Course Description and Syllabus
Fall 2014

COLLABORATIONS IN FEMINISM AND TECHNOLOGY
(formerly known as Dialogues on Feminism and Technology)
LIS 590 meets with GWS 590 and MDIA 590
Tuesdays, 2-4:50pm
LIS Building Room 341
4 credits | CRN 35246; no pre-requisites
Instructor: Sharon Irish, slirish@illinois.edu
Office Hours: LIS 331, Mondays, 2:30-3:30, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Collaborations in Feminism and Technology is a cross-disciplinary graduate seminar that’s part of a Distributed Open Collaborative Course (DOCC) in an international network of institutions and scholars called FemTechNet. The FemTechNet DOCC focuses on intersections among feminisms, media arts, science and technology studies, and human-computer interactions. As co-founder Anne Balsamo noted, the “DNA” of the FemTechNet DOCC is defined by its dialogic structure, generating conversations that create and expand knowledge on feminisms and technologies. While this “specific topic” defines the FTN DOCC it also encompasses a wide range of methods, themes, and subjects within many disciplines.

This Fall 2014 course will use technology for collaborative creation and peer-to-peer sharing while still valuing local issues and face-to-face connections. The course is built around a set of video dialogues on keywords—including Body, Race, Sexualities, Place, Labor, Archive and Transformation—with preeminent thinkers and artists who consider technology through a feminist lens. One of the course’s basic pedagogic instruments is the use of Boundary Objects that Learn, a concept indebted to the work of former UI faculty member S. Leigh Star. Through reading, discussion, writing, and making, we will add to a growing and global database of materials relating feminist technologies to economies, identities, infrastructures, and movements.

Goals: To focus upon multidirectional collaboration and to attend to the values and diverse expertise distributed throughout our class and among our networks. To the extent possible at UIUC, the course aims to embody and enact a different way of being academics, through flattened hierarchies and collaboration within and outside of established institutions. Students will create a digital portfolio that will be useful in their personal and professional lives, reflecting considerations of key feminist and digital structures. To help build these portfolios, we will read and watch feminist writings and films, edit Wikipedia, link to and collaborate with other DOCC nodal courses, critique digital tools, and reflect on all of these activities in discussion and writing. The digital portfolio will represent and communicate your explorations. The portfolio can be created using Twine, Scalar, Blogger, WordPress, Vimeo, Tumblr, Storify, or another tool or combination of tools.

NOTE: Readings will be found on the GSLIS Moodle site.
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We will prioritize (and perhaps change) the readings together and decide which of the ones listed will be our focus. Readings for each session should be read prior to meeting that week.

FemTechNet.org
Social Media hashtags: #femtechnet; #DOCC

Schedule of activities, readings and conversations
(subject to change; this is a working, dynamic document; readings will be prioritized according to interests and projects)

Week 1 (Aug 26) FemTechNet Introduction
DISCUSSION of guidelines and structures, such as individual contracts and sign-ups to facilitate class discussions

READ: Background information on FemTechNet DOCC
• “Transforming Higher Education with Distributed Open Collaborative Courses: Feminist Pedagogies and Networked Learning”
  http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/femtechnet-whitepaper/
• Juhasz, Alexandra, and Anne Balsamo, “An idea whose time is here: FemTechNet, a Distributed Online Collaborative Course (DOCC),” Ada: Journal of Gender, New Media and Technology 1:1(November 2012)
  http://adanewmedia.org/2012/11/issue1-juhasz/
• Losh, Liz, “Bodies in Classrooms: Feminist Dialogues on Technology”
  http://dmicentral.net/blog/liz-losh/bodies-classrooms-feminist-dialogues-technology-part-i
• Losh, Liz, “Learning from Failure: Feminist Dialogues on Technology”
  http://dmicentral.net/blog/liz-losh/learning-failure-feminist-dialogues-technology-part-ii
• http://justpublics365.commons.gc.cuny.edu/2013/02/05/mooc-to-pooc-moving-from-massive-to-participatory/
• Press coverage of the DOCC so far (and peruse the comments):
  http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/16/femtechnet-online-courses-teach-feminist-technology_n_3763863.html

Recommended readings:
  o Agre, Philip, Infrastructure and institutional change in the networked university, Information, Communication, and Society 3(4), 2000, 494-507;
Week 2 (Sept 2) Feminism 101
VIEW: Lynn Hershman Leeson’s film “Women Art Revolution,” in segments, stopping to discuss as we go along.
READ:


Recommended readings:

Week 3 (Sept 9) Collaborative Practices
- GUEST PRESENTER, Bonnie Fortune, on feminist maker/hackerspaces
VIEW (together in class): Mitch Altman (short)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wamwlXWK4M;
Mz Tek: http://www.mztek.org/about/ [scroll down for the video about a hacker space in London]

READ:
- “The Case against Sharing,” https://medium.com/the-nib/the-case-against-sharing-9ea5ba3d216d
- Fortune, Bonnie. “Queering the Hackerspace at Miss Baltazar’s Laboratory and Beyond.” Make/Shift 14(Fall/Winter 2013/2014), pp. 38-39.

Recommended readings/viewings:
- Stories from the Wood, by Sharon Townson and Ellie Kynaston http://vimeo.com/72282861
- Mitch Altman long: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wi4X7R1-kaY
- Stefanie Wuschitz: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KV0sw8OMe6c
- http://openinclusivity.org/

Week 4 (Sept 16) Science and Technology Studies 101
Student-led discussions begin
READ:
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Recommended readings:

- Priego, Ernesto "Can the Subaltern Tweet?" http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/university_of_venus/can_the_subaltern_tweet

Week 5 (Sept 23) Labor
DUE: Draft of Semester Contract, except Wikipedia proposal; see template
VIEW: LABOR Video dialogue, with Judy Wacjman and Anne Balsamo
READ:

- Cross, Jamie, Technological intimacy: Re-engaging with gender and technology in the global factory Ethnography (2011) http://eth.sagepub.com/content/13/2/119
- Winner, Langdon "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" In The whale and the reactor: a search for limits in an age of high technology. University of Chicago Press,
Recommended readings:


Week 6 (Sept 30) **Archive**
VIEW: ARCHIVE video dialogue, with Lynn Hershman and Ruby Rich
READ:


Week 7 (Oct 7) **Wiki Storming**
VIEW: Feminism, Technology, and Wikistorming
WIKIPEDIA proposal drafted in class; no student-led discussion
READ:

Week 8 (Oct 14) **Sexualities**
DUE: Finalized version of Wikipedia proposal
VIEW: SEXUALITIES video dialogue
READ:

Recommended reading/viewing: [http://www.cyberfeminism.net/](http://www.cyberfeminism.net/)
Week 9 (Oct 21)

**Race**

**VIEW:** RACE video dialogue with Nakamura/Fernandez

**READ:**


**Recommended readings:**


Week 10 (Oct 28) **Body**

**VIEW:** BODY video dialogue (New York)

**VIEW:** BODY video dialogue Flynn and Roberts (Illinois)

**READ:**


**Recommended readings:**

- Excerpts from *Frankenstein*, esp. chs. 5, 11, 12, 16, 24 [http://www.literature.org/authors/shelley-mary/frankenstein/index.html](http://www.literature.org/authors/shelley-mary/frankenstein/index.html)
Week 11 (Nov 4) **Differences and Democracies**

**VIEW:** DIFFERENCE video dialogue with Kim Sawchuk and Shu Lea Cheang

- Cricket Keating, Ohio State University, visits with us online
  https://wgss.osu.edu/people/keating

**READ:**


Week 12 (Nov 11) **Place**

**VIEW:** PLACE Gajjala/Irish video dialogue

**READ:**

- Edmunds, David S., Ryan Shelby, Angela James, Lenora Steele, Michelle Baker, Yael Valerie Perez and Kim TallBear, “Tribal Housing, Codesign, and Cultural Sovereignty,” *Science Technology Human Values*,
  [http://stth.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/06/19/0162243913490812](http://stth.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/06/19/0162243913490812)

**Recommended Readings:**

- McCorquodale, Duncan, Katerina Rüedi, & Sarah Wigglesworth, eds. *Desiring...*
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**Week 13 (Nov 18)**  *Systems: Games*

VIEW: SYSTEMS: GAMES video dialogue with Brenda Laurel and Janet Murray

READ:


**Week 14 (Dec 2)**  *Transformation*

VIEW: TRANSFORMATIONS video dialogue

READ:


**Recommended to re/read:**

- Haraway, Cyborg (see Week 4 above)

**Week 15 (Dec 9): Sharing**

**Possible topics for student portfolios (that Sharon can help with):**

- Interview/invite/read: Toby Beauchamp, Jimena Canales, Anita Chan, Anke Voss (all UIUC); Laura Forlano and Marie Hicks (IIT/Chicago); Jillana Enteen at Northwestern; Eden Medina at Indiana University (Bloomington, IN); Sharra Vostral at Purdue (Indiana)
- Collaborations with UIUC and/or OSU undergraduates in CL Cole’s and Cricket Keating’s classes
- Work with FemTechNet video dialogues that we don’t have time for: Suchman/Gibson-Graham; Bustamante/Diamond
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- #Ferguson and #FergusonSyllabus; https://medium.com/message/ferguson-is-also-a-net-neutrality-issue-6d2f3db51e0b
  https://storify.com/neelofer/fergusonsyllabus
- Visit/study/assess FabLab & Makerspace cucfablab.org; Urbana Makerspace http://makerspaceurbana.org/
  http://www.digitalundivided.com/
- Feminist Electronic Music Spaces (including empyre archive, June 2014)
- CUWiki and local wikis
- Feminist archives
- Christa Donner: http://www.christadonner.com/ and/or Terri Kapsalis http://www.saic.edu/profiles/faculty/terrikapsalis/
- Feministing http://feministing.com/ (Sharon knows co-executive director)
  (Other online venues: colorlines, crunkfeministcollective, nomorepotlucks)
- FemFM, Knowle West TV and other community media
- Community informatics and feminism
- Nakamura, Balsamo, Losh & Paredes Connected Learning Alliance workshop, October 13-26, online: “Diversity, Equity, Access”
- Zombies vs Feminists Twitter Tag: Feminist Pedagogy and Twitter Tag: Adapting Pete Rorabaugh’s Twitter vs Zombie’s 4.0 for Femtechnet 2014
  https://medium.com/whos-afraid-of-online-education/feminist-pedagogy-and-tvsz-e7ee99079d56
- Situated Knowledges mapping
- Exquisite Corpse ReMix
- Digital Labor conference, The New School, Nov 14-16
  http://www.digitallabor.org/ #dl14;
  https://mailman.thing.net/mailman/listinfo/idc
- **DOCC contributions**: primer for teaching video dialogues to undergrads; guides to key readings; syllabi mapping; organization of documents (archives); transcribing/captioning of videos

**Logistics, Due Dates and Assessment**
I want this course to serve your goals, needs and interests. **To repeat**: Students will create a digital portfolio that will be useful in their personal and professional lives, reflecting considerations of key feminist and digital structures. To help build these portfolios, we will read and watch feminist writings and films, edit Wikipedia, link to and collaborate with other DOCC nodal courses, critique digital tools, and reflect on all of these activities in discussion and writing. The digital portfolio will represent and communicate your explorations. The portfolio can be created using Twine, Scalar, Blogger, WordPress, Vimeo, Tumblr, Storify, or another tool or combination of tools.

Each student will draft a contract specifying their semester work using a template. Your draft of the contract—except for the Wikipedia section—is due on **September 23**. I will then schedule an initial meeting with you in late September into October, during which we will refine the contract together. The Wikipedia proposal is due
October 14. A second one-on-one session will be in late November to consider what you have done, what else you need to do, and any problem areas.

Course times will be dedicated to sharing your work and editing Wikipedia, among other activities.

The contract will include four parts, which will result in a portfolio, and add up to 1000 points. The point spread is to give you some idea of what to emphasize in your contract.

- Identify your goals, with specific outcomes (e.g. progress toward degree) (100 points)
- Facilitate discussion in relation to the readings for one or two sessions (100 points)
  - Session facilitator(s) will meet with Sharon. You or your team will need to schedule this meeting with Sharon for Thursday or Friday in the week prior to “your” class to plan for an effective session.
  - A rubric for an effective session will include: Draft several discussion questions that probe the methods, assumptions, gaps, and strengths of the author(s); what connections do you see in the readings to other themes of the course? Beyond these readings, are there related readings, or videos, or walking tours, or guest speakers that we might want to consider, view, take, or talk to?
- Contribute to the UI and DOCC2014 communities including a required Wikipedia effort: Collaboration and participation (300 points) and Wikipedia editing (200 points)
  - Your proposal with a timeline for your participation in editing Wikipedia will be due October 14.
- Expand your comfort zone and document it: try something new, such as visiting and trying something at the Fab Lab or Makerspace, writing a commentary about an exhibit, interviewing a campus staff member for a research project, demonstrate proficiency in a new subject area, the list is long and can build on other parts of your contract. (300 points)

Schedule of Additional, Course-Related Events

- Midwest Archives conference in Champaign, Sept 12
- Kathleen Fitzpatrick at UIUC: The Future of Scholarly Communication
  September 17, 2014, 4:30 pm, Knight Auditorium, Spurlock Museum (600 S. Gregory Street, Urbana) This event is free and open to the public.

The ubiquity of digital technology and networked communication, in parallel with changing dynamics and economics of scholarship and the academy have led to rapid change in scholarly communication. While it appears clear that sharing scholarship and engaging in scholarly dialogue will remain central to the academic enterprise, the best ways to share and to conduct that dialogue are less clear. Libraries, scholarly societies, and, of course, scholars themselves are all assessing both present and future modes and methods of communication. This panel discussion will be conducted by those on the front lines of that assessment and of innovations in response.
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- Engaged Librarian event, iHotel, 7-9pm Oct 7

**Partial List of Course-Relevant Activities**

- Participants may choose to work with the Ethnography of the University initiative, [http://www.eui.illinois.edu/](http://www.eui.illinois.edu/), taking advantage of its umbrella IRB for course-based research.
- Some participants may want to join a possible “field trip” to Ohio State University, timing TBD
- Participants should be aware of a FemTechNet conference on Thursday, April 16 at University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor

**Attendance/ Participation Policy**

If you find you must miss class, contact the instructor as soon as possible. Students missing more than one class session or who regularly arrive late or leave early will not pass the class unless alternate arrangements have been made with the instructor. According to University policy: "For a graduate level course, attendance is expected, and should not be counted toward the final grade. The Student Code explicitly states that for all students, “(a) Regular class attendance is expected of all students at the University” ([http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part5_1-501.html](http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part5_1-501.html))

**Academic Integrity**

Please review and reflect on the academic integrity policy of the University of Illinois, [http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-401.html](http://admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/article1_part4_1-401.html) to which we subscribe.

If, in the course of your writing, you use the words or ideas of another writer, proper acknowledgement must be given. Not to do so is to commit plagiarism, a form of academic dishonesty. If you are not absolutely clear on what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources appropriately, now is the time to learn.

**Statement of Inclusion**

I aim to support a diversity of worldviews, histories, and cultural knowledge across a range of social groups including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, economic class, religion, and their intersections.

**Disability Statement**

To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructors and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603 (V/TTY), or e-mail a message to [disability@uiuc.edu](mailto:disability@uiuc.edu).