GROWING CONVERGENCE RESEARCH LECTURE SERIES

Shaping Science: How organizations matter for interdisciplinary science

Thursday, May 26, 2022 ● 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM (ET)

Abstract

This talk draws on comparative analysis of two of NASA's most successful robotic space missions in the early 21st century, showing how they each handle the problems of promise of interdisciplinarity and the outcomes of those choices. Building on over a decade of ethnography among planetary scientists and mission personnel, I show how choices in organizational structure and culture have long lasting impacts in terms of establishing scientific questions, curating datasets, and facilitating careers. Ultimately, I argue that mission organizations shape how scientists and engineers communicate, interact, and collaborate, with implications for interdisciplinary science.

Biography

Dubbed "Margaret Mead among the Starfleet" in the Times Literary Supplement, Janet Vertesi is Associate Professor of Sociology at Princeton University. She has spent fifteen years studying NASA's robotic spacecraft teams as a sociologist of science and technology. Her studies have been published in books like Seeing Like a Rover and Shaping Science (University of Chicago Press), in edited collections digitalSTS (Princeton Press) and Representation in Scientific Practice (MIT Press), and in top ranked journals and conference in the fields of the sociology of science and technology, and human-computer and human-robot interaction.
More at http://janet.vertesi.com

Zoom link: https://msu.zoom.us/j/96876108531
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