Does truth still matter? Why did we lose faith in the ability of experts to resolve scientific controversies ranging from AIDS, Ebola and autism epidemics to climate change? How can experts regain their authority? This course will examine how expertise became a key aspect of politics in our society and why this made experts vulnerable to attacks. Bridging power, knowledge and science, we will study how experts produce knowledge, shape our identities, and wield power. To understand how this process contributes to the making of our society, we will focus on experts’ use of often conflicting forms of expertise to find solutions to pressing socio-political and economic problems. Rather than concentrating on pure sciences of the academia, we will treat expertise as a vessel for the deployment of power, knowledge, and truth in action out in the world. Our task will be to critically analyze the social and political strategies experts use for establishing their authority over truth, as well as the weaknesses these strategies pose for the rule of experts.

Course Mechanics & Grading:

Participation: 15%
• This course is designed as a seminar. I will introduce the assigned readings with a brief background on the author and topic, explaining the significance of the issues addressed and how it is relevant for the course. Then we will discuss the central themes, arguments and analytical concepts taken up in the readings together.

Midterm: 35%
• The Midterm will be a take-home exam that will cover the first five weeks of classes. It will feature four short essay questions, and you will be responsible for answering two. Each essay should be five to six pages long, excluding references, and typed up double-spaced, in Times New Roman, and in 12 size font with standard 1 inch margins.
• I will send out the questions at 12:01 pm on February 9th, and your responses will be due at 12:01 pm the next Friday, February 16th. Please, leave your papers in my mailbox at the Sociology Department and email me a copy.

Final Paper: 50%
• The final paper will be a take-home exam, covering the entire quarter. It will feature five essay questions, and you will be responsible for answering three. Each essay should be four to five pages long, excluding references, and typed up.
double-spaced, in Times New Roman, and in 12 size font with standard 1 inch margins.

- I will send out the questions at 12:01 pm on March 13th, and your responses will be due at 12:01 pm the next Friday, March 23rd. Please, leave your papers in my mailbox at the Sociology Department and email me a copy.

Required Books:

Gil Eyal et. al.. *The Autism Matrix*. (Polity, 2010)

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

*Week 1: AIDS, Lay Expertise & the Problem of Legitimacy*

January 8: Introduction

January 10:


*You can purchase Lakoff’s book on the publisher’s [website](#) at a 30 percent discount with the following code: 16M4197.*
Week 2: Problem of Extending Expert Knowledge

January 15: No Class - MLK Day

January 17:

Harry Collins and Robert Evans, “The Third Wave of Science Studies: Studies of Expertise and Experience,” Social Studies of Science 32, 2 (April 2002), 235-296. (Read only up to page 272; skip the Appendix.)

Bruno Latour. “Why Has Critique Run out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern.” Critical Inquiry 30, no. 2 (January 1, 2004): 225–48. (Skip the part that starts with Martin Heidegger at the bottom of page 232 and ends right before the first paragraph on page 234)


Week 3: Autism: Sociology of Expertise

January 22:


January 24:

Gil Eyal et. al.. The Autism Matrix. (Polity, 2010): 141-166, 234-256

Week 4: Power & Knowledge: Normal and the Abnormal

January 29:


January 31:

Week 5: Ebola, SARS, and other Viruses: Paradoxes of Contagious Diseases

February 5:
Andrew Lakoff. Unprepared: Global Health in a Time of Emergency. (University of California Press, 2017): (Selected Chapters)

February 7:
Andrew Lakoff. Unprepared: Global Health in a Time of Emergency. (University of California Press, 2017): (Selected Chapters)

FEBRUARY 9: MIDTERM QUESTIONS DISTRIBUTED

Week 6: Microbes, Modernity, and Development: Expertise as Network

February 12:
Bruno Latour. “Give Me a Laboratory and I Will Raise the World.” In Science Observed: Perspectives on the Social Study of Science, 141–169

Bruno Latour. We Have Never Been Modern. (Harvard University Press, 1993.): 1-12

February 14:

FEBRUARY 16: MIDTERM IS DUE AT 12:01 PM

Week 7: Hybrid Knowledge: Field Analysis

February 19:
Thomas Medvetz. Think Tanks in America. (University Of Chicago Press, 2014.): 23-46

**February 21:**

Thomas Medvetz. *Think Tanks in America.* (University Of Chicago Press, 2014.): 181-212


**Week 8: State, Science and Politics**

**February 26:**


**February 28:**


**Week 9: Climate Change: Truth, Knowledge Infrastructures, and Models I**

**March 5:**


**March 7:**

Week 10: Classification and Its Consequences: Looping and Identity

March 12:


Ian Hacking, Rewriting the Soul (Princeton University Press, 1995), (Selected Chapters).


MARCH 13: QUESTIONS FOR FINAL PAPERS DISTRIBUTED

March 14: Reading Period – No Class

MARCH 23: FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE AT 12:01 PM