

Science, Culture and Society: Understanding Science in the 21st Century

By Mark Erickson

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What is science? Science, Culture and Society tackles this difficult question. We used to be quite certain about science, and science used to be quite certain about the world: it was the form of knowledge and set of practical activities that would allow us to unravel the 'mysteries of creation' and the 'laws of nature'. Yet despite the important contribution made by science to today's knowledge economies and knowledge societies, it is considered by many to be remote, and even dangerous. As science becomes more important, we have less understanding of what science actually is.

Science, Culture and Society attempts to redress this knowledge gap and to provide an alternative framework for making sense of science. The book addresses key questions of what science is and how it is carried out, what the relationship between science and society is, how science is represented in contemporary culture, and how scientific institutions are structured. Drawing on methods from cultural studies and sociology the book locates science in a social and cultural perspective and provides a wide-ranging introduction to the social and cultural dimensions of science.

Designed as a primary text for undergraduates at all levels it will be key reading on courses in the sociology of science, cultural studies of science and technology, philosophy of science, and science and technology studies.

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Editorial Review

Review
"A timely, accessible and engagingly written overview of the interdependence between 'formal' scientific practice and knowledge and wider social and cultural representations of science."
Sociology

"What is notable about this book is not only that it covers the ground that you would expect in an undergraduate text book with this title, but that it also makes a sustained argument."
New Genetics and Society

"Erickson's examination of the ways in which science is represented within culture is compelling and his argument for the inclusion of analyses of science fiction within STS is both refreshing and convincing. His advice on how students might go about completing a small research project in the cultural studies of science will be particularly useful."
BSA Network

"Science and technology studies is a field that claims many disciplinary allegiances and areas of substantive concern. Mark Erickson's *Science, Culture, Culture and Society* is the first textbook to provide an entry point into all of them. Whether you're classically trained in history, philosophy or sociology, on the one hand, or someone with a background in science, technology or art, on the other hand, or even simply a fan of science fiction, you will be invited to see your field with fresh eyes from perspectives that are bound to increase in significance in the coming years."
Steve Fuller, *University of Warwick*

"This is fresh, vivid look at science as a process and a social system. Erickson has brilliantly redrawn the map of science studies to encompass art, philosophy, popular culture, science fiction and sociology. He is right on target when he identifies science as profoundly dispersed, unfolding across multiple domains, and engaging not only with the laboratory but also with the mass media, trash fiction, high theoretical philosophy and Congressional hearings. Vonnegut, Paolozzi, William Gibson, the Terminator, and Richard Feyman join Fleck, Kuhn, Popper, Latour and other standard characters in science studies in this clear-eyed exploration of the state of the field. In the process Erickson illuminates the powerful networks of knowledge production that reflect twenty-first-century, in all its uncertainty and hopefulness. This accessible and engaging book should be required reading for every undergraduate, or for anyone who has to make their way through the forms of life that constitute science in culture."
Susan Lindee, *University of Pennsylvania*

"Erickson has a gift for explaining complex philosophical ideas in accessible terms without doing damage to them. This lively, readable book does a fine job of demystifying science while introducing the reader to key ideas in the important new field of science studies. In an era where our lives are increasingly dominated by science and technology, this is an indispensable introduction to an exciting set of ideas."
Hugh Gusterson, *MIT*

From the Back Cover
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About the Author
Mark Erickson, is Senior Lecturer in Sociology, School of Applied Social Science, University of Brighton.

Users Review

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