

SOC461: Moon Bound in the 60s: A Sociology of the Apollo Era
(Spring 2022 example schedule)
Wednesdays 4:00pm-6:45pm // Tarbutton 206

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Office Hours: Thursdays between 12:00-4:30pm.

Prof. Scott's Office: Tarbutton 230. If you are on campus we can meet in-person in my office. If you are unable to meet in person, there is Zoom option.

PREFACE to this course (short video). Please watch first: <https://vimeo.com/306838400>

Course Overview and Objectives

Only 12 humans have walked on the Moon; only 24 have orbited the Moon. No human has been beyond Earth's orbit since the last Apollo lunar mission in 1972. The Apollo missions were extraordinary scientific achievements; they were also **historical events located in particular social-historical contexts**. This seminar course takes a sociological approach to explore different aspects of the early space flight era, particularly the era of the U.S. Gemini and Apollo Programs (1961-1972).

Learning Objectives

- Understand the major historical social contexts of the early U.S. Gemini and Apollo Programs, including political, cultural, and technological contexts.
- Understand and explore new social realities/constructs arising from the origins of the space flight era in the U.S.
- Understand and compare these new realities from the outsider view (e.g., media) and the insider view (e.g., the lived realities of astronaut families), using primary sources.
- Understand and evaluate the use of primary evidence (physical and digital) in developing historical narratives.
- Gather primary evidence and build arguments from that evidence in an op-ed format paper.

Course Content Focus: Sociological Aspects of a New Historical Era

The early space flight era is **an era when Science Fiction becomes Science Fact**. What are **the sociological aspects of science fiction becoming science fact?**

Four New Social Realities

The early space program gave rise to new social realities that had only existed in science fiction prior to this era. We will focus on four main aspects of the new "space world": new realities that become, in some ways, "social constructs" (from Merriam Webster dictionary: "an idea that has been created and accepted by the people in a society"; much more about this in the course). We will frame these as Defining Questions:

- 1. What is Space Flight?**
- 2. What is an Astronaut?**
- 3. What is an Astronaut Family?**
- 4. What is NASA?**

What makes these new realities “Social Constructs”? These new “space world” realities become social constructs because they *emerge within a particular social-cultural context*, and they are *formed and experienced by particular social groups*.

- These new realities are *shaped by* the larger *social-cultural contexts or systems* in which they emerge.
- The new realities are *experienced by* the *social groups participating in them* in particular ways.
- Over time, these new realities *become defined* both formally (by the originating actors and/or institutions) and informally (by insiders who inhabit the realities and outsiders who observe and interpret the realities).
- They become *defined over time (“socially constructed”)*, through actions and interactions of the insider groups with outside social institutions/actors.

The Historical Backdrop

These new social constructions originate within the larger social contexts of U.S. society in the late 1950s through the early 1970s. There are many broad social-historical contexts, we’ll consider three contexts that play major roles in shaping the new social constructions and the experiences of those who participate in them.

The **Political** world (Cold War/Space Race)

The **Cultural** world (e.g., Media; Organizations/Work Culture)

The **Technology** world.

Course Skills Focus: Sociological Research (Evidence) Project

Doing Sociology

The Final Project is a way for students to “do sociology” through their study and use of primary evidence to illuminate one of the four defining questions (new social constructions) arising out of the Apollo era. The course will focus on guiding students through their own sociological research project in one of these four areas. This project will be exploratory; students will use the sociological research process and social-historical methods to analyze primary source evidence related to a topic of their choice. They will then use their research findings to present evidence about their topic in the form of op-ed article – in essence “doing sociology” for a public audience. Detailed instructions about writing an op-ed article will be provided.

Primary Source Evidence

*“Historians make distinctions between what they call primary sources and secondary sources. **Primary sources** are firsthand accounts of events, recorded or produced by witnesses or recorders who were present at the time of the event or experienced the conditions being documented...Historians carefully read and evaluate primary sources to make decisions about how and why things happened as they did.”*

*“A **secondary source** is a work that interprets or analyzes an historical event or phenomenon. It is generally at least one-step removed from the event. Examples include scholarly or popular books and articles, reference books, and textbooks.”*

From Emory Libraries, United States History Research Guide (Sep 26, 2020):

<https://guides.libraries.emory.edu/c.php?g=50312&p=324806>

An exploration and analysis of primary source evidence will help shed light on how these four new realities become defined (constructed) as well as how they are experienced by participants. The primary sources available at Emory will help illuminate:

- **Social Constructions of the new “space world”:** Primary source evidence will help shed light on the development of the new social constructions: who constructs, and/or what is constructed, and/or

how these new realities are constructed. The use of primary evidence may also add a new story or perspective or angle to established secondary source history about these social constructions.

- **Insider Experience of the new “space world”:** using primary sources (from the primary participants in the historical events) will illuminate the meaning and experiences of those who lived these new realities or who inhabited the socially constructed category. The primary source evidence will help to tell new stories.

Examples/Ideas for Final Project Topics (for more ideas, see *Final Project Instructions*, provided later)

1. What is Space Flight?

Space Flight as idealized exploration or occupational work activity?

That can't be true! The long hold of science fiction and the rise of conspiracy theories.

2. What is an Astronaut?

The Astronaut as diplomatic ambassador (abroad)

The Astronaut as U.S. government spokesman/salesman (at home/domestic)

Astronaut Groups 2 and 3: Cohorts and Culture in the making of a new occupation

Human relationships with Technology: realities of astronaut work in the early digital era

3. What is an Astronaut Family?

From Test Pilot Wife to Astronaut Wife: Demands of a New Role

Growing up in the media spotlight: The original (and unchosen) “reality show”

World Book Encyclopedia, Life Magazine, and NASA: Constructing the Image of an Astronaut Family

Portrayal of astronaut children in the media: embodying gender roles of the era

4. What is NASA?

NASA as a “start-up” organization: explorations of structure and/or culture

The construction of NASA as a mythic organization

COURSE MATERIALS

Canvas site: <https://classes.emory.edu>

Our Canvas site includes all Readings and Class Slides (posted before each class session) posted under the relevant Week **Module**. All Assignment Instructions will be posted under **Assignments**.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class attendance, readings, and discussion are integral to this course (**20%**).

- Please complete readings before the class date listed on the syllabus.
- NOTE: I have **front-loaded the reading for the course**: a lot of reading the first 5 weeks; during the rest of the semester the reading will be less and will be vary for each student, depending on your particular final project topic.

Research Assignments (40% total)

Three research assignments (various percentages) will build the foundation for the final project.

Primary Evidence (Analysis) Assignments: to prepare for the final project, students will learn to analyze primary evidence, in two forms:

1. Physical Primary Source (Rose Library) Analysis Assignment: DUE March 2

Students will analyze primary source material from the *David R Scott and Anne Lurton Scott Papers* in the Stuart A. Rose Library. One class session will be devoted to instruction for this assignment. **(15%)**

2. Digital Primary Source (ECDS) Analysis Assignment: DUE Mar 16

Students will analyze primary source material from the Apollo 15 Learning Hub, developed by the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship (ECDS). One class session will be devoted to instruction for this assignment. **(10%)**

3. Secondary Source Review Assignment: DUE Mar 23

Students will read secondary source material in their chosen area, using the relevant sources from the Soc461 Bibliography (Prof. Scott will guide you here), and, if needed, other sources from literature searches. They will write brief summaries of the most relevant sources. **(15%)**

Final Project: Op-Ed Article presenting primary evidence (40% Total)

First Draft and Peer Review participation: 20%

Final Draft: 20%

The purpose of this project is to show how primary source evidence illuminates one of the new social realities (constructions) of the early space era. Students will use primary sources to add a new story (or perspective or angle) to the understanding of either: Space Flight or Astronaut or Astronaut Family or NASA in the early space era.

The three research assignments (detailed above) are designed to guide the student through the sociological research process (method: social-historical) as they investigate the topic of their choosing. Students may use any of their analyses from the assignments, and/or they may choose additional primary sources to analyze for the final project. Then, using these assignments students will develop a narrative about their topic, in the form of an op-ed article, in essence “doing sociology” for a public audience.

- Students will write first drafts which they share with a small group of their classmates. Each student will peer review the drafts of those in their small group, providing feedback in class discussion.
- Students will then revise their drafts and submit a final draft of their op-ed article.
- Detailed instructions will be provided!

CLASS SCHEDULE // **SUBJECT to CHANGE**

SECTION 1: Apollo Era Overview: When Science Fact becomes Science Fiction and Social Reality		
DATE	TOPIC	Required Readings/Videos/Audio
Jan 12	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Overview of the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociological (Theoretical) Framework • Research (Methods) Framework: Historical Case Study (Qualitative) • Evidence: Primary Sources <p>My Story (PPT with photos only)</p>	<p>Preface to this course: Tracy Scott, <i>Introduction to Evidence</i>: https://vimeo.com/306838400</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berger and Luckman (<i>Social Construction of Reality</i>): Introduction: The Problem of the Sociology of Knowledge • Fine (<i>Tiny Publics</i>): Chapter 1 (The Power of Groups)
Jan 19	<p>Lecture: Mercury Program Historical Context (1958-1961)</p> <p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space Race • Kennedy's decision <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rockets <p>Organizational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of NASA <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Fiction • Media of the era <p>CLASS DISCUSSION: <i>What is Space Flight?</i> The Awe of Science Fiction (Fans) The Reality of Space History</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brinkley (<i>American Moonshot</i>): Preface; Chapter 5 (Spooked into the Space Race), Chapter 7 (Missile Gaps and the Creation of NASA), Chapter 8 (Mercury Seven to the Rescue) • Shesol (<i>Mercury Rising</i>): Chapter 1 (The Nearest to Heaven I Will Get), Chapter 3 (Red Moonlight), Chapter 16 (A Real Fireball), Chapter 17 (The Big Lift), Epilogue (Escape Velocity) • Wolfe (<i>The Right Stuff</i>): Chapter 1 (The Angels), Chapter 2 (The Right Stuff), Chapter 3 (Yeager), Chapter 13 (The Operational Stuff) • Scott and Jurek (<i>Marketing the Moon</i>): Introduction.
Jan 26	<p>Lecture: Gemini Program into Apollo Historical Context (1961-1966)</p> <p>Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold War • Vietnam War • Women's Movement • Astronaut Selections (2 & 3) <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spacecraft and Computers <p>Organizational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NASA and Contractors • "Start-Ups" • Pre-Consulting Era <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media • Military culture • Family culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brinkley (<i>American Moonshot</i>): Chapter 12 ("Going to The Moon" Washington D.C. May25, 1961), Chapter 17 ("We Choose to go to The Moon": Rice University, September 12, 1962) • Wolfe (<i>The Right Stuff</i>): Chapter 14 (The Club), Chapter 15 (The High Desert) • Chaikin (<i>A Man on the Moon</i>): Chapter 1 ("Fire in the Cockpit"), Chapter 2 (The Office), Chapter 4 ("Before This Decade is Out"), Chapter 10 (A Fire to be Lighted). • World Book Encyclopedia Science Service. 1965. <i>The United States Astronauts and Their Families: A Pictorial Presentation</i>.

	<p>CLASS DISCUSSION: <i>What is an Astronaut?</i> The Right Stuff culture of Military Pilots The group culture of early Astronauts</p>	
Feb 2	<p>Lecture: <i>Apollo Program Historical Context (1966-1972)</i> Political</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold War • Vietnam War • Women’s Movement • Pre-and-Post Moon Landing (US) • Later Astronaut Selections <p>Technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spacecraft and Computers <p>Organizational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NASA and Contractors • “Start-Ups” • Pre-Consulting Era <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media • Military culture • Family culture <p>CLASS DISCUSSION: <i>What is an Astronaut Family?</i> <i>What is NASA?</i> The organizational culture of NASA. The communal culture of 1960s nuclear-family neighborhoods.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Murray and Cox (<i>Apollo: Race to the Moon</i>): Prologue, Chapter 2 (“I could picture the astronauts looking down at it with binoculars”), Chapter 11 (“It sounded reckless”), Chapter 21:1 (pp. 291-297), Chapter 30 (“We drank the wine at the pace they handed it to us”) • Mindell (<i>Digital Apollo</i>): Preface, Chapter 1 (Human and Machine in the Race to the Moon). • Eyles (Sunburst and Luminary): pages 1-33, 269-283, Epilogue. • Vaughn (<i>Challenger Launch Decision</i>): Preface to 2016 edition; Preface; pp. 17-20; 209-210. • Farmer and Hamblin (<i>First on the Moon</i>): Selections to be provided. • Scott and Jurek (<i>Marketing the Moon</i>): Selections to be provided.
Feb 9	<p>What is Sociological Research? Discussion of Assignments and choosing topics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum, and Carr (<i>Intro to Sociology 12e</i>): Chapter 2: Asking and Answering Sociological Questions. • Babbie (<i>The Practice of Social Research, 14th ed.</i>): pp. 344-347. • Schwartz and Cook. 2002. "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory." • Portelli. 2009. "What makes oral history different." • Brown. 2016. "On the Participatory Archive: The Formation of the Eastern Kentucky African American Migration Project." <p>BRING to CLASS (or email to Prof Scott):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Topic ideas

Feb 16	Rose Library Session (For Assignment 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon, Michelle. Analyzing a Primary Source. (Video) • Rose Library: Introduction Video. • Rose Library: FAQs Video
SECTION 2: Deeper Dives into the Questions		
Feb 23	<i>What is Space Flight?</i> Contextual Factors: Culture (Science Fiction) Political (Cold War) Technology SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION <i>Space Flight: Image vs Reality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous readings.
Mar 2	<i>What is an Astronaut?</i> (Particularly, NASA Groups 2 and 3) Main Contextual Factors: Culture (Work Group; Media) Political (Cold War, Space Race) SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION <i>Astronaut: Image vs Reality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous readings. <p><i>Accounts from Primary Actors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Neil Armstrong & David Scott (LIFE 1966). ○ David Scott (“What Is It Like to Walk on the Moon?” in <i>National Geographic</i>, 1973). <p>DUE: <i>Physical Primary Source (Rose Library) Analysis Assignment</i></p>
Mar 16	<i>What is an Astronaut Family?</i> (Particularly, Groups 2-3 in Nassau Bay) Main Contextual Factors: Culture (Military, Family, Media) Political (Cold War, Space Race) SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION <i>Astronaut Family: Image vs Reality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous readings. <p><i>Accounts from Primary Actors:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lurton Scott (Houston Chronicle, 1966). ○ Jan Armstrong (Houston Chronicle, 1966). ○ Hamblin (LIFE 1962 and LIFE 1968). ○ Diane Gordon Briggs and Tracy Scott (Rose Podcast, 2021). https://rose-commcon.transistor.fm/s2/3 <p>DUE: <i>Digital Primary Source (ECDS) Analysis Assignment</i></p>
Mar 23	<i>What is NASA?</i> Main Contextual Factors: Political (Cold War, Space Race) Culture (Organizational, Media) Technology. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION <i>NASA: Contrast Image vs Reality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous readings. <p>DUE: <i>Secondary Sources Review Assignment</i></p>

SECTION 3: Student Projects – Workshops and Discussions		
Mar 30	Discussion of final projects, and other topics (NASA, Space Flight), as relevant.	
Apr 6	Workshop Student Projects	DUE: <i>Outline of Paper</i>
Apr 13	Workshop Student Projects	DUE: <i>First Draft of Paper</i>
Apr 20	Workshop Student Projects & Wrap Up	

May 4: Final Project DUE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

***NOTE on SELECTION of Secondary Source Readings for SOC461:**

I have selected the readings from secondary sources that I believe offer the best understanding of our four “new realities” (social constructs) from both the external (scholarly) perspective, as well as the insider group perspective.

The following books focus more on the broader historical contexts from an external (scholarly) perspective, less on documenting insider (primary participant/group) experience.

- Brinkley (2020) *American Moonshot* – (Political landscape)
- Mindell (2010) *Digital Apollo* – (Technology)
- Scott [no relation] and Jurek (2015) *Marketing the Moon* – (Media Culture)
- Shesol (2021) *Mercury Rising* – (Political Landscape, Work Culture)
- Vaughn (1996) *Challenger Launch Decision* – (Organizational Culture)

These books focus on “insider perspectives” and in some ways are close to “ethnographies” of the primary actors/groups:

- Chaikin (1994) *A Man on the Moon* – (Primary: Astronaut. Secondary: NASA)
- Farmer and Hamblin (1970) *First on the Moon* – (Primary: Astronaut, Astronaut Family)
- Murray and Cox (1989) *Apollo: The Race to the Moon* – (Primary: NASA/Contractors.)
- Wolfe (1979) *The Right Stuff* – (Primary: Spaceflight, Astronaut. Secondary: Astronaut Family)

Rationale for selection of the “insider perspective” sources:

1. These are what I call historical ethnographies.

- Their primary goal is to capture the realities and experiences of the group during the events, rather than to interpret the events’ “place in history” or the “historical significance” from a later/broader vantage point.
- They focus on the experiences of insiders, especially linking individual experiences to the experiences of the social group; they capture the (insider) group culture better than many other histories I’ve read.
- They do what the best ethnographers do: **they listen**; they tell the stories of their participants and their group.

2. They use best evidence (to support the ethnographic research)

They are supported by robust evidence (from outsider perspective that captures insider experience).

Why is the evidence good?

- **Time:** data gathering was close(r) in time to actual events.
 - They are researched and/or written during or closer to the time that the events happened than many subsequent histories.
- **Data:** interviews with all (or most) of the primary participants, again (usually) close in time to occurrence of events.
- **Positionality:** the writers recognize their own positionality: their stance or positioning in relation to the social, cultural, and political context of the events.
 - The writers are not employed by NASA.
 - The writers bracket their own worldviews (personal views and social location) and set them aside in the writing of their subjects.
 - The writers are documentarians/ethnographers first, “space-fans” second (if at all).

Primary Sources

The David R. Scott and Anne Lurton Scott Papers in the Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

<https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/scott1511/>

David R. Scott was in Group 3, and Anne Lurton Scott was his wife during his astronaut years. The collection includes photographs, photo albums, news articles, official NASA printed material, correspondence, memorabilia, and audio material (reel-to-reel tapes and audiocassettes) documenting their experiences as an 'Astronaut family', c. 1963-1973.

Apollo 15 Learning Hub: <https://apollo15hub.org>

The *Apollo 15 Learning Hub*, created by the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship, presents the Apollo 15 lunar mission through primary source materials, many from the archival collection of Apollo 15 Commander David R. Scott, digitized and available on the internet for the first time.

The primary Digital Archive is the complete Apollo 15 Flight Data File (FDF) from Col. David R. Scott's personal collection. The Apollo 15 FDF is composed of the official Flight Plan documents, flight checklists, mission cue cards, lunar maps, and star charts carried aboard Apollo 15, over 50 items total, comprising hundreds of pages. The significance of the Flight Data File documents as flown is that many handwritten notes were made by the crew during the mission and never recorded elsewhere. These can now be closely read in deep zoom, available online, searchable and browsable, in the Redux app.

Primary Actors: Articles and Oral Histories

Armstrong, Jan. 1966. "Neil Armstrong's Wife Writes: 'Even if Neil and Dave Have Unexpected Problems in GT-8 – and They Probably Will – I Know There Is Little Cause for Concern,'" *Houston Chronicle pages for Women/ Section 3: pages 1,5* (Wednesday, March 9, 1966). Houston, TX.

Armstrong, Neil and David R. Scott. "Constructive Alarm in Gemini 8," *LIFE* Vol 60 No 14 (April 8, 1966): 87-90.

Briggs, Diane Gordon and Tracy Scott. 2021. Rose Library Podcast: *A Conversation with Tracy Scott and Diane Gordon Briggs*, (Dec 16, 2021): <https://rose-commcon.transistor.fm/s2/3>

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Scott, David R. 2008. "Foreword" to Woods, W. David. *How Apollo Flew to the Moon*, 1st edition. Springer Praxis Books / Space Exploration.

Scott, David R. 2019. "Foreword" to Eyles, Don. *Sunburst and Luminary: An Apollo Memoir*. Boston: Fort Point Press.

Secondary Sources

(Selected Readings will be given to each student for their specific project topic of interest.)

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Bainbridge, William Sims. 1991. *Goals in Space: American Values and the Future of Technology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

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<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/John-Glenn-s-neighborhood-10784236.php>

Hamblin, Dora Jane. 1962. "Applause, Tears and Laughter and the Emotions of a Long-Ago Fourth of July." *Life* March 9:34.

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Introduction to the Rose Library: <https://vimeo.com/500076502>

Rose Library – Student FAQs: <https://rose.library.emory.edu/instruction/students/faq.html>

OPTIONAL: Rose Library *Behind the Archives* Podcast episodes:

“What is Accessioning”: <https://rose-btarch.transistor.fm/episodes/what-is-accessioning>

“What is Processing”: <https://rose-btarch.transistor.fm/episodes/what-is-processing>

“What is Curation”: <https://rose-btarch.transistor.fm/episodes/what-is-curation>

“What is Research”: <https://rose-btarch.transistor.fm/episodes/what-is-research>