

## Notes & Ideas from 10.01.07 SSNet Colloquium Meeting

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What follows is a summary of key questions raised, and suggestions of topics for future SSNet colloquia and working groups. We've added some suggestions that were made by email or in discussion outside this 1<sup>st</sup> colloquium meeting, so this is the beginnings of a planning & prospects list – something we hope to post on the website and make interactive. When we do that, we'll also incorporate all the ideas posted on the WebQ set up after the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

If this initial summary suggests something you'd like to see added, or you'd recommend reframing or expanding anything listed here, please contact: [ssnet@u.washington.edu](mailto:ssnet@u.washington.edu).

### Framing questions:

An opening observation and question: the three broad categories—HPS / cultural studies of science / equity-ethics-policy—are useful to think with, but do they capture all the various kinds of science studies, or STS work that attendees/prospective Network participants are doing? What kinds of projects, topics, themes are left out by these categories / put pressure on them / cross-cut them?

This question was raised by Sarah Elwood (Geography), and was the main catalyst for discussion in the larger of the two colloquium groups.

A later query about framing categories and concepts: is “science studies” meant to incorporate technology? And how broadly is “science” construed?

### Suggested topics for future colloquia:

> Wise use of the knowledge and technological tools produced by science. Collective wisdom is needed to address the most pressing issues facing science/society today (e.g., global climate change), so this is a call for discussion of how we might best address large scale, complex social/environmental issues in which science is implicated.

See the discussion of these issues posted on-line by Vladimir Chaloupka (Physics):

[www.phys.washington.edu/users/vladi/stsuw.doc](http://www.phys.washington.edu/users/vladi/stsuw.doc)

> Convene a panel of scientists from diverse fields to address the question of how various types of science studies research bears on their work, or not. What would scientists like to see science studies scholars do: what questions, what forms of inquiry would be useful, relevant to the sciences? Related proposals:

> develop a panel on the question of what the gap is between philosophy of science and science itself (i.e., how big/real is the “gap”, how to narrow the gap, etc.); expand this to consider the gap, points of intersection and disconnection with other types of sciences studies reserach.

> Invite scientists to participate in any panels that deal with specific research fields or traditions, to be sure that the actual work being done is not misrepresented.

> Plan on outreach to colleagues in the sciences. Vary the location of events and colloquium.

> Consider a colloquium on “what is science”/how is “science” conceptualized in different disciplinary contexts. The framework might be questions about the viability of “unity” ideals, as discussed by philosophers of science, and recently advocated by E.O. Wilson in *Consilience*.

> Topics that arise at the intersection between science education and science studies: e.g., what is involved in the production of scientists, as opposed to the production of science?

This topic was suggested by a number of colleagues in Education, at UW-Seattle and UW-Tacoma (e.g., - Reed Stevens; Susan Mosborg, Matt Weinstein)

> A related focus: on the practice of science, “the process of doing scientific work” (rather than the products of science / what science is), along lines suggested by SPSP, the newly formed Society for Philosophy of Scientific Practice.

> Identify cross-cutting topic or issue and set up a panel of discussants who can address it from the perspective of each of the broad constituencies identified as making up SSNet: history and philosophy of science, cultural studies of science, ethics/equity/science policy. For example:

- environmental concerns, perhaps in collaboration with the emerging initiative to establish a College on the Environment
- global health issues, perhaps in collaboration with the new Department of Global Health

> Identify an influential theory or theorist and set up a panel to discuss its implications in different areas, test it across applications; Latour and actor-network theory was one suggestion.

> “Democratizing science,” conceived as an umbrella theme for STS/ScienceStudies approaches which picks up issues that may not fit comfortably within the framework of HPS and cultural studies of science, and integrates normative issues (research ethics, equity, policy). Focal topics include:

- the role of science/technology in public deliberation
  - > the ways in which technological innovations affect access to science, technology, science-based decision making and policy
  - > lay science applications; the implications of new technologies, e.g., for social movements
- collective/collaborative engagements with science/technology: e.g., the role of lay practitioners in scientific research (naturalist traditions, parallel computing) and CPBR, PAR and other forms of collaborative research practice (participatory GIS), active learning pedagogies in science education
- models of (democratic) deliberative process as an ideal for scientific process (e.g., Longino): possibly a reading group or pilot seminar?

This suggestion comes from Sarah Elwood (Geography).

> Science and the arts (including performance art, music, and visual art): a colloquium on the ways in which artists engage science, not (only) in the sense of commenting on it (politically) but as an integral part of their work and that of the sciences

Suggested by Richard Karpen (DXArts).

> A related topic: bridging communication between arts and sciences, and also between 'arts', given how differently we all have been taught to see the world.

> Interdisciplinary approaches to research as a topic to be explored in its own right:

- how is interdisciplinary research done, and how it can be done well?
- how can work be shared in ways that makes it attractive and accessible/understandable (and not alienating) to those outside discipline? How can dialogue be encouraged across disciplinary lines:
- what does good work in other fields look like? How do you keep up with, and adjudicate work outside one's own specialty?
- how can interdisciplinarity be institutionalized? Consider developing spinoff seminars on the model of the successful IGERT student run seminar on CPBR, and grants or conference proposals on these issues.

> Interest in expanding science students' worldview to consider ethical and human dimensions of work

> A graduate students' colloquium and/or working group on interdisciplinary science studies projects / practices: showcase innovative projects and provide a forum for discussing the kinds of problems they face doing them (institutional and intellectual barriers to working across disciplinary lines)

> Race critical and feminist perspectives on science: designed to bring together equity/access research/interventions with content analyses, critiques of the scientific integrity:

- a presentation on/from Angela Ginorio's project w/Evelynn Hammond and Willie Pearson

- a colloquium on the ADVANCE project at UW
- an SSNet reading or discussion group that focuses on the work of Charles Mills (keynote speaker for the Philosophy of Social Science Roundtable)

> Examination of the science/humanities, or physical/social sciences divide that so often structures interaction, prefigures debate in interdisciplinary fields like environmental science

A suggestion that has arisen in connection with a possible project on anthropologies of the environment (Ben Fitzhugh, Steve Harrell, Sara Breslow; Anthropology)

> Speaker-specific colloquia: organized as reading group discussions or panel presentations on the work of visitors like Nancy Cartwright (Walker Ames, in March), Lewontin (Danz, in April) or participants in conferences (Roundtable in March, Interdisciplinarity in June)

> Collaborative research practice: a colloquium that anticipates the "Interdisciplinarity" conference, and is one focus for a broader "democratizing science" working group?

- David Tekeuchi (Social Work) w/ reference to a national postdoc training program he co-directs

### **Task forces and working groups:**

> Digital Media working group: a task force convened both to explore ways of developing the SSNet website so that it can serve to link colleagues and facilitate the developing of an interactive network, perhaps with a research component, on the model of, and with connections to the Virtual Knowledge Studio. Web development projects proposed:

- consider the STS Wiki at University of Virginia: [http://en.stswiki.org/index.php/Main\\_Page](http://en.stswiki.org/index.php/Main_Page)

From Mott Greene (Earth Sciences/Astrobiology)

- consider podcasts of colloquium meetings and other events, and setting up ways of inviting comment on presentations and otherwise keeping the discussion going outside of colloquia

> Develop a list of related courses: FOSEP is already working on such a list (especially for the sciences), so this might best be a collaborative venture

> Collaboration with UW Earth Initiative (Stephanie Harrington) to discuss strategies for maintaining interdisciplinary groups.

> Democratizing science cluster

> Graduate student interdisciplinary science studies working group

> Funding task force / development committee

> Curriculum and program development task force