University of Wisconsin-Madison
HISTORY OF SCIENCE 623
Studies in Early Modern Science
Spring 2021 (online)
1 credit
3:30–4:25 PM (Wednesdays)

Florence Hsia
12:00–2:00 pm Thursday & by appt.
608-262-1044 | florence.hsia@wisc.edu

Robin Rider
Zoom office hours
11:30 am–12:30 pm Tues. & by appt.
608-262-2809 | robin.rider@wisc.edu

outcomes
Students taking this course will gain familiarity with some major trends in recent literature on history of early modern science, understand significant concepts and interventions raised, and develop their own perspectives on relevant interpretative and methodological issues.

requirements & grading
This 1-credit course meets as a group for 1 hour per week (online synchronous). You can expect to spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. Plan to give an average of 2–3 hours per week to reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for exams for this course. To make the most of your time in class, complete the readings assigned for each class meeting before coming to class. Bring the readings with you to all class meetings.

You’ll be asked to take turns presenting the materials assigned for HS 623 (the number of presentations will depend on the number of course participants). A typed summary/critique (1 page in length) should accompany each of your presentations. Please provide copies of your 1-page summary/critique to all course participants.

Normally students should co-enroll in History of Science/History 323 (Scientific Revolution). In lieu of the graded assignments for HS/Hist 323, you should complete 15–20 pages of prose writing in connection with this course. This can take the form of a research paper, based on primary sources; a critical discussion of some historiographical issue in the secondary literature; two or more book reviews (situate the book with respect to existing scholarship and critique the author’s use of source material); or a bibliographic survey in preparation for a prelim field. Please meet with us as early as you can in the semester to discuss how you propose to fulfill the writing requirement.

You should be prepared to present a prospectus and preliminary bibliography to the group on March 24. We will discuss written work-in-progress on April 28. All of your written work is due May 5 (Wednesday) by 10:00 am. Grading will be based on class participation (~25%), presentations (~25%), and the written work (50%).

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
All readings marked with asterisks can be accessed online via the UW–Madison library catalog.
Jan 27 (W) introductions

Feb 3 mastering narratives
Margaret J. Osler, “The canonical imperative,” in Rethinking the scientific revolution, ed. by Osler, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 1–22

Feb 10 visualizing science

Feb 17 shifting paradigms
Owen Gingerich, An annotated census of Copernicus’ De revolutionibus (Nuremberg, 1543 and Basel, 1566), Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002, ix-xxxi

Feb 24 material matters 1
*Hjalmar Fors, Lawrence M. Principe, and H. Otto Sibum, “From the library to the laboratory and back again: experiment as a tool for historians of science,” Ambix 63.2 (2016): 85–97

March 3 material matters 2
March 10

**Galileo’s O**


Wilding’s reviews of *Galileo’s O* (vols. 1–2, 2011; vol. 3, 2014)


March 17

**rethinking religion**


March 22 (M)  please email your materials to all seminar participants

March 24 (W) discussion of prospectus & preliminary bibliography

March 31

**making facts**


April 7

**networks & communities**


April 14  
**globalizing the Scientific Revolution**


*Christopher M. Parsons, “The natural history of colonial science: Joseph-François Lafitau’s discovery of ginseng and its afterlives,” *William and Mary quarterly* 73.1 (2016): 37-72

April 21  
no meeting

April 26 (M)  
please email your materials to all seminar participants

April 28 (W)  
discussion of drafts

May 5*  
all written work due May 5 (Wednesday) by 5:00 pm