The focus of this course is popular knowledge -- both that which is "popularized" and that which is popular in the sense of "of the people". In putting these two meanings together, I am asking questions rather than setting out a tidy body of secondary literature. Historians of science in the past 20 years or so have developed sophisticated ways of thinking about what "knowledge" is; historians of culture have debated and re-debated the meanings and utility of the category "popular culture". Our readings will focus on a variety of ways in which these two fields might intersect in explorations of "popular knowledge". Books marked with an * are available for purchase; the rest of the readings are in a xerox packet.

The secondary focus of the course is writing. Students in the course must commit to writing 500 words a week (ie, 2 double-spaced pages) on anything related to the course -- a comment on a reading, a book review, a reflection on a movie or TV program or item of material culture, or preliminary research findings. The aim of the exercise is to develop writing skills by focusing on small chunks of prose. We will spend class time on analyses of writing, research and writing techniques, etc. Students will write a research paper, which will be developed step by step through the course. I strongly recommend that students buy the third edition of Strunk and White, The Elements of Style, if they don't already own it.

**Sept. 9 Introduction**

**Sept. 16 Popular Culture 1:**


Discussion: what is popular? examples.

**Sept. 23 Popular Knowledges and Boundary Crossings: Plagues**


**Sept. 30 The Functions of Texts**


**Oct. 7 Gender and Domestic Technologies 1**


**Oct. 14 Gender and Domestic Technologies 2**


**Oct. 21 Discussion of Research Topics and Research Strategies**

**Oct. 28 Popular Knowledge and the Public Sphere**


**Nov. 4 Towards a Social History of Plants and People**


**Nov. 11 Us and Them**


**Nov. 18 Presentation of Research: Outlines**

**Nov. 25 Thanksgiving no class**

Dec. 2 No class we will meet for an additional session on Tues. Dec. 16 to present papers.