



Graduate Studies – Course Syllabus

DIGFS5002 001 Dialogues in Feminism and Technology

Number of credits: 0.5

Thursdays 18:30-21:30

RHA 205 Richmond Rm 514

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GRADUATE COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

“Dialogues in Feminism and Technology” offers the opportunity to engage with key feminist theoretical and methodological research in science, technology and media that, despite its formative role in scholarship, is rarely considered as a coherent collection. Uniquely, the course offers recently created dialogues of key feminist scholars in conversation on key topics in the areas of science, media and technology study, including difference, identity, race, sexuality, archives, labour, and more. As one of 15 course sections being taught internationally, this course invites students to participate in an international learning community of others studying the same content during the term”

EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION:

“Dialogues in Feminism and Technology” stems from a feminist collaborative and networked initiative (FemTechNet- FTN) that aims to create physical, virtual, and situated spaces of engagement with science, technology and media. This is to be accomplished through an open and networked learning experiment called the DOCC: Distributed Open Collaborative Course. The narrative of the course traces the contributions of feminist epistemologies, practices and methodologies for (new) conceptualizations of the body, difference, sex, race, objectivity, machines, dispossession, queer animation and becomings. In tracking connections, students are encouraged to create virtual publics; to rupture singular knowledge claims and to disperse shared knowledges. Dialogues provide a framework for productive feminist interventions that are polyvocal and partial,

thus inspiring the capacity to be in relation with difference. This course challenges global capitalist and liberal discourses of science and technology that appropriate “dialogue” for the purpose of maximizing profits while simultaneously creating precarious situations for those who fail to embrace a corporate logic. Contrarily, the commitment to dialogues in this course is critical of a market driven logic or of “resolutions” that silence and expel difference. True dialogues are contingent upon who speaks and who risks speaking, therefore, dialogues are ongoing and without fixed destinations, always connecting and recombining (deliberately and accidentally). The aim is not to garnish “results” but rather to keep moving, experimenting and (re)searching in and through networks. Feminist dialogues insist on imagining something other than what we think we know—inspiring potentials, concepts, new methods and practices. We start by paying attention to the potential of relation-scapes that may be based on reaching towards and across difference, and we end the course with assemblages that intersect politics, poetics and practices of embodiment in science, media, and technology.

ABOUT MARIA-BELÉN ORDÓÑEZ:

Through unofficial channels of public pleasure, desire, affect and corporeal politics, Maria Belén Ordóñez' research broadly explores alternative sexual citizenships, the destabilization of (hetero)normativity and the formation of publics in mediascapes. Her ethnographic research has been based in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver where she engages with the affective impacts of events in disparate locations such as media headlines; queer identified spaces of pleasure and activism, and the contested zones of censorship and regulation. Her research has included the investigation and tracking of affect in Canadian legislative challenges dealing with sex, sexuality and morality. Specifically, the cases of *R v. Sharpe* (child pornography), *R v. Bedford* (bawdy house laws), the police raid of the Taboo gay strip club (homophobic targeting of young gay strippers) in Montreal and Canadian legislation that raised the age of consent from 14 to 16 years of age. Ordóñez uses feminist methodologies and multi-sited ethnography to think and write about the emergence and undoing of public events and bodies. For example, recent feminist research in an edited volume, *Reworking Postcolonialism: Globalization, Labour and Rights* (2015), Ordóñez tracks media circuits of power, desire and labour as a rhizomatic *event* in a globalized context and specifically the political undoing of the former director of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Khan.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:

In conversation with a larger community of FemTechNet (FTN) scholars, artists, students and activists, this course supports student's interest in feminist analysis for critical engagements with science and technology. Through close readings of texts; critical writing and exploration; discussions of articles; (video) dialogues; blog design and creative content/posts, students will:

- Build and contribute to feminist knowledges and perspectives
- Develop embodied narratives that are situated in local experience
- Consider and apply feminist theories to science, technology and art practice

- Explore dialogical and digital forums as methodologies for articulating feminist theoretical terms and ideas
- Acquire critical feminist perspectives that facilitate nuanced understandings of the operations of (global) power
- Build feminist digital archives by working with online feminist networks

COURSE WEBSITES/Online Forums:

FemTechNet.org

Twitter: #FemTechNet

FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FemTechNet/>

Canvas: <https://canvas.ocadu.ca/>

Student Blogs

*Class will decide key sites for discussion and level of participation.

TEACHING METHODS AND DELIVERY:

This graduate seminar is based on a collaborative model of learning which entails active class participation and preparation of weekly readings and blog entries. Students will need to follow the blogs of peers and consider blog content for class discussions. Maria Belén will read student blogs; facilitate and structure class discussions and provide a weekly framework based on the readings.

There will be FTN online exchanges (i.e. town halls) and students will be asked to attend and report back to the class.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Dialogue Blogs:** create, develop and maintain a course blog with a partner (weekly submissions).

The blog documents feminist engagement by actively observing everyday life in Toronto. Themes should interweave situated, feminist and queer understandings of difference, combined with the materiality and lived experience of technology and science. The situated context of Toronto serves as a framework in identifying local productions of feminist knowledge, **through lived and imagined observations regarding everyday art and cultural practices**. Your blog will facilitate understanding the course **with and alongside** your partner; elaborating upon the understanding of concepts and possible applications. You will also be asked to post some class assignments to your blogs. You will need to work with your partner to develop blog content through a dialogical approach discussed and elaborated upon in-class (you should plan for a minimum of one exchange about a specific issue related to course topics and observations of the city).

Blog entries must address the following:

-Weekly readings and FTN video dialogues

-Reflections about themes, topics and questions discussed in class.

- What did you find interesting each week (in class or while out and about) and how might you analyse these points of interest using feminist perspectives? You can observe and write about the same sites and cultural practices, or, you can choose to observe different sites in relation to what

your blog partner shares.

Optional Blog Additions

You are encouraged to insert any and all forms of expression that you deem relevant and useful to your blog discussions- this includes but is not limited to: public images, graffiti, doodles, videos, photography, animations, text, multiple text, nonsensical text, poems, stories, reflexive journal style entries, links, reviews of all kinds: an exhibit you saw, a film you watched, a (sensational) media story etc. Blog content and conversations may also be used as feminist resources to draw and learn from in the classroom, therefore, you are responsible for browsing your peer's blogs before and during class. Note that your blog will also be made available **with your permission** to other institutions offering this course and/or in the FTN circuit.

Constructing your blog

By the second class, students should have their blogs set up and must provide the rest of the class with their blog url. Preferred blog sites, tips, tools and interfaces can be discussed via Canvas. Students must write a **minimum of 300 Words** per week.

2. **Class Facilitations of Course Readings and Written report. You will sign up to facilitate two readings** and initiate and facilitate two discussions based on key questions raised from the readings. A 500-word discussion report will be submitted based on the discussion of **one** of the facilitations (readings) and posted/submitted in the following class. The facilitator should outline the question/s and the critical observations made about the reading so as to lead a class discussion.
3. **Video Creation. Students will video record a 12-15 minute conversation about a selected course reading with a peer.** The dialogue must address course themes and integrate questions/comments/critiques. The conversation can revolve around pre-determined questions in order to stay within the time limit. It is expected that you have a plan and structure (i.e. a loose script) before recording. The video must be uploaded to Vimeo and/or blog and it must be titled with a key concept.
4. **Cross-Class Assignments** As part of an ongoing effort to connect simultaneous nodal courses, the class will connect and engage with another DOCC nodal.
 - a) **Introductions-In-Relation** This exercise requires that students record (and upload to Sound Cloud) "introductions". This entails communicating a selected moment/event in a student's life and reflecting on this moment in light of (and through) Erin Manning's reading, "Engenderings: Gender, Politics, Individuation" in The Politics of Touch (2006). These introductions will serve as an exchange and as a way to situate student's life experiences with broader questions of subjectivity and performativity. Students from another DOCC will also prepare introductions (with a different reading) for OCADU students to consider and engage.
 - b) **Video Dialogue Responses** Another exercise will entail recording and uploading a short 15-20 min. class conversation in response to Dr. Melissa Meade's, "Gender, Culture and Technology" digital storytelling narratives.
5. **FemTechNet/Online Presence** Student efforts to connect and collaborate in discussions with other students enrolled in DOCC 2016 courses will be included in the evaluation criteria of the course.

There is a Facebook FTN group to join; it will be used in the course to track/post relevant feminist and/or feminist related media pertaining to course themes.

***EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCHEDULE**

% of Grade

Due Dates

Class Participation

10%

is based on: weekly classroom discussions and online presence; timely and appropriate submission of blog posts and assignments; and appreciable endeavours to develop academic learning and collaborative skills.

Cross-Class Assignments

25%

There are two cross-class assignments and each one is worth 12.5%. Students will be evaluated on their level of engagement with another DOCC class. Emphasis will be placed on student's ability to communicate ideas and on the depth and focused scope of the dialogues that transpire in recordings. The written component of "Introductions" (1100 Words) will be evaluated based on student's ability to clearly outline and elaborate on a concept and/or idea in Erin Manning's reading and on the ability to connect and integrate these ideas and concepts with a personal life moment/event. Students will then read their introductions and post to Sound Cloud to be shared with OCADU and another DOCC class (posted no later than Sep. 29) After listening to the introductions from students in Dr. Melissa Meade's class, "Gender, Culture and Technology" at Colby-Sawyer College (New Hampshire), students will be asked to post a 500 Word reflection on their blogs that engages with questions of subjectivity and becoming (Due date TBA). We ask how it is that "we" perform as "subjects"? What's in an introduction and how can we theorize this through a feminist lens? How well students integrate these two components (personal/analytical) will be evaluated and discussed in class.

The second assignment pays attention to student's ability to engage in a short video recorded class conversation that responds to ideas discussed in the FTN Video Dialogue, "Difference" and in the readings by Shildrick, M'Charek and Sandoval. The class will then receive digital storytelling narratives from Colby-Sawyer College in New Hampshire ("Gender, Culture and Technology") and provide feedback using the readings and video dialogue, "Difference". Class video conversation will then be shared with Colby-Sawyer College. Students are encouraged to blog about this process.

Student Video Dialogue

20% uploaded no later than midnight Nov. 17

Evaluation will depend on how the dialogue is framed and organized. Students will need to determine the selection of articles and the possible links between them. Moreover, students will work in pairs and communicate ideas that they determine to be important and relevant to their own research interests/questions. The dialogue will be framed and organized before the video recording so as to create the best possible staging for the conversation. Students are free to choose how they will communicate their ideas (i.e interview form, casual conversation, thematic staging for effect, etc.).

Weekly Collaborative Blogs

25%

Dec. 3 no later than midnight

The blog submissions are part of an ongoing class response to the material but also to what the course material inspires. This is an opportunity to highlight and develop the potential connections

between course content and student's everyday life in Toronto. Students will be evaluated based on how well they curate their blogs and also on how the overall course themes, questions and observations are engaged with (through diverse digital forms such as but not limited to: images, sound and video, etc.). **The point is not to summarize course material** but rather to develop a voice and a style alongside the course readings with a partner.

Class facilitation of two articles and written report of one facilitation (500 Word Blog post) 15% _____ (sign up)

Student led class facilitations aim to generate discussion through well-considered and prepared questions. Students will critically focus on one aspect of the readings being facilitated and offer selected key observations tied to proposed key questions; the 500 Word written report will highlight key observations and questions. Students will also need to construct a discussion framework (i.e. propose working in pairs to answer a question, an activity that stresses some aspect of the article) that is deemed most suitable for generating discussion and class engagement.

FemTechNet Online Presence 5%

In addition to maintaining a weekly blog, students are expected to navigate and engage the FTN online forums. There will be a number of invitations to participate and students are encouraged to contribute to online discussions. This also includes sharing, tracking and observing media related to the course and posting to the FTN FaceBook group.

*Any further details regarding assignments will be posted on Canvas (please see "Assignments").

GRADING SCHEME:

The following grades are used at the graduate level:

A+ 95-100

A 85-94

A- 80-84

B+ 75-79

B 70-74

C 60-69

F 0-59

P Pass (Summer Off-Campus Only)*

I Incomplete**

W Withdrawn without Academic Penalty

*A grade of P is not used in grade point average (GPA) calculations.

**Incomplete work must be completed no later than the end of the following term.

Please note that as per Section 5.3 of the Graduate Studies General Policies, students in graduate programs are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 75% (B+).

REQUIRED TEXTS: All articles will be available through **Course Reserves** on Canvas.

REQUIRED RESOURCES: It is recommended that students bring laptops to class. Ongoing access to the internet is required.

Advance preparation: Students must research blog platforms and select one for the

course. Students must also be prepared to start blogging in the second week of class. Some Suggestions: “Five Best Blogging Platforms”: <http://lifehacker.com/5568092/five-best-blogging-platforms>

“Top Ten Free Online Blogging Platforms”: <http://sixrevisions.com/tools/top-free-online-blogging> **WEEKLY READINGS/SCHEDULE:**

Sept. 8 Week 1

Introductions Overview of course and FemTechNet Discussion: MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) vs. DOCC (Distributed Open Collaborative Course)

Juhasz, A. & Balsamo, A. “An Idea Whose Time is Here: FemTechNet – A Distributed Online Collaborative Course (DOCC). *Ada: a Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, No. 1. 2012

Recommended:

FemTechNet Road Show: <http://femtechnet.org/2015/08/femtechnet-roadshow-table-of-contents/>

Feminist by Jasmine Rault

Technology by Lisa Brundage and Emily Sherwood

Network by alex cruse

Distributed by Maria-Belén Ordóñez

Open by T.L. Cowan

Collaborative by K.J. Surkan

Course by Karen Keifer-Boyd

Governance: geek feminist critiques of the digital liberties movement by sky croeser

Improvisation by Melissa Meade and Cricket Keating

Sept. 15 Week 2

Manning, Erin “Engenderings: Gender, Politics, Individuation” in *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty*. pp. 84-109. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

** In-class time to work on “Introductions”*

Sept. 22 Week 3 Corporeal Figurations

Shohat, Ella “ ‘Lasers for Ladies’: Endo Discourse and the Inscription of Science” in *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*. pp. 139-165. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.

Latour, Bruno “How to Talk about the Body? The Normative Dimensions of Science Studies” in *Body and Society* 10(2-3): 205-229. 2004.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Body \(Skawennati and Heather Cassils moderated by T.L. Cowan\)](#)

Sept. 29 Week 4 Differences

Shildrick, Margrit “The Body Which is Not One: Dealing with Differences” in *Body & Society* 5: 77. 1999.

M'charek "Fragile Differences, Relational effects: Stories about the Materiality of Race and Sex" in *European Journal of Women's Studies* 17(4) 307-322. 2010.

Written "introductions" must be posted to Blog and uploaded to Sound Cloud by midnight.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Differences](#), (Kim Sawchuk and Shu Lea Cheang)

Oct. 6 Week 5 Race: Feminist Methodologies and Disruptions

Sandoval, Chela "U.S. Third World Feminism- Differential Social Movement I" in *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Theory out of Bounds Volume 18. 2000. Pp. 40-63.

October 10-14: Study Break

Oct. 20 Week 6 Sex and the (Techno)Politics and Poetics of Reproduction

Martin, Emily *The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles* in *Signs* (April 1991), 16 (3), pg. 485-501.

Haraway, Donna "Fetus: The Virtual Speculum in the New World Order" in *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. FemaleMan@Meets_OncoMouseTM: Feminsim and Technoscience*. pp. 173-212. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.

Recommended: FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Race](#), (Maria Fernandez and Lisa Nakamura)

Oct. 27 Week 7 Feminist Labour in the Virtual

Ong, Aiwa "Neoliberalism as a Mobile Technology" in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, Vol. 32, No. 1. Jan.,2007. pp. 3-8

Terranova, Tiziana "Free labour: Producing culture for the digital economy" in *Social Text*, 18(2):33-58. 2000.

Nov. 3 Week 8 Feminist Epistemologies, Practices, and the Expansion of "Objectivity"

Harding, Sandra "After Absolute Neutrality: Expanding 'Science'" in *Feminist Science Studies: A New Generation* pp. 291-320. Eds. Maralee Mayberry, Banu Subramaniam, Lisa H. Weasel. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Nov. 10 Week 9 Feminist Machines

Haraway, Donna "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the 1980s" in Linda Nicholson (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*. pp.190-233. New York and London: Routledge, 1990.

Cooper, Melinda "Preempting Emergence: The Biological Turn in the War on Terror" in Melinda Cooper, *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era*. pp. 74-100 Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008.

Halberstam, Judith "Automating gender: postmodern feminism in the age of the intelligent machine" in *Feminist Studies*, 3, 439-60. 1991

Nov. 17 Week 10 Dispossession: Situating Feminist Practices

Judith Bultler and Athena Athanasiou "Transborder Affective foreclosures and State Racism" in *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*. 2013

Video Dialogue Due (uploaded to blog and/or Vimeo's FemTechNet channel)

Recommended: FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Place \(Radhika Gajjala and Sharon Irish\)](#)

Nov. 24 Week 11 Animating Sexuality: Queer Potentials

Halberstam, Jack. "Animating Revolt and Revolting Animation" in Halberstam, J. *The Queer Art of Failure*. pp.87-121. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 2011.

Barad, Karen. "Nature's Queer Performativity" in *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 19(2):121-158, Spring/Summer 2011.

Dec. 1 Week 12 Becomings

Alaimo, Stacy "States of Suspension: Trans-corporeality at Sea" In *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 19.3:476-493 (Summer 2012)

Beatriz DaCosta "Reaching the limit: When Art becomes Science" in *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism and Technoscience*. Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip (eds.). pp. 365-382. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008.

Haraway, Donna "Sowing Worlds: A Seed Bag for Terraforming with Earth Others" in Margaret Grebowicz and Helen Merrick *Beyond the Cyborg: Adventures with Donna Haraway*. pp. 137-146. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013

[Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene: Staying with the Trouble", 5/9/14](#) (Vimeo 25 minute lecture)

Myers, Natasha "Sensing Botanical Sensoria: A Kriya for Cultivating Your Inner Plant" In *Centre for Imaginative Ethnography* (digital). 2014.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Transformation \(Catherine Lord, Donna Haraway about the legacy of Beatriz DaCosta\)](#)

DOCC Blogs Due December 3rd before midnight

LATE WORK

This is a graduate level course and it is anticipated that all course work should be presented and handed in, in a timely manner, as per the course schedule. If for any reason this is not possible, please anticipate and discuss the matter with your instructor. Medical cases which present problems with deadlines require confirmation in writing from a health care professional. Late work is normally subject to a 10% penalty per week, and will be accepted solely by arrangement, and with the discretion of the instructor.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

An incomplete grade is considered when students encounter unexpected difficulty completing course work within the semester. Students must discuss their situation with their instructor and request an incomplete grade prior to the end of the semester. Incomplete grades are filed at the discretion of the teaching faculty. Students with incomplete grades must complete all course work no later than the end of the following term.

ATTENDANCE

The university requires that students attend classes on a regular basis and that they participate fully in them.

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION

A student who foresees a conflict between a religious obligation and any scheduled class assignments, including the final examination or critique, must notify his/her instructor in writing and in the case of final examinations and critiques must make a written request to the Office of Graduate Studies within three weeks of the first class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students may not re-submit previously graded work without permission, or submit work produced for other courses for evaluation. Plagiarism, misrepresenting personal performance or status and/or any conduct which damages the integrity of scholarly and artistic activity is unacceptable. Academic penalties will result. See the OCAD U Academic Calendar for details.

Academic freedom is a fundamental right in any institution of higher learning. Honesty and integrity are necessary preconditions of this freedom. Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offences.

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Graduate students who conduct research that involves human participants may require the approval of the OCAD Research Ethics Board prior to the initiation of any such research. For more information on research involving human participants, please visit the OCAD U website at: www.ocad.ca/research/research_ethics_board.htm

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

The syllabus, schedule, and course outline may be amended, altered, or changed as the course proceeds. The weekly schedule is open and will be developed in response to the ongoing concerns of the participants. Guest speakers and student presentations will be organized as the term progresses. The class will be notified and when possible, consulted about developments and changes.