

Science, Technology, and Society

Science, Technology, and Society (STS, formerly Science and Society) is an interdisciplinary concentration that examines the processes of scientific discovery and the establishment of scientific policies and systems of belief from historical, philosophical, anthropological, and sociological perspectives. Concentrators analyze the practices, norms, and values that reflect and shape our deepest convictions about what is considered "science." Students select courses in the physical sciences, life sciences, or mathematics and choose a thematic track that may include the history and philosophy of science; gender and science; race, science and ethnicity; health and medicine; environment and society; or they may create their own independent focus. STS prepares students to follow, guide, and shape scientific knowledge as it travels from the laboratory into the public arena.

Requirements

Consisting of 12 courses, the program of study outlined below will be developed by each student in consultation with the concentration advisor. Where appropriate, independent reading, lab courses or GISPS may count for up to three of the twelve total courses. Students will take a minimum of 7 intermediate to advanced courses.

Required Courses (2)

The concentration has two required courses.

- STS 1000 : Introduction to Science and Society: Theories and Controversies, or equivalent introductory course: usually taken in the second or third year.
- STS 1900 : Senior Seminar in Science and Society, also open to non-majors with the proper background, usually taken senior year.

Thematic Track (3)

Students will organize their course of study around the choice of a thematic track. The theme may be thought of as the applied content portion of the concentration. Students will take a minimum of three courses, at least one of which must be at an advanced level, in one of the thematic areas listed below:

- History & Philosophy of Science
- Gender & Science
- Race, Science & Ethnicity
- Health & Medicine
- Representing Science in Literature & Culture
- Policy, Persuasion & the Rhetoric of Science
- Environment & Society
- Independent Focus

Science Track (4)

Students will take a minimum of four courses in one of the following scientific areas: physical sciences, life sciences, mathematics/computer science. The chosen area should provide appropriate background and support for the chosen concentration theme. The science courses will be sequenced such that a concentrator will move enough beyond the introductory level to gain some understanding of the world view of scientists within a chosen field. The particular sequence of courses which best meets the science requirement will be chosen in consultation with the concentration advisor. When necessary, the concentration advisor will seek guidance from faculty within the chosen scientific field.

Science and Technology Studies Theory (3)

Students will take three Science and Technology Studies-related courses in the social sciences and humanities. These courses, which will provide critical theoretical background for the study of Science and Society, should address questions of historiography, epistemology and methodology in the field of science and technology studies. A full list of such courses and sample concentrations may be found at <https://www.brown.edu/academics/science-and-technology-studies/>

Honors

To qualify for Honors a student must:

- Be in good standing
- Have completed at least two thirds of the concentration requirements by the application deadline
- Have earned a majority of "A" grades in the concentration. Classes taken S/NC will count as qualifying towards that majority if they are marked "S with distinction" or are accompanied by a Course Performance Report (https://ask.brown.edu/performance_reports/) indicating that had the student taken the course for a grade, the grade would have been an "A."