



"Okay your father managed to get a mouse. Now how do we use it?"

WOMENSST392B: Gender & Technology

Tuesday, 2.30- 3.45 (Bartlett 202)

**This is a blended course:
Online participation during the week**

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Technology today is deeply integrated into most aspects of our lives. However, technology is never gender or race neutral. Rather, social categories such as gender, race, class and sexuality are shaped by technology and in turn, shape the development of new technologies. Technology is in that sense best understood as a “co-production” of gender and technology. This course draws on a variety of fields such as anthropology, biology, engineering, feminist science and technology studies, design studies, philosophy, sociology, and literature to provide a critical perspective on gender and technology. Topics will include: feminist technology studies, the digital divide, internet, web, and digital technologies, social media, home technologies, biotechnology, reproductive technologies, surveillance, and digital entertainment technologies.

Note: This course is a blended course, meeting half the time in a classroom setting and the rest in an online setting. Each week, you are expected to be a well-prepared and engaged participant in the classroom, and an engaged and responsive participant online. Weekly details are on the syllabus.

II. COURSE READINGS

There are no texts for this course. Readings are all electronic and available as web links or files on the course Moodle site. If you are registered for the course, you should automatically have access to the course Moodle site. If not, please contact OIT.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This class is designed to be a blended course. Of the structured “course time” assigned each week, we will engage with the course material half the time in a face-to-face setting in class and the other half electronically through MOODLE. In the syllabus, you will see that for each week there are assigned readings, as well as class exercises and reflection pieces. **For each week’s face-to-face class on Tuesday, you should have completed the readings assigned for the week, completed the exercise or reflection piece, and posted your contribution by midnight the previous Sunday. You should have responded to at least one other person’s post each week before Tuesday noon.** We will discuss the readings, your posts and responses in class each week. It is therefore essential that you complete and reflect upon the reading and online assignments before coming to class, so you are prepared to contribute to the discussion. It is critical that you participate in the emerging conversation and analysis. Every class will focus on the readings assigned for that class as stated in the syllabus. The format of the class will be primarily a group discussion focused on the themes of the class readings.

ATTENDANCE: Your attendance & participation (in class and online) is required for the entire session of each class. More than 3 unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade by at least one letter grade.

- ***Attendance and Class Participation – in class (10%):*** The issues we will be discussing this semester have both academic and personal implications. In order to grapple with this material it is vital that you do the readings and assignments carefully and on time, come to class with questions, opinions, and analyses (agreements and disagreements) -- in other words to be prepared to participate in an intellectual debate. In class participation (quality not quantity!) counts for 10% of your grade.
- ***Online Participation on Moodle (65%):*** Online Participation is required each week. Each week your online engagement takes the form of either a class exercise or a reflection piece. Detailed instructions are posted on Moodle. Your post for Tuesday’s class is due the previous Sunday by midnight. Please read the other posts and respond to at least one classmate’s post by Tuesday at noon on the day of the class:
 - ❖ **Online Exercises (40%):** Several times during the semester, the week’s online work is through a particular class online exercise. Details of the exercise and the writing requirements are posted on Moodle. Each of these assignments is worth 10% and the **top four** grades will be count towards your final grade.
 - ❖ **Reflection Pieces (25%):** Several times during the semester, you will be asked to reflect on the readings for that week. Please do the readings and write a 2-3 page reflection piece on the readings for that week. Questions and themes are posted on Moodle. Each reflection piece entry is worth 5%. Your **top five** grades will count towards your final grade.

- **Final Project (20%):** A final project, 8-10 pages (details in class and Moodle) is due on November 27. The project will require you to do analytic work focusing on themes of the course. A title and abstract are due by October 23. The paper is due in class or online by class time on November 27. On that day, you will exchange your paper with a classmate for a peer evaluation.
- **Peer Evaluation (5%):** You will exchange your final project paper with someone else in the class on November 27 and write a 2-page critical reflection on the paper. The original paper and your evaluation of the paper are due in class on December 4. (These can also be posted online.)
- **Extra Credit:** Throughout the semester, I will post events taking place in the Five Colleges that relate to the themes of the course. You can attend an event, write a 2-page summary for a 2% extra credit. If you find a relevant event that you are interested in, please check with me. The summary must be turned in within one week of the event. You can earn up to 6% in extra credit papers for the semester.

Summary of Grading

In class participation –	10%
Online exercises (best of 4):	40%
Reflections pieces (best of 5):	25%
Final Paper:	20%
Peer evaluation:	5%
Extra credit (up to 6%)	6%

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University's official policy on academic honesty. **You can access the policy in full at http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/rights/acad_honest.htm

Accommodation Policy Statement

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements:

<http://www.umass.edu/disability/procedures.pdf>

IV: SCHEDULE

PART I – GENDER AND TECHNOLOGY, AN INTRODUCTION

Week 1: September 4 – Introductions

Week 2: September 11 – The Great Reach of Technology

Readings:

- Ruth Schwartz Cowan, “The ‘Industrial Revolution’ in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20th Century,” *Technology and Culture*, 17 (Jan. 1976): 1-23.
- Marianne van den Boomen, “Hacking Barbie in gendered computer culture,” In *Doing Gender in Media, Art and Culture*, Rosemarie Buikema and Iris van der Tuin eds., Routledge, 2007:193-206.
- Elizabeth F. Churchill. (March/April 2010). Sugared Puppy-Dog Tails: Gender and Design. *Interactions*: 52-56: http://delivery.acm.org/10.1145/1700000/1699787/p52-churchill.pdf?ip=128.119.132.219&acc=ACTIVE%20SERVICE&CFID=106795704&CFTOKEN=45097538&_acm_=1345574323_34e967e81ca52c1f90b0cca098c52541
- O’Leary, Amy. (2012, August 1). In virtual play, sex harassment is all too real. *New York Times*.: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/02/us/sexual-harassment-in-online-gaming-stirs-anger.html>
- Tom Jacobs, “Sex Stereotypes and the Single Robot,” *Pacific Standard*, August 7, 2012: <http://www.psmag.com/culture-society/sex-stereotypes-and-the-single-robot-43998/>
- Hafner, Katie. (2012, April 2). Giving women the access code. *New York Times*. Retrieved August 1, 2012: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/03/science/giving-women-the-access-code.html?pagewanted=all>

Online Work: Exercise

Week 3: September 18 – Gender and Technology: Conceptual Issues

Readings:

- Judy Wajcman, “Feminist Theories of Technology,” *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 2010, 34, 143-152.
- Jackson, Michele. (2007). Exploring gender, feminism and technology from a communication perspective: an introduction and commentary. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 30(2), 149-156.
- Francesca Bray, "Gender and Technology," *Annual Reviews Anthropology*, 36: 37-53, 2007
- Gannon, Susanne. “Laptops and Lipsticks: Feminising Technology,” *Learning, Media and Technology*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Mar 2007) 53-67.
- Race and Cyberspace: Interview with Lisa Nakamura: <http://www.english.illinois.edu/people/faculty/schaffner/w4w/readings/nakamura.pdf>

Online Work: Reflection Piece

PART II - TECHNOLOGY AND THE MEDIA

Week 4: September 25 – Social Media

Guest: Eve Ng, Research Associate, Five College Women's Research Center

Readings:

- Bennett, Shea. (2012, May 29). Women use, and would miss, social media more than men, says study. *Media Bistro*: http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/social-media-gender-divide_b23202#more-23202
- Stephen Winzenburg, "In the Facebook Era, Students Tell you Everything," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 29, 2012.
- Michael Bugeja, Facing the Facebook, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 27, 2006: <http://www.vpss.ku.edu/pdf/PSDC%20Facing%20the%20Facebook.pdf>
- Bennett, Shea. (2011, May 16). The typical Twitter user is white, female and in their early 30s. *Media Bistro*: http://www.mediabistro.com/alltwitter/social-media-demographics_b8850
- Tate, Ryan. (2012, July 2). Women explain why Google+ is all dudes. *Wired*: <http://www.wired.com/business/2012/07/google-plus-women/>
- Ellison et al, "The Benefits of Facebook "Friends:" Social Capital and College Students' Use of Online Social Network Sites," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12, 2007: 143-168: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html>
- E. J. Westlake, "Friend me if you Facebook: Generation Y and Performative Surveillance," *The Drama Review*, Vol 52, Number 4, Winter 2008, 21-40: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/tdr/summary/v052/52.4.westlake.html>
- O'Neill, Megan. (2011, Jul 1). How much do Facebook & YouTube profit from user generated content? *Social Times*: http://socialtimes.com/user-generated-content-infographic_b68911

Online Work: Exercise

Week 5: October 2 – Digital Nation

Readings:

- Eric Hoover, "More Wired but Not so Different? New Book Paints a Complex Portrait of Today's Students," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 20, 2012.
- Torin Monahan. Dreams of Control at a Distance: Gender, Surveillance and Social Control. *Cultural Studies / Critical Methodologies* 9 (2)(2009, April): 286-305.
- Christina Dunbar-Hester. Beyond "Dudecore"? Challenging Gendered and "Raced" Technologies Through Media Activism. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 54(1), 2010, pp. 121-135.
- Nakamura, Lisa. "Race In/For Cyberspace: Identity Tourism and Racial Passing on the Internet." *Works and Days: Essays in the Socio-Historical Dimensions of Literature and the Arts*, Indiana, PA 13.1-2 (Spring-Fall 1995): 181-93: <http://www.hnet.uci.edu/mposter/syllabi/readings/nakamura.html>

Online Work: Exercise

Week 6: October 9 – Technologies of Difference
Tues, Oct 9, No Class (Monday Schedule)

Readings:

- Watch: *Diagnosing Difference* **OR**
- **Friday, Oct 5, Intersex Symposium, Mount Holyoke College**

Online Work: Reflection Piece



Week 7: October 16 – Gender, Technology and Fan Culture

Guest: Julie Levin Russo, Research Associate, Five College Women's Research Center

Readings:

- Kristina Busse, "Frandom and Feminism: Gender and the Politics of Fan Production," *Cinema Journal Studies*, No 4, Summer 2009: 104-107
- Francesca Coppa, "A Fannish Taxonomy of Hotness," *Cinema Journal Studies*, No 4, Summer 2009: 107-113.
- Karen Hellekson, "A Fannish Field of Value: Online Fan Gift Culture," *Cinema Journal Studies*, No 4, Summer 2009: 113-118.
- Abigail de Kosnik, "Should Fan Fiction be Free?" *Cinema Journal Studies*, No 4, Summer 2009: 118-124.
- Julie Levin Russo, "User Penetrated Content: Fan Video in the Age of Convergence," *Cinema Journal Studies*, No 4, Summer 2009: 124-130
- Alexis Lothian, "Living in a Den of Thieves: Fan Video and Digital Challenges to Ownership," *Cinema Journal Studies*, No 4, Summer 2009: 124-136.

Online Work: Reflection Piece

PART III - SEXUALITY, REPRODUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY

Week 8: October 23 – Technologies of Desire

Guest Speaker: Angela Willey, WGSS, UMass

Readings:

- Navneet Magon and Sanjay Kalra, "The organismic history of oxytocin: Love, lust, and labor," *Indian Journal of Endocrinology Metabolism*, September 15, 2011: 156-161:
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3183515/>
- Angela Willey and Sara Giardono, "Why do Voles Fall in Love? Sexual Dimorphism in Monogamy Gene Research," In *Gender and the Science of Difference*, Rutgers University Press, 2011.

Online Work: Exercise

Week 9: October 30 – Reproductive Technologies

Readings:

- Dorothy Roberts, “Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?” 34 *Signs* 783-804 (2009).
- Rajani Bhatia, “Constructing Gender from the Inside Out: Sex-Selection Practices in the United States,” *Feminist Studies* 36, no. 2, Summer 2010.
- Silja Samerski, “Genetic Counseling and the Fiction of Choice: Taught Self-Determination as a New Technique of Social Engineering.” *Signs*, Vol 32, No 4, 2009: 735-761.

Online Work: Exercise

Week 10: November 6 – Genetic Technologies

Readings:

- Ruth Hubbard & Stuart Newman, “Yuppie Eugenics,” *Z Mag* 2002
<http://www.zcommunications.org/zmag/viewArticle/18020>
- Gilbert Welch and Wylie Burke, “What’s in Your Genes? You don’t want to know – Yet.” *Washington Post*, May 11, 2008: <http://www.ashg.org/pdf/newsclip/Washington%20Post%20-%205.11.08.PDF>
- Garland Allen, "Science Misapplied: The Eugenics Age Revisited." *Technology Review* 29, Aug/Sep 1996, pp. 23-31.
- Amy Harmon, “Facing Life with a Lethal Gene,” *NYT* March 19, 2007:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/18/health/18huntington.html?scp=1&sq=facing%20life%20with%20a%20lethal%20gene&st=cse>

Online Work: Reflection Piece

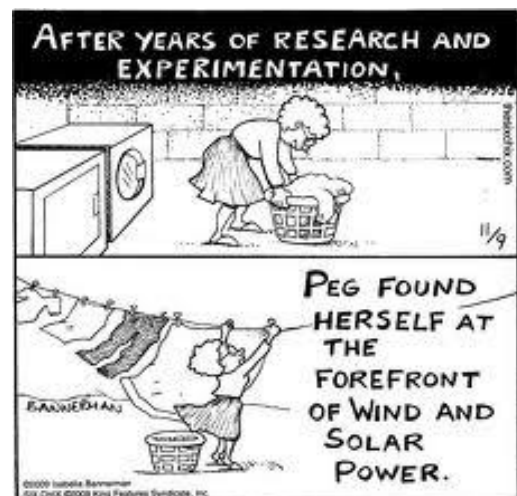
PART IV: TECHNOLOGY AND CITIZENSHIP

Week 11: November 13 – Digital Divides Guest Speaker: Virginia Eubanks, University of Albany

Readings:

- Virginia Eubanks, *Digital Dead End: Fighting for Social Justice in the Information Age*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011. (Chapters 1: Four Beginnings & Chapter 5: Technologies of Citizenship)

Online Work: Reflection



Week 12: November 20 – Black Women and New Media Production.

Guest: TreaAndrea Russworm, English, UMass

Readings:

Ann Everett, "The Revolution Will be Digitized: Afrocentricity and the digital Public Sphere," *Social Text*, 71 (Vol 20, No 2), Summer 2002: 125-146.

Smith, Aaron. (2010, September 17). Technology trends among people of color. *Pew Internet*: <http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2010/September/Technology-Trends-Among-People-of-Color.aspx>

Week 13: November 27 – Technology and Social Justice,

Five College Feminist Media Justice Group, Mari Castaneda and colleagues.

Readings:

TBA

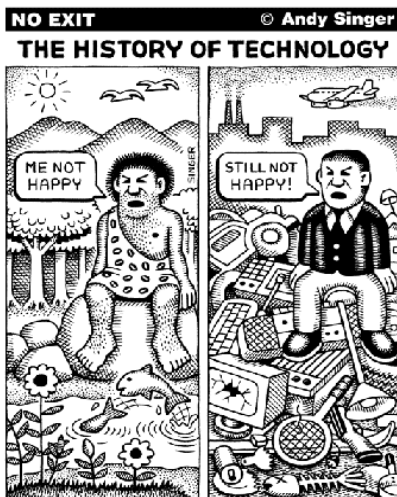
Jesse Daniels. Rethinking Cyberfeminisms(s): Race, Gender, and Embodiment. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 37(1-2)(Spring/Summer 2009): 101-124.

Donna Haraway. A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century, in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York; Routledge), 1991: 149-181.

Final Project Due

Week 14: December 4 – Conclusion

Final Project and Evaluation Due



So what does your 2009 version do that 2008 doesn't?



Well, it doesn't make you feel outdated.

