

WGST/ANTH 278
Women in Science
"Introduction to Gender and Information Technology"

Fall 2017
TuTh 2 - 3:15pm
107 Hanes Hall

Professor Nguyen
210 Smith Building
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Office Hours TuThu 3:30-4:30pm

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description

Technology is often narrated as universally beneficial; that technology uniformly contributes to progress, that technology uniformly makes the world a better place, that technology uniformly makes life for everyone more efficient and enjoyable. In this class, we will consider how these prevailing ideals of technology are factually inaccurate and ideologically motivated. Instead, this course will consider the ways in which technology is a system of relations. By this view, technology organizes how people come together in complex ways: mediated not only by screens and silicon chips but, more importantly, by gendered, political, economic, and cultural systems that shape how we value work and labor. Technology, by this token, is neither positive nor negative, but ambiguous and wholly dependent on the complex system of relations that inform its design, production, use, and decay.

Broadly speaking, this class explores the broad relationships between gender and information technology. This class will focus in particular on the ways in which information technologies organize gendered forms of distinction, particularly around ideals of work and labor. We will learn about the invisible history of computing as a feminine profession and discuss in detail the erasure of women's contribution to this field. This course will introduce students to gender norms and conventions that categorize and divide different social worlds of technology and beyond. This course will also teach students how these gender divisions persist within the organization of the Internet and social media. As such, this class introduces students to historical and contemporary cases of gender and technology and through these readings, students will also be introduced to feminist theories of technology and social change.

Requirements and Assignments

This class will be run as a seminar and as indicated below, participation is not only required, but will count significantly toward your final grade. Participation will thus not only include in class contributions but also through group journal. As part of this group journal, students will contribute a 600 word personal reflection essay in response to the week's readings. Additionally, students will be expected to post a 300 word response to a peer's essay. Students will occasionally be assigned to lead class discussion.

All students will also be expected to write a significant critical review essay as a midterm exam, the details of which will be handed out during the semester.

The final will consist of a group research project that will require significant reflection, engagement, research, collaborative writing. Details for this final will also be handed out during the semester.

Class participation 10%
Group presentation 10%
Weekly group journal essays 25%
Midterm Critical Review Paper - 25%
Final Group Research Paper - 30%

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory, 3 unexplained absences will result in a 10% grade reduction. I expect students to be punctual and regular tardiness will not be accepted. 3 tardies will count for one absence.

Late homework will not be accepted except for medical reason.

Additionally, any cases of suspected plagiarism will be immediately referred to the Honor Court procedures. If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism, please refer to this resource from the Writing Center: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>

Email Policy

During the academic year, I receive a considerable amount of email. In order for me to respond to my e-mail efficiently, please follow the following guidelines:

1. If you cannot see me during my office hours, e-mail me to set up an appointment; I will try to respond as soon as possible.
2. I read and reply to e-mail once a day and usually do not read or reply to e-mail after 5 PM or weekends.
3. Grade inquiries and disputes will not be considered or discussed via e-mail. For all grade inquiries and questions about assignments, please set up an appointment with me.
4. I will not reply to e-mail inquiries regarding course matters (assignment requirements, due dates, exam structure, readings, etc.) that arise from missing class or inattention to the course syllabus. Inquiries requesting clarification will receive replies, though I would strongly prefer these inquiries to be made in class or during office hours.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1 Technology and Gender Divisions of Labor

Week 1: Aug. 22

Tu: Course Introduction

Th: Oldenziel, *Making Technology Masculine*, Introduction

Week 2: Aug. 29

Tu: Oldenziel, *Making Technology Masculine*, Chapter 1

Th: No class

Week 3: September 5

Tu: Schwartz-Cowan, *More Work for Mother* Introduction

Th: Schwartz-Cowan, *More Work for Mother*, Chapter 3

Week 4: September 12

Tu: Schwartz-Cowan, *More Work for Mother*, Chapter 4

Th: Schwartz-Cowan, *More Work for Mother*, Chapter 7

Week 5: September 19

Tu: Hochschild, *The Managed Heart* Chapter 1

Th: Hochschild, Chapter 7

Week 6: September 26

Tu: Hockschild, Chapter 8

Th: Janet Abbate, *Recoding Gender*, Introduction

Unit 2 Erasure and Women's Work

Week 7: October 3

Tu: Abbate, *Recoding Gender*, Chapter 1

Th: Abbate, Chapter 2

Week 8: October 10

Tu: Nathan Ensmenger (2003) "Letting the 'Computer Boys' Take Over: Technology and the Politics of Organizational Transformation." *IRSH* 48, pp. 153-180.

Th: Midterm Review Workshop

Critical Review Essay Due Friday

No posts to Sakai forum

Week 9: October 17

Tu: No class

Th: No Class Fall Break, No posts to Sakai forum

**Unit 3
Gender and the Internet**

Week 10: October 24

Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labor: Producing Culture for the Digital Economy." *Social Text* 18(2), 2000, 33-58.

Week 11: October 31

Tu: Nakamura, Lisa. 2016. The unwanted labor of social media: Women of color call-out culture as venture community management. *New Formations*, 86(1).

Th: Cara Wallis (2013). Technology and/as governmentality: The production of young rural women as low-tech laboring subjects in China. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 10(4), 341-358.

Week 12: November 7

Tu: Lisa Nakamura, "Indigenous Circuits: Navajo Women and the Racialization of Early Electronics Manufacture." *American Studies Quarterly* 66(4), 2014, 919-941.

Th: Sarah Roberts, "Commercial Content Moderation: Digital Laborers' Dirty Work," in S. Noble & B Tynes (Eds.). *The Intersectional Internet*, 147-160.

Week 13: November 14

Tu: Overview of research materials, Kristan Shawgo, Women's and Gender Studies Librarian, Therese Triumph, Science Librarian

Th: Senft & Noble, "Race and Social Media." In J. Hunsinger and T. Senft (Eds.), *The Social Media Handbook*, 102-125.

Group Research Discussion

Final Group Forum posting

Week 14: November 21

Tu: Wordpress Lab

Th: No class Thanksgiving

No posts to Sakai forum

Week 15: November 28

Tu: T. Shepherd et al. (2015). "Histories of Hate." *Social Media + Society*, July-December, 1-10.

Tynes et al. Digital Intersectionality Theory and the #BlackLivesMatter Movement

Th: Anita Sarkeesian and Gamergate

"Damsel in Distress" Part 1

<https://feministfrequency.com/video/damsel-in-distress-part-1/>

"Damsel in Distress" Part 2

<https://feministfrequency.com/video/damsel-in-distress-part-2-tropes-vs-women/>

Anita Sarkeesian, TEDxWomen 2012:

<https://feministfrequency.com/video/tedxwomen-talk-on-sexist-harassment-cyber-mobs/>

Week 16: December 5

Final discussion

Final group research projects