

Critical Approaches to Science, Technology, and Medicine (CAST-M) Program Seminar
Syllabus, Fall 2023

Program Seminar leaders

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Timing and location

Tuesdays, 1-2:45/3pm

Welch Medical Library Seminar Room

Description and Norms

CAST-M's Program Seminar is a space for students to learn essential skills for graduate study. Pro Sem sessions will therefore on one level function as practical "how to guides" for reading, writing, researching, collaborating, and communicating in social science contexts. Practical sessions will help students develop capacities to manage academic workloads, hone research questions, contribute to scholarly communities, and thrive as independent intellectuals. In addition to occasional faculty guest speakers, Seminar participants will also be able to sign up for slots to workshop in-progress materials for constructive feedback.

On another level, this Seminar is also an exercise in building a new program's own vibrant, generous, and generative scholarly culture. As such, all participants are expected to contribute to the Seminar to the best of their abilities; come prepared and on time; and collectively agree upon and follow norms for interpersonal respect and support. We will decide these norms collaboratively at the first seminar meeting in order to consciously build a fulfilling, lively program environment.

Schedule

Sept 5: Welcome and introductions

Get to know students, define & agree to class norms, ask what they want to get out of it, skills to work on.

Sept 12: How to Read – Colloquium material

We will read and discuss the Sept 14 HoM colloquium paper in order to familiarize students with digesting and responding to short papers/colloquium pieces, and to get them confident participating in HoM colloquium and asking questions.

Sept 19: How to Read – Coursework

This section will be more focused on graduate school workload management, especially how to develop good note-taking habits and citation organization.

Sept 26: Faculty visit – TBD

Various faculty will visit throughout the semester to share their work, academic trajectories, and any other relevant reflections for the students. This will help students get to know faculty in a more personable and low-stress setting.

Oct 3: How to Research

The point of these sessions is turning research interests into doable projects. How to go from interest to reality? Define an interesting question and workable project scope? Identify research sites or relevant methods? Etc.

Oct 10: How to Research II

Oct 17: Library of Congress Field Trip

Oct 24: Faculty Meeting with Dr. Lan Li

Oct 31: How to Navigate Bias in Academia

Bias unfortunately remains not-uncommon in US academia. What are options for recourse and empowerment in the face of bias or discrimination? Where can students go for support if necessary? This session will introduce institutional resources as well as discuss “survival strategies.”

Nov 7: How to Conference

Conferences are a crucial opportunity to network and share research with colleagues. When should students attend conferences? Which ones? How to build relationships at these kinds of events? When to attend conferences versus present material? Etc.

Nov 14: How to Write II/Open Slot for Workshops

Nov 28: Faculty Visit

Dec 5: Planning for Spring Courses/Summer Research

Dec 12: Final Meeting, Debrief, Reflection, Break Send-Off