



WTMC

*Netherlands Graduate Research School
of Science, Technology and Modern Culture*

WTMC PhD Summer School 'Failure'

Anchor teacher: Edward Jones-Imhotep

24 - 28 August 2020

Location:

Study and Conference Centre Soeterbeeck

Elleboogstraat 2

NL-5352 LP Deursen-Dennenburg

The Netherlands

STS scholars have long focused on the “workings” of science and technology in creating contemporary social worlds — shaping cultural imaginaries; structuring political and economic relations; forming nascent and persistent identities and senses of self. As Bruno Latour has expressed it in another context, “technology is society made durable.” More recently, though, scholars have begun turning to breakdowns, accidents, and malfunctions — to failures writ large and small — as a way of understanding how contingency, disruption, neglect, and repair also generate the social worlds we inhabit. Their work asks us to rethink basic assumptions about how we understand and write about the interrelations of science, technology, and modern cultures. What possibilities does the study of failure hold? How do we theorize the relations between social order and failure? What emerges from the slippages between our expectations of machines and their performance? And what kinds of social worlds are produced when things go wrong? This summer school offers an in-depth exploration of these questions from broken worlds. Through a combination of lectures, workshops, and student-led projects, we will probe the possibilities of failure as a chance to pause, and to re-imagine the “workings” of science and technology in modern cultures.

The WTMC Summer School is residential. It is aimed at PhD candidates who are in the first phase of preparing their doctoral dissertations. The Summer School will offer many interesting insights in terms of both methodology and content. We are delighted that Edward Jones-Imhotep will act as this year’s anchor teacher.

Edward Jones-Imhotep is a historian of science and technology. He is Associate Professor of History at York University in Toronto, and holds an ongoing visiting professorship at the University of Paris. He is also a co-founder of Toronto's TechnoScience Salon, a public forum for humanities-based discussions about science and technology, and a member of the Executive Council of the Society for the History of Technology. Jones-Imhotep's research focuses on the historical intersections of science, technology, and modern culture. He is particularly interested in the historical "behaviors" of technologies — including malfunctions, breakdowns, and failures — and in the place of those behaviors in the culture, politics, and economics of modern societies. His publications include *The Unreliable Nation: Hostile Nature and Technological Failure in the Cold War* (MIT Press, 2017), and *Malleability and Machines: Glenn Gould and the Technological Self* (Technology & Culture, 2016, 57(2), 287-321). His current book project, entitled *Unreliable Humans/Fallible Machines*, investigates how people from the late-18th to the mid-20th centuries saw machine failures as a problem of the *self*: a problem of the kinds of people that failing machines created, or threatened, or presupposed.

Guest lecturers: [Mieneke te Hennepe](#) (Rijksmuseum Boerhaave), [Sven Dupré](#) (Utrecht University) and [Annapurna Mamidipudi](#) (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science)

Preparation for the Summer School is estimated at 80 hours in total. The Summer School is credited with 5 ECTS. The Summer School is residential as the programme continues into the evening. It starts on August 24th at 10:30 AM and ends on Friday 28th August at 4 PM. Full participation in all parts of the programme is required. The Summer School takes place at Meeting and Conference centre Soeterbeeck, Deursen-Dennenburg (near Nijmegen) in The Netherlands.

PhD candidates who are enrolled in the WTMC educational programme are only charged €10 per day for meals.

For external PhD candidates, a participation fee of € 1130 (€ 1060 for members of EASST) is charged. Accommodation and meals are provided and included in the fee.

After their acceptance, participants will receive an email with an invoice and online-payment request and receipt. To participate, you must pay the fee via the online payment request. Registration to the workshop is final after the advance payment has been received by WTMC.

The registration form for this Summer School is available [here](#).

Please register by 31 May 2020 !

For practical questions related to the Summer School, please contact Elize Schiweck: e.schiweck@utwente.nl.

For content-related questions, contact the coordinators Anne Beaulieu: j.a.beaulieu@rug.nl or Bernike Pasveer: b.pasveer@maastrichtuniversity.nl