

GRADUATE SEMINAR ON INTERDISCIPLINARITY – SPRING 2010

STS 903 – Interdisciplinarity in the Modern Research University

Tuesdays 2:30-5:00

Co-taught by: Greg Downey (gdowney@wisc.edu), Noah Feinstein (nfeinstein@wisc.edu),
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3 credits



What is “interdisciplinary” research and why does it matter? Does interdisciplinary research demand that individual scholars be trained in multiple specializations? Can interdisciplinary research be performed by teams of specialists using technological tools for working across time and space? How do institutional norms, physical spaces, and political-economic structures of power and opportunity affect interdisciplinary research? And how do interdisciplinary practices compare across different modes of research, from the natural, physical, and social sciences to the arts and humanities? This graduate seminar, team-taught by four faculty affiliates of the Holtz Center for Science and Technology Studies, explores the meanings and practices of “interdisciplinary,” “transdisciplinary,” and “multidisciplinary” research in the modern university. Although the course content will often focus on interdisciplinarity in the context of science, students with other disciplinary backgrounds are enthusiastically encouraged to participate. Using ideas and readings drawn from history, sociology, public policy, anthropology, education, and communication studies, this seminar itself will serve as an example of interdisciplinary practice. Students will work together in interdisciplinary teams to produce a final review, policy, or research paper on a topic assigned by the faculty.