SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Before we go any further here, has it ever occurred to any of you that all this is simply one grand misunderstanding? Since you’re not here to learn anything, but to be taught so you can pass these tests, knowledge has to be organized so it can be taught, and it has to be reduced to information so it can be organized do you follow that? In other words this leads you to assume that organization is an inherent property of the knowledge itself, and that disorder and chaos are simply irrelevant forces that threaten it from outside. In fact it’s exactly the opposite. Order is simply a thin, perilous condition we try to impose on the basic reality of chaos...

--William Gaddis, JR, p. 25

According to C. Wright Mills, there is a perspective called the "sociological imagination" that can be used to "frame," or interpret, perceptions of social life. In part, this imagination features a healthy skepticism, assuming that social appearances often aren’t what they seem. But even more, this perspective involves an awareness toward the linkages between history and biography, between social structure and consciousness, and between "knowledge" and its socio-cultural contexts. It is this one of this discipline's approaches to critical thinking.

Perhaps no where is this imagination so exercised than in the sociology of knowledge, which studies the social sources and social consequences of knowledge--how, for instance, social organization shapes both the content and structure of knowledge or how various social, cultural, political conditions shield people from truth. It has been argued that the concept of knowledge is to sociology as the notion of attitude is to psychology: a notion so central that, in many ways, it is the foundation for the entire discipline. (Though written nearly 70 years ago, Robert Merton's description remains one of the best definitions of the field.)

There are at least three broad intellectual traditions of this subdiscipline. The first attempts to plot how various social and cultural orders spawn different knowledge systems--why, for instance, the very discipline of sociology evolved where and when it did and why the biographies of its "founding fathers" (e.g., Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Cooley and Mead) overlap as they do. As the combination of soil and environment determine the crops a farmer plants as well as their yield, so different types of knowledge (e.g., religious, political, scientific, everyday) are understood to differentially flourish within varying social milieus.
In developing precisely how knowledge becomes socially modified, sociologists have focused on such processes as:

- **knowledge production**: how various combinations of relative institutional power (i.e., political vs. religious, familial vs. industrial, or print vs. electronic communications) lead to differences in the social value attributed to, hence differential expenditures invested into the development of, different knowledge types.
- **knowledge encoding**: is political commentary more effective when graphed, put into poetry or song, or when presented as a newspaper editorial? how professional journals impose style constraints; cultural encodings of time and space; Ebonics in the classroom?
- **knowledge transmission**: enter Marshall McLuhan and how forms of human communication affect our cognitive habits, social relations, political ideologies, etc.; impacts of electronic communication
- **receptivity to hearsay, information, and knowledge**: identifying social groups more likely to believe television than newspaper accounts, or the premises of New Age philosophy; groupthink
- **decoding**: how beliefs determine what we see; how expert status entails ability to decipher legalese, government gobbledygook, and academic jargon
- **knowledge/information storage**: on the social systems of public memory and forgetting; lost and/or forgotten knowledge; archives and time capsules; how the form in which information is stored (i.e., in a folder of written notes vs. in a computerized file; in qualitative vs. quantitative formats) affects the way in which connections are seen and knowledge derived
- **knowledge retrieval**: the social constructions of history (i.e., collective observances of the anniversary of Columbus's voyage and the ending of World War II; implications of the Federal Government's shift from paper to computerized records
- **decision making**: are they made on the bases of "facts," "gut feelings," or blind ideology? have computer networks made social decisions more or less democratic?

This causal connection between knowledge and society goes both ways: Not only does society shape its knowledge but the reverse holds as well. Here one may study how a new religious message, scientific insight or technological develop alters the social order, such as how the theory of evolution has spawned social movements or how "scientific management" structures the organization of work or how twentieth century discoveries of nuclear physicists altered the hierarchy of science and political fundings for scientific research. Consider, for instance, the proposition that it was a story that kicked started Western civilization, a story of a shared experience of a natural phenomenon so extraordinary that humanity felt compelled to preserve it. This compulsion to share stories may, in fact, be one of those qualities that distinguishes the human primate from all other animals. Being a symbolic creature, our experienced reality is largely shaped by the meaning of things, "framed" by the beliefs, ideals, and emotions carried by the commonly shared symbolic containers we call language. When these socially-constructed frameworks (by which human experiences are commonly parsed and given order) evolve to the point
that they survive through time, we have the seeds of civilization--which, by definition, is marked by the beginning of preserved stories, the beginning of recorded history, that time when--by virtue of having writing--a people see themselves as "civilized" and see others without the art as "uncivilized."

Returning to this extraordinary event, consider a nearby star going supernova, with a luminosity greater than that of a full moon. Indeed, such an event is referred among humanity's oldest stories, preserved in Sumerian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphics. The hypothesis of George Michanowsky is that this stellar explosion over the southern horizon of Mesopotamia triggered the arts of writing and mathematics, giving rise to the oldest civilizations. He links the event to the Egyptian goddess Seshat, the inventor of writing ("sesh" remains the Egyptian word for writing) and mistress of the House of Ankh, whose headdress is a seven-pointed star. He translated the epithet on Tutankhamun's cartouche as "Ruler of the Southern Star."

An additional tradition of the sociology of knowledge involves the social psychology of consciousness and belief. This cognitive branch alerts us to the facts that we live in a second-hand world, that most of what we "know" is generally received uncritically from others, and that models of decision-making must take into account the roles of pluralistic ignorance, emotion, and the bearing of knowledge type (e.g., scientific, religious, commonsensical) and form (e.g., mystical vs. rational, concrete vs. speculative) being reflected upon.

Here the sociology of knowledge examines the relationships between mental phenomena and social organization--how, for example, the oppressed are exploited through "false consciousness," how "groupthink" dynamics stifle the creativity of decision-makers, and how ideologies and stereotypes shape what is perceived. Finally, this social psychological tradition examines human attachments to belief systems and how these attachments function in social organizations.

A few years back, former Kennedy insider and ABC newsman Pierre Salinger had egg on his face when he publicly claimed to have evidence that the U.S. Navy was responsible for the downing of TWA Flight 800. The evidence, he claimed, was from "French security" sources. It was, in fact, a bogus story obtained from the Internet. When a CNN correspondent showed him the document, Salinger said "Yes, that's it. That's the document. Where did you get it?"

Indeed, as Chicago Tribune columnist James Coates observed, "America is awash in a growing and often disruptive avalanche of false information that takes on a life of its own in the electronic ether of the Internet, talk radio and voice mail until it becomes impervious to denial and debunking." The overarching questions of the term include:
• How does one know what knowledge is factual in this medium, what ideas are worthy of our attention? How, for instance, does one check out the veracity of claims made in Project Censored’s Top 25 Censored Media Stories of 2002-2003?
• How will the Internet affect organized knowledge?
• What types and forms of knowledge is the Internet best suited for?
• In what ways can the Internet foster knowledge development?
• Will the Internet lead to the obsolescence of libraries?
• How long can this "Wild West" of information remain free (Ken Wasch, the president of Software Publisher Association, said "Our greatest fear is that the Internet will become a vehicle of free distribution of information" [Wall Street Journal, Sept. 6, 1995])?

**WHAT DO WE REALLY KNOW?**

A knowing of knowing ... would mean knowing how an artist thinks, putting a thing together; knowing how a scientist thinks, taking a thing apart; knowing how a practical man thinks, sizing up a situation; knowing how a man of understanding thinks, grasping the principle of a thing; knowing how a man of wisdom thinks, reflecting upon human experience. It could mean being able to think in all these ways...all in one.

--John Dunne, *The Way of All the Earth*

Do we really "know" more than our ancient ancestors or do we live in a time when knowing those who know is what really counts? Thinking of those things about which you are confident that you truly "know" and understand, what proportion is based on first-hand experience? What proportion is second-hand knowledge, those facts and beliefs that you accept as true because they come from sources that you trust?

**Rationality and Culture Difference**
**Social Construction of Reality**
**Sorokin essay "The Integral Theory of Truth and Reality"**

**EXERCISE:** In addition to stories about the downing of TWA Flight 800, there are a number of knowledge claims being made on the Web. Select one of the following topics, locate on the Web pages making such claims, and evaluate the "evidence" given:

• early batches of polio vaccines were contaminated with the SV40 virus which is why the contemporary epidemics of brain cancer and AIDS--or that the AIDS epidemic is
actually man-made, either being a conspiracy against minorities and gays or a scientific experiment that got out of control
- the AIDS epidemic is actually man-made, either being a conspiracy against minorities and gays or a scientific experiment that got out of control
- a UFO crashed in Roswell, New Mexico, and the government retrieved alien bodies and stored crash remains in Hanger 57
- President Kennedy was assassinated by a conspiracy of federal agencies
- there never were any Americans on the moon; the televised visuals were actually filmed in some back lot by some talented Hollywood movie director (see rebuttals not from NASA but rather at Moon Hoax)
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt knew of the Nazi's Holocaust death factories but refused to intervene until the end of the war

The Bermuda Triangle
Area 51/Groom Lake

**ELABORATING ON THE CONCEPT OF KNOWLEDGE**

"DATA" will be defined as input gathered through the senses; and "INFORMATION" as integrated data which denotes a significant change in the environment. Information is converted to "KNOWLEDGE" by interconnecting it with known concepts and skills as part of achieving a goal. "WISDOM" is knowledge about knowledge.


Knowledge as strategy for successfully predicting, adapting to, and controlling both physical and social phenomena and change

When considering the concept of "knowledge," undoubtedly this aspect is the first to come to mind. For instance, knowledge of one's enemies allows a group to anticipate their strategies and to counter their hostile actions; knowledge of the biochemical workings of deadly viruses can lead to neutralizing vaccines; knowledge of forthcoming meteorological disasters has produced wealthy investors in the futures commodities market; knowledge of emerging cultural trends can make or break those in the apparel, music, cinema, television, and novelty industries.
Knowledge as Order and Ordering Perspective

What does "productivity" mean when you’re looking at information? Blaise Pascal apologized to a correspondent, "I have made this letter longer only because I have not had the time to make it shorter." The same fact is true of much information work: extra work often increases the value of the information by reducing its volume. What measure could be used to assess the productivity of the information worker who works longer to produce less?


- is order a product of nature or of the mind?
- paradigms, metaphors, and gestalt: the mediation of knowledge by concepts and classification schemes
- institutions as structurers of objective reality
- belief systems: their sources and our standards for accessing them; rumors; ideologies

Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*
Home Page for James Daugherty's New Paradigms Project
Unified Concept of Information
The Common Theory Project - 0024

Knowledge as property

living in the information age with informational transactionalism: spies, copyrights, plagiarism, the public domain and the Freedom of Information Act

*The Digital Dilemma: Intellectual Property in the Information Age* from the National Academy of Sciences
World Intellectual Property Organization
The WTO and the TRIPS (trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights) Agreement
Copyright Search from the US Copyright Office, search for ownership of rights in three major databases: serials, documents, and such registered works as films, music, software, and works of art
Bryan Alexander's "The Digital Millenium Copyright Act: Licensing the Commons"
Yahoo! Intellectual Property links
Hall Davidson's "The Educator's Guide to Copyright and Fair Use", which comes with The Copyright Quiz
Stanford's Copyrights and Fair Use Directory
Knowledge as power & control

We can choose to use our growing knowledge to enslave people in ways never dreamed of before de-personalizing them, controlling them by means so carefully selected that they will perhaps never be aware of their loss of personhood.

--Carl Rogers, humanistic psychologist

Here we develop a sense of knowledge that is less concerned with the properties of knowledge per se but more directly concerned with its social implications--how, for instance, knowledge is used as a mechanism of social control.

- ideology and class dynamics: types of legitimation; false consciousness; cognitive policemen; lessons from Lenin and the Third Reich
- persuasion: According to Plato in *Rhetoric*, this is the key to power,
- secret knowledge: hidden "truths;" shamans and experts

*RhetNet from University of Missouri*
**The Nobel Prize e-Museum**

Types of knowledge and criteria for their classification

- Borhek and Curtis’s (*A Sociology of Belief*) classifications of belief systems: values, criteria of validation, logic, perspective, substantive beliefs, prescriptions and proscriptions, and related technology
- Georges Gurvitch and the interactions between knowledge types and forms
  --the knowledge types: the perceptual world (time, space), knowledge of we and other, common-sense, technical, political, scientific, and philosophical
  --knowledge forms differentially emphasized within each knowledge type: mystical-rational; empirical-conceptual; positive-speculative; symbolic-concrete; collective-individual
  --aspects of social groups that influence the knowledge type-form associations
INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS

Consciousness, social reality, and knowledge as social products

- is "truth" absolute or relative?
- the history of ideas
- intellectual traditions: Saint-Simon ("the production of ideas occurs within the structure of every society"), Marx and Engels (the ideological hegemony of the elite and the facade of legitimacy), Durkheim (the "collective representations" of the masses), Scheler (historicism), Nietzsche ("art of mistrust), Mannheim ("systematization of doubt")

U Colorado's Sociology of Knowledge: Excerpts from classic statements
Journal of the History of Ideas
Emile Durkheim and his The Elementary Forms of Religious Life
Sorokin's sociology of knowledge

Lessons from social psychology

The social patternings of perception, thought, memory, and decision-making

- attitudes, stereotypes, and personal knowledge of everyday life
case study in how attitudes coalesce: looking at how attitudes toward abortion, suicide, and euthanasia reside in Americans' minds.
- the stratification of experience
- the self-fulfilling quality of expectations
- case study: the social construction of time

W. I. Thomas
excerpts from Harold Garfinkel's Studies in Ethnomethodology

Language, thought, and meaning: perceiving, interpreting and describing a typical world

- it's a symbolic and classificatory world: symbols as triggers for mindsets, depth levels of meaning
- language as cultural template: the Whorf-Sapir theory of linguistic relativity,
- the metaphoric fabric of the semantic universe (see George Lakoff & Mark Johnson's "Metaphors We Live By")
How social institutions channel perception and thought

**SYSTEMS THEORY APPROACH TOWARD THE PRODUCTION, DISSEMINATION, RECEPTION, AND UTILIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE**

Knowledge production, discovery, and application

- the relationship between knowledge codification and creativity - knowledge growth as a result of knowledge structures
- creating social climates for discovery and innovation: when cultures interact, R&D expenditures, bureaucracy and the social organization of innovation, incentives, nurturing genius
- **think tanks around the world**
- the social statuses and roles of intellectuals, prophets and seers - comparing the social status of the historian vs. the seer - the ideal of the university
- implications of 45% of all federal funds for university researching going to the nation's 126 medical schools
- legitimation and verification systems

Data on the [Top American Research Universities](#)  
[Listing of Guggenheim recipients](#)  
[Nobel Winners Archive](#)  
[TRIZ Theory of Inventive Problem Solving](#)  
[Pulitzer Prize Winners Archive](#)  
[The MacArthur Foundation](#)  

Knowledge creation and technological innovation are often not planned. There is the serendipity factor. Ken Chowder's "Eureka!" *(Smithsonian, Sept. 2003)*  
Joseph Rouse - What Are Cultural Studies of Scientific Knowledge? - Configurations 1:1

Encodings for transmission and decision-making processes; sorting and labeling

- symbols and semeiotics
- mathematics as a way of knowing: when do numbers speak louder than words?
- the social parsings of space, time and temperature
  - Why does the United States refuse to go on the metric system? The country was supposed to be measured in meters and kilos by 1980. What happened? Look at the venom the measures generate. At [metricsucks.com](#) we learn it is the source of many of the world’s problems, including Starbucks coffee, rap music, Jerry Springer and government conspiracies!
Of temperature, Daniel Boorstin observes in *The Discoverers*:
"Others all over Europe were now beginning to speak the language of machines, parsing experience by novel grammars of measurements. Familiar experience was transformed. Nothing was more remarkable than the new way of thinking about heat and cold. Hot and cold, dry and moist, were distinctions obvious to the touch. According to the ancient Greeks, these qualities combined to make the earth, air, fire, and water of which the whole world was made. Just as today we treat odors or tastes as different kinds rather than different quantities, so it then was, as we have seen, with temperature" (p. 369).

For a good story of the rise and fall of a new system for time reckoning, read about the French Thermidor

- matters of language translation: is it ever possible?
- sociology of bureaucratic recordkeeping (e.g., Elizabeth Yakel's "*The Social Construction of Accountability"*)
- the disappearance of the art of shorthand
- cryptography

An interesting case study can be made of U.S. intelligence attempts in the mid-1990s to force all of our computers to be equipped with the Clipper chip, an encryption chip that would allow law enforcement to decrypt all data passing through our systems. A nice touch, revealed in released documents, obtained in 2001 through the Freedom of Information Act, was the proposal to share this technology with such close allies as China, Pakistan and Syria.

- Yahoo's links to Codes, which includes links to the stories of the Navajo Code Talkers
- StegoArchive.Com "Steganography simply takes one piece of information and hides it within another. Computer files (images, sounds recordings, even disks) contain unused or insignificant areas of data. Steganography takes advantage of these areas, replacing them with information (encrypted mail, for instance). The files can then be exchanged without anyone knowing what really lies inside of them. An image of the space shuttle landing might contain a private letter to a friend. A recording of a short sentence might contain your company's plans for a secret new product."

- Center for Social Informatics--involving "the body of research and study that examines social aspects of computerization -- including the roles of information technology in social and organizational change, the uses of information technologies in social contexts, and the ways that the social organization of information technologies is influenced by social forces and social practices."

- National Cryptologic Museum
- Translation strategy when conducting the European Social Survey

Knowledge transmission and dissemination
According to their 2000 "How Much Information?" study, a research team from the School of Information Management and Systems at the University of California at Berkeley estimates "the world's total yearly production of print, film, optical, and magnetic content would require roughly 1.5 billion gigabytes of storage. This is the equivalent of 250 megabytes per person for each man, woman, and child on earth."

- where our knowledge comes from -- censorship; on being overhead; killing the bearer of bad news
- disinformation
- how transmission form shapes content
- -- implications of the speed of diffusion owing to technological innovation
- implications of predicting natural and social disasters
- the peer review system for academic publications
  - Alison McCook, "Is Peer Review Broken?" from The Scientist
- In 2002, a group of scholars who had urged a boycott of expensive scientific journals formed the Public Library of Science. Four years later the battles between monopolistic journal publishers (esp. Elsevier), libraries, authors and reviewers were intensifying. Faculty promotion typically requires peer review. For a number of journals, authors must pay to have their article reviewed. Reviewers, on the other hand, generally are not paid for their efforts. If author's article is accepted for publication, he or she typically must surrender ownership of their work to the publisher. Meanwhile, the libraries of the institutions for which the reviewers and authors work receive no price break for the journals their faculty helped produce. What's wrong with this picture? For greater detail, see "Reshaping the World of Scholarly Communication--Open Access and the Free Online Scholarship Movement." To assess the value of journals based on the price per citation of their articles see Carl Bergstrom's Eigenfactor.org and Ted Bergstrom's journal pricing page.
- bumper stickers and bathroom stalls are among the few sites where common folk can make public their editorial comments
- a social psychology of knowledge transmission: disclosure rules; persuasiveness (ethos, pathos, logos and social power)

Create Change: A resource for faculty and librarian action to reclaim scholarly communication
Origins of Writing class project of David F. Lancy's Utah State anthropology class
Dianne Tillotson's Medieval Writing
Clay Tablets - The Ancient Art of Writing
Storytelling: The Art of Knowledge develops the importance of sharing narratives in six Canadian Native communities
The History of Printing
KB7QOP's Morse Code Page
Forbes ASAP: Telecosm Archive
Receptivity/sensoring and decoding/interpreting; feedback mechanisms

According to *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America* (Research Division Report #46 of the National Endowment for the Arts, June 2004), 47.6% of American adults (and only 37.6% of males) read literature in 2002, down from 56.9% in 1982. More than four in ten did not read a book of any kind.

- the social psychology of perceptual biases and distortions
- information overloads and the perceptual biases of social groups: groupthink
- the receptiveness of the "liberally educated"

Memetics Index
Paleography defined

Storage and Retrieval: Social memory systems

According to the University of California-Berkeley study *"How Much Information? 2003, "* the quantity of new information produced in 2002 was five exabytes, equal in size to one-half million libraries each containing a quantity of digitized information equal in size to the entire print collection in the Library of Congress! Who decides how much of this information glut is worth preserving? In what format is it best preserved to allow easy retrieval--and perhaps knowledge to be gleaned from it? Other topics:

- the computer: confidentiality vs. privacy invasions; information thefts; the Freedom of Information Act
- *"Exploring Charging Models for Digital Cultural Heritage"* goal is "to investigate some of the underlying assumptions being made in the move from previously analog photographic services into the realm of digital capture and delivery, in particular to look at how marketable, cost efficient and income-stable the new digital services and resources are in comparison with previous methods"
collective remembering and forgetting; the sociology of history; "lost knowledge;" Holocaust revisionism and historical revisionism in postwar Japanese textbooks

The Memory Hole site with goal of "rescuing knowledge, freeing information"--to expose what "we're not supposed to know (or that we're supposed to forget)."

Google Bombing

Conceptualizing decision-making units and processes: On how knowledge is put into use

bureaucracies and information flows: management isolation; the momentum of piecemeal decisions; time horizons

groupthink

case studies: the Challenger disaster; juries in action; community advisory committees

whistle-blowers

CASE STUDIES IN PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Applications to Religion: Morality, Ethics and Pluralism

Religious knowledge has long been a favorite case study for practitioners of the sociology of knowledge. As a knowledge type, religion gives recipes for ways of making sense out of life’s ultimate frustrations and existential dilemmas. As Durkheim observed in The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life "Religious conceptions have as their object, before anything else, to express and explain, not that which is exceptional and abnormal in things, but, on the contrary, that which is constant and regular."

Think about Americans' responses to the following question: Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about the Bible?

- The Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally, word for word.
- The Bible is the inspired word of God but not everything in it should be taken literally, word for word.
- The Bible is an ancient book of fables, legends, history, and moral precepts recorded by men.

Prediction time. What percent of Americans do you believe believe that the Bible is the word of God and should be taken literally? How would you believe this belief various
across the spectrum of Christian faiths? Are strongly religious persons more or less likely to agree? What is the relationship between education and the likelihood of holding this belief? Ready? Click here to see the relationships.

Intriguing, no? It brings to mind the parallel between the Catholic doctrine of papal infallibility and the Protestants’ position of scriptural inerrancy--both extreme matters of faith. As Robert Bellah observed, only in the West does belief in the sense of assent to the truth of specific dogmas been regarded as essential to faith. Among the many possible research topics in the sociology of religious knowledge:

- on the conceptualizations of evil and the sacred; cosmology and eschatology. Click here for a study of Americans’ beliefs in the devil.
- The Internet Sacred Text Archive
- Illustrations of how religion shapes Americans’ moral outlooks:
  - Attitudes toward abortion on demand by religious faith and education
  - Attitudes toward abortion on demand by religious faith and religiosity
  - Attitudes toward euthanasia by religious faith and religiosity
  - Attitudes toward euthanasia by religious faith over time
  - Attitudes toward euthanasia by religious faith and religiosity over time
  - Attitudes toward euthanasia by education and religiosity
- Cross-national beliefs in an afterlife. Interested in why Americans have the greatest expectations in life after death? Click here.
- faith healers, doomsday cults, and witchcraft
- the interactions between religious and scientific knowledge systems: from Galileo to Gaia.
  - Click here for case study: Religions impact on attitudes toward animal testing and the moral rights of animals.
  - Click here for case study: Religion’s role in shaping Americans’ attitudes toward the theory of evolution.
- how religious knowledge shapes individuals’ temporal orientations.
- the controversy surrounding Dan Brown’s best-seller The Da Vinci Code, with both conservative Catholic and Protestant clergy attacking the fictional work’s premise
- civil religion and ethnoreligion

Applications to political systems

- Marx on the ideological advantages of the elite; knowledge as enhancing the legitimacy and authority of those with power
- on democracy and an informed citizenry
- Science and politics have traditionally had an uneasy relationship but rarely to the degree of the 2004 Presidential election. More than 4,000 scientists, including 48 Nobel Prize winners, signed a statement opposing President Bush’s administration’s use of scientific knowledge.
From the ACLU (2005), Science Under Siege: The Bush Administration’s Assault on Academic Freedom and Scientific Inquiry

- polity as a memory system: on the social construction of the American bicentennial, the Texas sesquicentennial, and glasnost and Soviet history
- the political economy of "brain drains," where core nations import the cognitive laborers of developing nations, thereby retarding their nascent modern industries (see also the UN Development Programme’s Human Development Report 2001)
- propaganda
- information control: censorship and secrets of state; from the Homeland Security folks- the Information Awareness Office. And just wait until the Pentagon’s LifeLog project comes on line.
- classified, declassified and reclassified documents; see The National Security Archive at George Washington University for collections of declassified information
- the politics of scientific and technological knowledge
- towards a sociology of conspiracy theories

DisInformation
U.S. State Department’s "Identifying Misinformation"
Banned Books On-line
The File Room Censorship Archive home page
gonzo links "the best of the broadband apocolypse"
Conspiracy Central: AboveTopSecret.com
Alex Constantine’s Political Conspiracy Research Bin
Conspiracies & Hoaxes
Proparanoid.com’s Conspiracy Page
Hugh’s HAARP Info Page

Applications to the military

Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA)--DoD Agency Responsible for Information Technology
military secrecy--great connecting sites!
Central Intelligence Agency Home Page
Loyola Intelligence Homepage
Yahoo! - Government:Military:Technology Transfer
Rand Corporation -- Hot Topics

With a focus on "Information Warfare"
Applications to Science and Medicine

- implicit ideologies within the scientific method
  --the history of the idea of progress
  --when politics and ideology infect science
- the social construction of scientific genius
  --competition and scientific discovery
- science vs. other knowledge systems: taking on paranormal explanations; the Shroud of Turin
- Americans’ scientific ignorance--and the implications
  --case study: the Movement to Ban Dihydrogen Oxide

Steve Mizrach’s essay
Pulitzer Prizes - History
NAEP 1996 Science Report Card for the Nation and States

Applications to the sociology of work

- personal work knowledge
  --presentations of self-knowledge: vitæ and résumés
  --the M.B.A.: the utility of educational knowledge
  --retirement knowledge
- the cult of information, informational foraging, occupational "half-lives" and the crisis of obsolescence
- more on knowledge flows in organizational settings
  --R&D expenditures
- knowledge industries: experts, advise columns, "how-to" manuals
- Research question: As top engineers and scientists flee large corporations and the dot.coms following the economic collapse of the latter and the “consolidations” by mergers between the former, dispersing talent and destroying research teams, what will be the impact of such flights on the quality of the nation’s R&D?
Friedrich Engels, "A Fair Day's Wage for a Fair Day's Work"  
The Information Warfare Site--"an online resource that aims to stimulate debate about a range of subjects from information security to information operations and e-commerce. It is the aim of the site to develop a special emphasis on offensive and defensive information operations."

Applications to mass media

- corporate hegemony over newspapers, television, and radio --television as cultural source of stereotypes and knowledge
- Who is in the business of shaping public opinion? Check out SourceWatch, "a collaborative project of the Center for Media and Democracy (http://www.prwatch.org) to produce a directory of the people, organizations and issues shaping the public agenda. SourceWatch's primary focus is on documenting public relations firms, think tanks, industry-funded organizations and industry-friendly experts that work to influence public opinion and public policy on behalf of corporations, governments and special interests."
- the construction of the evening "news": on the press and Gary Hart, Thomas Eagleton
- advertising: treating individuals as bundles of appetites

Applications to the Internet

*First Monday* a peer-reviewed journal on the internet  
Purportal.com "the bunk stops here"--are you contributing to the perpetuation of an urban legend?  
The World Wide Web History Project  
"Renaissance Two: Second Coming of the Printing Press?"  
The Sociology of Cyberspace  
Resource Center for Cyberspace Studies  
Forbes issues on the future of technology and the internet  
Network Wizard's survey of Internet hosts and domains  
Planning Commissioners Journal: SHAPING OF COMMUNITIES--IMPACTS OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY  
The Impact of Electronic Journals on Scholarly Communication: A Citation Analysis  
Yahoo! - Society and Culture:Cyberculture  
Yahoo! - Society and Culture:Alternative--Cyberangst  
GCSocWeb: Resources: Cyber Culture
Applications to Education

- the intellectual within academe
- liberal arts the myth of interdisciplinary endeavors
- the extent (and implications) of Americans’ lack of knowledge
  - limited geographic literacy: a 2006 Roper/National Geographic survey found two-thirds of 18-24 year-olds could not locate Iraq on a map of the Middle East & 7 in 10 could not identify Israel or Iran
  - profound historic ignorance
- the Great Alan Sokal Hoax: a physicist writes a parody on "left-wing" scholarship’s contention that social, cultural, and political conditions dominate truth. His article, which questions the reality of gravity, gets published as a serious piece in a postmodern journal and sets off a firestorm.
- creationism, sex education, women’s studies: the textbook controversies in the politics of education
- stigmatized knowledge: on parapsychology, life after death experiences

Self Knowledge and the Maintenance of Identity

- family as personal archives; scrapbooks and diaries
- the social construction of the stages of life
- control over body knowledge: the tension between our symbolic and our biological selves
- managing personal, private knowledge: on the sharing of secrets; family knowledge systems (skeletons in the closet)

In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for research and educational purposes.