

Queering STS

We excited to announce that qUCL will be hosting our second one-day conference exploring the intersections of STS and queer theory.

1st September, 2021 (online via Zoom)

Science and technology studies (STS) is “not yet queer” (Muñoz, 2009, p. 1). Even though both queer and science and technology studies have a shared commitment to the denaturalising of hegemonic knowledge (scientific, medical, or otherwise), STS scholarship has only engaged in a limited manner with the historical and ongoing co-construction of science, technology, gender, and sexuality (Voss and Lock, 2012). As Maria do Mar Pereira (2019) has noted, work at the margins of STS pertaining to gender or sexuality is something of a paradox: viewed as, at once, hackneyed topics and also quite extraneous to the ‘mainstream’ concerns of the discipline. Equally, while work in queer studies has often critiqued the regulatory function of scientific knowledge as it pertains to queerness or the place of science in queer politics, it has sometimes under-problematized the notion of ‘science’ as a body of knowledge.

Excitingly, under the banner of ‘queer STS’, scholars, like the Queer STS working group in Vienna, are increasingly producing engaging work at the intersections of science, technology and queerness. Like them, we think “queerness” does not exclusively encapsulate sexuality and gender. Queer can also be used to examine norms and normative systems - such as race, ability, and class - in science and technology development, organisation, and policy as an object of investigation.

Crucially, as Stephen Molldrem and Mitali Thakor (2017, p. 7) suggest, the future of queer STS depends on “building the scaffold for emotionally and intellectually supporting” scholars working at the fringes of their discipline – creating spaces, like conferences, “to strengthen academic bonds and offer new avenues for Queer STS world-making.”

With a keynote lecture from Professor Kane Race, University of Sydney, organisers of this one-day conference are inviting contributions to continue to further work in queer STS. We seek to platform work that queers established STS theory – either as critique or to develop new modes of thinking and doing – or that examines the intersections of queerness, science, and technology. We also invite first-person accounts or reflections on the experience of working in STS at the margins.

On the basis of these broad objectives, the conference will be organised around three panels:

1. **Queering STS:** Papers that queer established STS theories and methodologies, for example the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK), actor network theory (ANT), the social construction of technology (SCOT), expertise and credibility studies, co-production, and so on.
2. **Beyond Queer, Beyond STS:** Papers that operate outside of the bounds of “traditional” STS theory, particularly those examining the intersections of science, technology, and queerness
3. **Queer in STS:** Papers that describe experiences at the margins of STS (e.g. being queer in STS, doing queer work in STS)

We anticipate paper of 15-20 minutes in length, delivered via Zoom, and followed by a short Q&A session. The papers prepared for this conference may be included in an edited collection on the subject of ‘Queering STS’ that the organisers plan to propose to UCL Press.

Please submit abstracts of no more than 300 words and a short bio of 100 words to lgbtq-research@ucl.ac.uk by **28th May 2021**. Please indicate alongside your submission which panel (1, 2 or 3) you would like your paper to be considered for. If you have any questions about the conference, please do not hesitate to get in touch!

Simon Lock (he/they) and Benjamin Weil (he/him)