

Knowledge history 3-weeks

Teaching between 9.45 am and 4 pm

Day 1 Friday 4/6 10 am in class or online

The History of Knowledge – A Tentative Timeline and introduction to the Course

What is the role of knowledge in history? How has 'legitimate' knowledge been defined historically and how have different forms of knowledge interacted with each other in various historical contexts?

The course starts with a general, macro-historical overview of dominant forms of knowledge from pre-historical times to the present day, focusing in particular on the relation between elite knowledge and broader, more popular forms knowledge throughout the ages.

The second part of the lecture, we will discuss the basic concepts of knowledge. We will talk about knowledge cultures, knowledge circulation, knowledge creation, knowledge carriers, knowledge transformation, what counts as knowledge and different forms of knowledge.

We will present the structure and content of the course, course requirements, the portfolio and the exam project 'the Museum of Doubt'. As we would like to know more about you as students, we will also examine your knowledge of knowledge. A very important task is to find the format of the course. Some of you will work from home, while others can attend the teaching sessions on Campus.

Day 2 Monday 7/6 10 am in class or online

Knowledge cultures and the History of Electromagnetism

In the lecture, we will use the story of electromagnetism as a case for studying knowledge. We will look into the interaction between two scientific knowledge cultures as they presented themselves in the conflict over electromagnetism. In this process, knowledge was created, but it had to meet criteria for what counted as knowledge in specific knowledge cultures.

We will also examine what happened in boundary areas between knowledge cultures, where trading zones formed and the boundary objects connected clashing parties. And we will see how knowledge was circulated and transformed in the process. It was not just academic knowledge, which came into play – many forms of knowledge were used in this story. The knowledge cultures differed at global, national, local and individual levels. And we will see how the story of the discovery of electromagnetism was turned into an ideal story for the creation of scientific knowledge.

Day 3 Tuesday 8/6 9.45 am at the museum

The Knowledge of Farmers – a visit at the Open Air Museum

At the museum, we will examine knowledge in the lifeworld of Danish farmer lifeworld and see how they knew.

Day 4 Wednesday 9/6 10 am in class or online

Knowledge and Identity – Historical Explorations

Does knowledge have a gender, class, ethnicity or even a particular sexual orientation? And how has knowledge been used in the making of identity – e.g. national, sexual, class-based – throughout modern and contemporary history? We will address these complicated, yet highly topical questions by delving into a number of hands-on, historical examples and some text excerpts representing various positions in current debates about knowledge and identity.

Day 5 Thursday 10/6 10 am in class or online

Representations – Make Visible and Invisible

How have we made something present, which was not there, and how have we made something sensuous, which we couldn't sense? In terms of knowledge, we can ask how we have presented knowledge and how the presentations affect knowledge. Knowledge can be visualized, modelled and turned into parameters. Knowledge is expressed and contained in concepts, classifications, and parameters and all this allow us to make predictions and build scenarios. But we must remember that all these representations have been created by humans over time. By studying the development of representation we will see, that when something is made visible, something is also made invisible.

We have also built knowledge into instruments and equipment, which can be transported over time and place. But the tools direct our gaze and provides a path we often have followed without asking critical questions. Instruments and instruments are not neutral tools. Technology interacts with knowledge and transform knowledge.

Day 6 Friday 11/6 10 am in class or online

Scientia potentia est – Knowledge, Power and Surveillance in a Historical Perspective

“Scientia potentia est – Knowledge is power!” Knowledge has always been a key ingredient of state power, gathered through various kinds of surveillance techniques and technologies. At the same time, popular forms of knowledge – secretive as well as publicly dispersed, “dissenting” forms – have always been considered a potential threat to state power, and thus subjected to different kinds of surveillance and censorship. We will look into this shadowy but exceedingly relevant aspect of the history of knowledge through some key texts and a modern film classic about secret state surveillance in the late cold war period.

Day 7 Monday 14/6 10 am class or online

How do you know? How do computers know?

Do you know your knowledge culture? We will look into the history of engineering education, traditions and practices, which have led us to the engineering education and practices, we see today. The computer is central to engineering and we will see how computers know. To find out how you

know, we will dive into the knowledge culture of your discipline and see if there is more than one culture at play.

Day 8 Tuesday 15/6 10 am to 12 am in class or online and 2 pm in central Copenhagen

Always ask an expert! A History of not Knowing it all.

In the 20th century, the educated expert stepped upon the stage, but exercising or claiming expertise is not a recent phenomenon. In this class, we will look into expert cultures and expert roles, but we will also ask if the expert of today is different from the expert of the past? We will discuss authority and who decides, who has it. We will examine the often messy meetings between expert and expert, as well as the meetings between experts and laypeople. We will see how we may avoid the insights of others and discuss if we often think we know more, than we do.

In the afternoon, we will study the experts of the city, when we go on a city walk in central Copenhagen. We will also look at the knowledge embedded and visualized in the city – why can we read the signs.

Day 9 Wednesday 16/6 10 am in class or online

Fake News & True Lies – Historical Musings about News and Knowledge

The word “news” in English derives from an abbreviation of “new things”, but how has knowledge historically been connected to news and (not least) the circulation of news through various kinds of media? Focusing on current debates about so-called fake news in the world of digital social media, we will delve into the blurry and often contested distinctions between news, gossip, propaganda, sensationalism, opinion-making and even espionage from the invention of printing to the digital revolution.

Day 10 Thursday 17/6 10 am in class or online and afternoon meetings in groups

Introduction to exam and methods

In this class, we introduce communication, referencing, information search and argumentation. We will also introduce the exam project and have your first group meetings in the exam groups.

Day 11 Friday 18/6 Meetings at scheduled timeslots

Group project

Peer feedback in the afternoon

Day 12 Monday 21/6 Meetings at scheduled timeslots

Group project

Teacher feedback

Day 13 Tuesday 22/6 Group meetings

Group project

Day 14 Wednesday 23/6

Exam

Day 15 Thursday 24/6

Exam