Rebecca Wilbanks  
University Oral Examination Reading List  
Exam Date: June 3rd, 2013  
Committee: Ursula Heise, Ramón Saldívar, Jessica Riskin, Mark McGurl  
University Chair: Thomas Mullaney

**Biotechnology and Life’s Imagined Futures: Creating, Modifying, Theorizing Life**

*appears in multiple sections

**Historical Perspectives on Life (Jessica Riskin)**

*These texts trace a genealogy of the concept of life in Western thought, from its classical origins up through the present day.*

**Primary Sources**

Aristotle. [~350 B.C.E.]


Secondary Sources:


Bio-politics (Ramón Saldívar)

These texts consider how both life, and efforts to understand life through scientific inquiry, are shaped by power relations. Biotechnologies are situated within global formations of speculative capitalism in a postcolonial world.


* Gibson, William.

**Living technologies (Ursula Heise)**

*From Aristotle on, attempts to understand living beings have frequently drawn on metaphors from the technologies at hand. The works in this section respond to the way in which living things and technological artifacts are drawn even closer together as 1) technologies become more complex and take on seemingly autonomous properties and 2) the body is understood in theory and practice as a mechanical and manipulable entity.*


Posthuman Life (Mark McGurl)

These texts concern the figure of the human in the wake of its decentering by evolutionary theory, and within the context of technoscientific manipulation of bodies. In addition to deconstructing this figure in the present, they project both evolutionary and technological change into the future, painting varied pictures of futures in which the human is not necessarily superceded, but has been irrevocably mutated.


"Thing at the Doorstep.")
Bear, Greg.
Atwood, Margaret.