



STS Newsletter Fall 2011

A few of the current STS majors in the New England Lounge, (clockwise from top left): Emily Beer '12, Liz Edgardo '13, Rebecca Guenoun '12, Alex Cheung '12, and Michelle Farinella '12

Vassar College: Program in Science, Technology & Society

The Science, Technology & Society Majors Committee is back in action and we are pleased to bring you the newest of our endeavors: the first ever STS Newsletter.

The Alumni Newsletter will be a quarterly publication featuring new developments in the STS Program, recapitulations of events held during the academic year, and features of current students and alumnae/i.

If you're interested in participating or would like to be featured in upcoming newsletters, please email the STS academic intern, Rebecca Guenoun (reguenoun@vassar.edu).

Between issues, please check out our frequently updated website (sciencetechnologyandsociety.vassar.edu/) for information on new courses, events, and short alumni updates.

Also, please look out for information on our blog, where we will be posting information of interest to the field of

STS, as well as some of the many alum and student interview we are gathering.

We hope this first issue finds you well.

Sincerely,

The STS Majors Committee '11-'12

Committee Co-Chairs:

- Michelle Farinella, '12
- Hannah McDermott, '12

Academic Initiatives Co-Chair:

- Rebecca Guenoun, '12

Alumni Relations Co-Chairs:

- Alex Cheung, '12
- Aaron Steinberg, '13
- Sam Wagner, '13

Programming Co-Chairs:

- Liz Edgardo, '13
- Melina Harris, '13
- Olivia Arnow '13

Director: Janet Gray
Administrative Assistant: Alison Mateer

IN THIS ISSUE



Alumni Interview:

Anh-Phuong Nguyen, '95

Page 2

Course Offerings:

2011-2012 Academic Year

Page 2

STS Statistics:

Some numbers in the STS program

Page 3

Junior Year Abroad:

Hannah McDermott, '12

Page 3

2011 Senior Thesis

Nicole Kretinsky, '11

Page 3

Alumni Interview:

Bill Kloth, '08

Page 4

Alumni Feature: Anh-Phuong Nguyen

Interview and Article by : Aaron Steinberg

After graduating Vassar in 1995, Anh-Phuong initially took what he described as a “conventional career path.” However, after ten years of working corporate jobs in various locations, he had an awakening. Soon after, he and his friend got in a van and made the trek from Chicago to San Francisco where Anh-Phuong began doing freelance web design and strategy. He has stayed in this niche for the last five years and has found great success in his work. Currently, Anh-Phuong is leading all web initiatives for the Global Social Change Film Festival and Institute, a festival created to “support filmmakers to be effective social activists and support social activists to be engaging storytellers.” The festival took place in Bali in April 2011 and, although this was only the first year, it was met with such a



great reception that plans have been made for another in the spring of 2012, set in New Orleans.

When asked to reflect upon his time at Vassar, Anh-Phuong said it was a “great overall experience.” Although he very much enjoyed his four years, Anh-Phuong said the biggest thing school left with him was a “hunger for more information and education.” With that in mind, Anh-Phuong continues to learn as he works with his clients moving into areas like “serious games” and mobile development/technologies for social change.

GETTING INVOLVED

The Global Social Change Film Festival would like your help! Opportunities for internships and other collaborations are available (those with gaming development experience especially encouraged).

For more information on the film festival, please visit <http://www.socialchangefilmfestival.org/>

EMAIL: anh@socialchangefilmfestival.org

Fall 2011:

The Scientific Child, Prof. A. Fiss

This class considers both the history of science education and the roles that the sciences played in the construction of childhood and adolescence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Issues in Bioethics, Prof. E. Parens

The aim of this course is to understand the emerging and sometimes acrimonious debate about the prospect of what observers—some with dread and others with enthusiasm—are calling our “posthuman future.” We will investigate the competing conceptions of technology, nature, and happiness at work on each side of the debate, and will

Course Offerings: 2011-2012

Some of the interesting topics STS students are studying this year

see to what extent competing conceptions of those key ideas aggregate to form what might be called distinctive “ethical frameworks.”

Spring 2012:

Albert Einstein, Prof. J. Challey
This course explores the complex life and work of the iconic scientist of the 20th century. Using original sources, Einstein’s revolutionary contributions to relativity and quantum mechanics, his role in Germany in the opposition to the rise of Nazi ideology and anti-Semitism,

and his work as a political and social activist in the U.S. are examined.

The Culture and Chemistry of Cuisine, Profs. M. Rossi and D. Jemiolo

This course develops the basic chemistry, biochemistry and microbiology of food preparation; explores the basis of nutritional practice; covers social and political aspects of controversies like GMOs, high-fructose corn syrup, and the historic role of food commodities in the world economy.

2011 SENIOR THESIS

mHealth Interventions for HIV/AIDS Care

Nicole Kretinsky, '11, argues that mobile phone interventions are a cost-effective method to increase adherence to HIV/AIDS therapy in low-resource settings. By capitalizing on the ubiquitous nature of cellular phones in developing countries, health care providers can integrate the use of voice calls, text and picture messages, and advanced capabilities into HIV/AIDS treatment regimens. The potential of mHealth interventions is evident when situated in the decentralization of medical care, community health, and patient-centric medicine as explored in case studies from Kenya, India, Uganda, and Malawi. Finally, this work envisions the future of mHealth interventions by predicting that just as developing countries have leapfrogged over landline telephones to cellular phones, a jump over ethernet and wireless Internet straight to Internet access via mobile phones is likely to occur. The incorporation of smart phones into health care delivery will allow for advanced patient support and monitoring, public health data collection, disaster relief, and health education via a widespread and familiar technology.

FACTS: STS MAJOR

11

Majors in the class of 2012

17

Majors in the class of 2013

12

Majors in the class 2014 (Already!)

16

Courses offered in 2011-2012



Hannah spent her semester abroad in Germany. This year, she will be writing her thesis on a comparison of United States and Germany policies on reproductive technologies.

Junior Year Abroad:
Hannah McDermott, '12

by Sam Wagner, '13

This past fall semester Hannah McDermott '12 (pictured above and below) spent a semester abroad like many of her junior peers. Choosing a program run by Duke University in Berlin, Germany, she studied at the prestigious Humbolt University. Here, she was able to take several courses perfect for both her double-major in Science, Technology & Society and German Studies. The most interesting class, she remarked, was a course on European environmental policy. "We discussed what EU policies were, how they came into place, and the differences between the U.S. and Germany that prevent the U.S. from taking the same drastic measures." Along with the few other students, Hannah met with experts in the field of European environmental policy and was even privileged enough to attend meetings of the German think-tank, EcoLogic. Through her experience, Hannah learned how to apply the core ideas of STS in a context where

the discipline does not formally exist as it does in the United States. With the amazing experience now past, Hannah hopes to use the knowledge she gained in her final year at Vassar. Hannah is serving as one of two co-Chairs for the STS Majors Committee for the 2011-2012 academic year.



Alumni Feature:

Bill Kloth, '08

Interview by : Sam Wagner '13 and Aaron Steinberg
Article by : Sam Wagner, '13

When Bill Kloth first entered Vassar College he thought, as many incoming freshman do, that he wanted to follow the pre-medical professions track. Inspired by one of his peers, Bill decided to forego medical school and serve our country as a member of the Marines. Happy that he found the Science, Technology & Society Program, Bill says that the Program set him up well for his military career. "STS," he says, "forces you to look at things in different perspectives."

After applying during his senior year at Vassar, he entered officer training school just five days after graduation. Despite the short break, Bill excelled through the ten weeks of intense physical and mental tests to become an officer. He then went on to receive his Military Occupational Specialty in communications and now holds a position in second light armor reconnaissance. As Bill rose through the ranks and became the Communications Platoon Commander, he was selected to be the Lead Operations Manager and Executive Officer of a team partnering with the Afghani police force.

His team deployed this April for Afghanistan and Bill spent his vacation before departure visiting Vassar College. During Bill's visit, he took part in one of several discussions about the past, present, and future of the STS Program. His insights and expertise were invaluable and it was wonderful to

have an alumnus still so involved in the Program. In fact, Bill hasn't really ever left STS behind. As a communications officer, everyday his duties are informed by STS frameworks, including concepts from the Science and Technology Studies course taught by Professors Bob McAulay and Jim Challey. Bill specifically mentioned Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory as integral to how he understands the broad processes within the structure of the Marine Corps as well as the needs of the individual members of his company. As a result of the interdisciplinary nature of the STS Program and courses, Bill feels he is better able to understand the perspectives of others. The duality of social and hard sciences provided Bill with both written and analytical skills that have furthered his career path.

We wish Bill a safe tour of duty in Afghanistan and hope to catch up with him when he returns in December.



Coming Soon!

Look out for the new STS blog where we will have frequent updates on:

**past and current students,*

**happenings in the department,*

**and general interest pieces in the world of STS!*

If you would like to contribute to the Science, Technology, and Society newsletter, or if you have any comments, questions, or feedback, please contact the 2011-2012 Science, Technology, and Society academic intern, Rebecca Guenoun at reguenoun@vassar.edu.

