

136-545 Science and its Publics

Credit Points:	12.50
Level:	9 (Graduate/Postgraduate)
Dates & Locations:	2009, This subject commences in the following study period/s: Semester 1, - Taught on campus.
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: One 2-hour seminar per week. Total Time Commitment: 2 contact hours/week, 8 additional hours/week. Total of 10 hours per week.
Prerequisites:	Admission to a coursework Masters program in the Faculty of Arts, or to an Honours or Postgraduate Diploma in the Faculty of Arts or the Faculty of Science.
Corequisites:	None
Recommended Background Knowledge:	None
Non Allowed Subjects:	None
Core Participation Requirements:	<p><p>For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the Disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Student Support and Engagement Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Overview, Learning Outcomes, Assessment and Generic Skills sections of this entry.</p> <p><p>It is University policy to take all reasonable steps to minimise the impact of disability upon academic study, and reasonable adjustments will be made to enhance a student's participation in the University's programs. Students who feel their disability may impact on meeting the requirements of this subject are encouraged to discuss this matter with a Faculty Student Adviser and Student Equity and Disability Support: http://services.unimelb.edu.au/disability</p></p> </p>
Coordinator:	Ms Stephanie Lavau
Contact:	Dr Gerhard Wiesenfeldt gerhardw@unimelb.edu.au
Subject Overview:	The subject will examine the complex relationship between science and its publics from historical, philosophical and sociological perspectives. Students will be asked to critically reflect on the role of science in society and examine how this may have changed over time. They will evaluate the need to promote the public understanding of science and to increase levels of 'scientific literacy' in today's society. Various analytical approaches to the public understanding of science will be examined. Students will be encouraged to develop a critical appraisal of the cognitive deficit model of the public understanding of science and examine the effectiveness or otherwise of methods that have been used to evaluate public attitudes to science and technology.
Objectives:	<p>Students who successfully complete this subject will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # develop an understanding of the historical, philosophical and sociological dimensions of the public understanding of science; # understand the complexity of the relationship between science and its publics; # develop a critical appreciation of the politics of science and science literacy; # have developed a sound knowledge and understanding of the public understanding of science through several pertinent case-studies; # be able to critically evaluate current efforts to communicate science to the public.
Assessment:	One 1000 word paper 20% due during the first half of the semester. One 1000 word paper 20% due during the second half of the semester. One 3000 word essay 60% due during the examination period.

Prescribed Texts:	A subject reader will be available for purchase from the University Book Shop. Science, Social Theory and Public Knowledge (Irwin, A., and Michael, M., (2003)) Open U.P., Berkshire, England
Recommended Texts:	Albury, R., (1983), <i>The Politics of Objectivity</i> , Deakin U.P., Victoria. Chalmers, A.F., (1976), <i>What is this thing called science? An assessment of the nature and status of science and its methods</i> , Queensland U.P., St. Lucia Qld. Gregory, J., and Miller, S., (1998), <i>Science in Public: Communication, Culture, and Credibility</i> , Plenum Trade, New York. Irwin, Alan, (1995), <i>Citizen Science: A Study of People, Expertise and Sustainable Development</i> , Routledge, London and New York. Levinson R., and Thomas, J.N., (eds.), (1997), <i>Science Today: Problem or Crisis?</i> , Routledge, New York. Perutz, M., (1989), <i>Is Science Necessary?</i> , Oxford U.P., Oxford and New York Royal Society (Great Britain), (1985), <i>The Public Understanding of Science: Report of a Royal Society ad hoc group endorsed by the Council of the Royal Society</i> , The Society, London. Yearley, S., (1992), <i>The Green Case</i> , Routledge, London.
Breadth Options:	This subject is not available as a breadth subject.
Fees Information:	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees
Generic Skills:	Students who successfully complete this subject will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> # have developed research skills; # have developed critical thinking and analysis; # be able to think in theoretical terms; # be able to understand social, ethical and cultural contexts; # be able to communicate knowledge intelligibly and economically; # have developed written communication skills; # have developed public speaking skills; # ave developed good time management and planning; # be able to work as a team.
Related Course(s):	Master of Arts (Science, Communication and Society)
Related Majors/Minors/Specialisations:	History and Philosophy of Science History & Philosophy of Science History and Philosophy of Science