

Assignment 1

Haraway Case

Preparation:

1. Read Haraway case (see below.)
2. Review the notes you took while watching the video during class.
3. If needed, supplement these notes by listening to the [soundtrack](#).

Part A:

Before Week 2, e-mail both instructors:

- a. A least five knowledge claims of Haraway's in the video or of your own related to the case.
- b. At least five questions that you would like to inquire related to the video and the case.

These will be posted to a wikipage so you can see what others have contributed.

Optional: If you are comfortable and confident using a wiki, post them yourself.

Part B:

Bring to session 2, two printed copies of:

- a. The results of your inquiries. Include inquiries that did not yield answers yet.
- b. Append any knowledge claims and questions that have arisen relevant to the case and how to teach/engage others to interpret the cultural dimensions of science.

Expected: 800 words.

Haraway Case

“What can we learn from the Haraway/Paper Tiger video about ways to teach/engage others to interpret the cultural dimensions of science?”

In this playful video on National Geographic coverage of primates, feminist historian and cultural analyst of science, Donna Haraway, advances many interpretations on issues that range from Big Oil's response to decolonization to the sexuality of primate researchers. The video was made soon after she had completed the research for her

book, Primate Visions (1989), but the video does not make evident the archival evidence or methodology of interpretation, including her criteria for selecting what aspects of the wider social context are relevant. Not surprisingly, therefore, the interpretations in the video provoke reaction from viewers—how can she support that claim?

In this case, we want you to turn any reactions you have—positive as well as negative—into a genuine inquiry into cultural interpretation of science. How does one link some aspect of science to some aspects of the social and cultural context? Does interpretation follow the same or different rules of evidence and reasoning from scientific claims? Where do questions come from? Where do interpretative themes come from? How do metaphors work in science? How does the outside social context get inside the science—indeed, is this the right image of what is going on? And so on.

By the end of this case, we want you to prepare two-page “Guides for teaching/engaging others to interpret the cultural dimensions of science.” The audience you should envisage for these guides are graduate students like you were two weeks ago (before you started the course) who seek ideas, examples, and other resources to help them teach or engage others (now or in the future) around this topic. (Feel free to imagine a specific group of people -- the "others" -- that would be being taught or engaged, such as the ones you lead in discussion sections.)

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

WGS.693 Gender, Race, and the Complexities of Science and Technology: A Problem-Based Learning Experiment

Spring 2009

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.