerer than we suppose, but queerer than we can suppose."

Werner Heisenberg: "Not only is the Universe stranger than we think, it is stranger than we can think."

Albert Einstein: "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and all science."

**Schedule:**

Week of:	Tuesday	Thursday
August 30	Introduction to class What is Science	Everyday Distances and Astronomical Distances (no readings)
September 6	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Introduction, Chapter 1	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 2-3
September 13	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 4-5	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 6-7
September 20	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapters 8-9	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 10
September 27	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 11	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 12
October 4	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 13	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 14
October 11	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 15	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 16
October 18	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 17	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 18
October 25	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 19	Readings: Firestein, Introduction, Chapters 1-2
November 1	Readings: Firestein, Introduction, Chapters 3-5	Readings: Firestein, Chapters 6-8
November 8	Readings: McClellan and Dorn, Chapter 20 and Afterword	Student Presentations #1 and #2
November 15	Student Presentations #3 and #4	Student Presentations #5 and #6
November 22	Guest Lecture (no readings) <b>Timeline assignment due</b>	Student Presentations #7 and #8
November 29	Student Presentations #9 and #10	Thanksgiving
December 6	Student Presentations #11 and #12	Spare day
December 13	No class; no final	No class; no final