

SAC368: Topics in Digital Media Studies / ArtDes398.001 Topics in Art & Design/WOMENSTD  
344 002 F14/AMCULT 301 003 F14

Dialogues in Feminism, Technology and Culture

Fall 2014

Room, Day and Time of Class: MLB 2114 Wednesdays 1-4pm

Irina Aristarkhova and Lisa Nakamura

Office Hours: Nakamura (NQ 6443, T, 10:30-11:30),

Aristarkhova Tuesday (AA 1012, 1-3pm, Email: [airina@umich.edu](mailto:airina@umich.edu))

## Syllabus

Our lives are dominated by technology. At least this is what the popular press tells us. But is this really the case? How is our current digital age more "technological" than what came before? How can art practice, critical writing, and published research by feminist scholars help us understand the ways that technology forms and re-forms gender and sexuality?

This course will trace the history, major theoretical concepts, and practice of feminism within digital media and technology. It is an experimental Distributed Open Collaborative Course which will be networked with [FemTechNet](#), an 18 college consortium of networked feminist scholars and cultural producers teaching related topics.

This class will address in-depth creative practices and scholarly dialogue surrounding current themes in new media and digital culture from an interdisciplinary feminist perspective. Invited speakers in dialogue with each other and students will examine both the histories and cutting edge scholarship on feminism and technology produced through art, design, science and visual media. We will cover such topics as cyberfeminism and digital feminism, post-digital reproductive technologies, gaming and virtual worlds, and social media in light of gender, sexuality, and race/ethnicity studies.

This course will be "open" to other types of learners: independent studies, self-directed learners, and drop-in learners through shared digital learning materials. We will use teleconferencing with other classrooms, flipped classroom and student-driven research projects among other forms of pedagogy. This course will address both the histories and cutting edge scholarship on feminism and technology produced through art, science and visual media.

Assignments may include short video reports, mind maps, diagrams, debates, and a TED-style video as a final project on a theme of the student's choice.

**WEEK 1. 9/3.** Introductions, the name game, FemTechNet format, feminist digital pedagogy projects

## WEEK 2. 9/10

**Bring:** an object or an image related to tech from your childhood

**Watch:** a FemTechNet video dialogue. be ready to discuss in class.

**Define: What is Feminism? Cyberfeminism? Gendered Technology?**

Introduction to video dialogue format and interactive class projects. [See this link for help on making dialogue videos.](#) and a link to [video resources](#) you will need.

**Activity: Sign up** for video dialogue/theme leader (4-5 person groups). TL's prepare for video-dialogue: do online research, prepare 6 questions, lead the discussion

**read for week 3: Stabile:** [The Blind Shall See! The Question of Anonymity in Journal Peer Review:](#)  
<http://adanewmedia.org/2014/04/issue4-pontilletorny/>

Love in the Time of Racism: <http://adanewmedia.org/2014/07/issue5-moorecasper/>.

**Juhasz:** [Making Connections, Making Things, Making the Internet](#)

## WEEK 3. 9/17.

Video Dialogue with Alex Juhasz and Carol Stabile. Topic: **Publish. New forms of feminist digital writing, review, and distribution.**

Led by the Instructors with Theme Leaders.

[blog 1 due](#)

## WEEK 4. 9/24.

**Interrupt: Indigeneity, Labor, and Technology** (digital archives, online critique, indigenous and Native American studies, labor, cultural new media production, etc.).

**Reading:** Nakamura, "Indigenous Circuits" (Ctools), Fernandez, "Feminism, Racism, and Embodiment" (Ctools)

**Watch:** Nakamura, Fernandez, and Balsamo, "[Feminism, Technology, and Race](#)"

**Key Terms:** Indigenous Histories of Technology, Settler Colonialism; Digital Labor; Digital Humanities: The Archive, The Blog; Methodologies, etc.

**Theme Leaders sign up** for week 5 video dialogue (4-5 person groups) SL's prepare for video-dialogue: do online and library research, prepare questions, lead the discussion,

**blog entry 2 due**

## WEEK 5. 10/1

Video Dialogue with Katherine Behar and Marina Grzinic topic: **Imagine: Cyberfeminist Creativity.**

Led by the Instructors with Theme Leaders.

**Key Terms:** Feminist Critique of Identity and Sexual Difference; Feminist Methodologies in Digital and New Media Studies; Creative New Media Practices in Art & Design.

Katherine Behar's work: <http://www.katherinebehar.com>

Marina Grzinic's work: <http://www.vdb.org/artists/marina-grzinic>

**blog 3 due**

## **Week 6: 10/8 The Technological Body**

Gender Testing, Disability studies, Cyborg Studies; health and feminist technoscience.

**Reading:** Aristarkhova “Ectogenesis and Mother as Machine” and “Robots as Future Caregivers.”

**screening:** “Technologies of Orgasm” documentary.

**blog 4 due**

## **Week 7: 10/15. Listen: Inequality and Feminist Alternatives**

**Skype with Prof. Marla Jaksch, College of New Jersey DOCC class**

**Reading:** Vandana Shiva “Water Wars.”

**Watch:** [Vandana Shiva lecture](#)

**Key Terms:** Post-Colonial Theory, Cybergeography, Innovation from Below, Global Feminisms, Eco-feminism, New Materialisms

**Theme Leaders sign up** for week 8 Koh visit (4-5 person groups) TL’s prepare for video-dialogue: do online and library research, prepare questions, lead the discussion, sign up for roles in pre-production, production and post-production

Links for Week 8: [101 Women Artists Who Got Wikipedia Pages This Week](#)

[Krystal South](#), artist who runs wiki editing workshops

[Feminist Wikipedia-thon](#)

**blog 5 due**

## **WEEK 8. 10/22.**

**Empower: Storming Wikipedia:** Global Women Write In #GWWI

*Workshop leader:* Adeline Koh, Robert Stockton College

**Key Terms:** Class Analysis and Digital Media; Inequality; Intersectionality

**Assignment:** Start a wikipedia account before attending workshop. Research and edit (or create) one Wikipedia entry about a feminist (scholar, activist, artist, designer, writer, poet, etc)., who is of different background than yourself (class, race, nationality, gender, sexuality).

**Theme leaders sign up for SubRosa video**

**blog 6 due**

Choose two readings from this list: SubRosa Collective, [Introduction to Domain Errors!](#)

[Cyberfeminist Practices!](#)

Carol Hanish, [The Personal is Political](#)

Nicolas Lampert, [A People’s Art History of the United States](#), chapter T.B.D.

Institute for Precarious Consciousness 17 April 2014, [We are All Very Anxious: Six Theses on Anxiety and Why It is Effectively Preventing Militancy, and One Possible Strategy for Overcoming It](#)

Will Johnson, [Lean Production: Inside the Real War on Public Education](#)

Bruce E Levine (AlterNet, *July 31, 2011*), [8 Reasons Young Americans Don't Fight Back:](#)

[How the US Crushed Youth Resistance](#)

**WEEK 8. 10/29.**

**Reboot: Feminist Interventions @ Ann Arbor: SubRosa workshop on Re-booting the Student Body as a Feminist Server led by Hyla Willis and Faith Wilding.**

**Key Terms:** Biopower and Biopolitics; Biotechnology; Disciplinary Power and Technology; Data and Body Harvesting; Reproductive Futures subRosa workshop.

**blog post 7** responding to SubRosa due 10/30 at 9pm.

**WEEK 9. 11/5.**

**Perform: Gender Stereotypes in Social & Digital Media**

**Reading:** Humphreys and Vered, “Gender and Networked Media” (Ctools), Consalvo, [“Confronting Toxic Gamer Culture”](#)

**Key Terms:** Gender, Race, Class; Social Media Stereotypes; Feminist Digital Media Studies, Hip-Hop Feminism, Performativity; Intersectionality. Solidarities and Social / Digital / New Media. Blogs, online feminist activism, etc.

**blog post 8** Research how “femininity” and “masculinity” are policed in social and digital media. Post two examples to the class blog. How do questions of class, race, and sexuality complicate gender stereotypes? Use readings and in-class dialogue to argue your points.

**WEEK 10. 11/12.**

**Play: Feminist Game Studies:** History of Women, Games, Playful Technologies

**Reading:** Mary Flanagan, selection from *Critical Play* (Ctools), Stabile, Carol, “I Will Own You”: Accountability in Massively Multiplayer Online Games” (Ctools)

**Midterm Check-in:** Propose your final project. May be collaborative with groups of up to four. You may not proceed with this project without approval from instructors.

**blog entry 9:** prepare for Pederson and Orkal visit

**WEEK 12. 11/ 19. First part of the class:** Visit from Claudia Pederson and Arzu Ozkal, Istanbul, Turkey

**Second part of the class: Feminist Game Production**

**Workshop** In-class presentation of feminist game ideas, prototypes, stories and story-boards, and games.

**Reading:** Anna Anthropy, *Rise of the Video Game Zinesters*, Chs 1, 6, Appendix A, (Ctools) Kennedy, “Female Quaker Players and the Politics of Identity” (Ctools)

**Assignment:** create a Twine game and test it in class.

**blog 10 due: synthesis**

**WEEK 13. 11/26** Thanksgiving

**WEEK 14. 12/3. Students’ independent work in class on their final projects.**

**WEEK 15.** 12/10 – Final Project Presentation (if writing a paper is your choice, then final paper submission). Wrap Up and Self-Crafted Gift Exchange

**blog 11 due: extra credit up to 2 points**

**SCHEDULE OF Video Dialogue speakers:**

1. Alex Juhasz and Carol Stabile, September 17.
2. Katherine Behar and Marina Grzinic, October 1.
3. Adeline Koh, October 22.
4. Faith Wilding and Hyla Willis for subRosa, October 29.
5. Claudia Pederson and Arzu Ozkal. November 19.

**Resources:**

Global Feminisms Project at UofM / IRWIG:

<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/55692>

<http://culturite.wordpress.com>

<http://decolonization.org/index.php/des/issue/current/showToc>

<http://www.crunkfeministcollective.com>

<http://www.idlenomore.ca/story>

<http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/1-1/all-the-digital-humanists-are-white-all-the-nerds-are-men-but-some-of-us-are-brave-by-moya-z-bailey/>

<https://www.michigandaily.com/article/what-being-black-university>

**Grading and Course Policies:**

Class blog: 30% (10 entries of 500 words each)

Final Collaborative Project or Individual Paper: 40%

Other Assignments as listed on syllabus (i.e. wikistorming, quiz, questions for class visitors, game production, etc): 30%

For your final assignment, you have a choice of collaborative project or a traditional paper.

**Option 1:** Collaborative Group Project.

Students work in groups of 5-7. You can create a game, a Ted-style talk, a social media event, an exhibition, a performance, a campus wide event connected to the subRosa workshop, or another format on the topic of feminism, visual culture and digital technology. Final projects will be presented on December 10, during our last class. Your presentations should be approximately 20-30 minutes in length, and include a printed page describing how you distributed responsibilities within the group. Examples of potential project formats will be demonstrated in class, and we will have at least one full class session in which you will form project groups and brain-storm your final project ideas. Grading of the final project will be based on: preparation / research; originality / creativity and the quality of the presentation / realization.

**Option 2: The Paper**

You have a choice to work individually and write a paper as a part of this assignment. You will need to choose a topic based on the class readings, events, and themes, and discuss it with one of the instructors to have your topic finalized. The length of the essay should be between 3500-4000 words, with a bibliography (the MLA style). The essay will be graded based on its quality of research (textual, visual and other media sources); how well the argument is developed (originality) and supported (through quotations from class readings and happenings / events, showing your engagement with class materials). Deadline for essay submission (a hard copy in class, a soft copy on Ctools) is December 10. You are welcome and encouraged to send drafts to the instructors for their comments before submitting the final version.