WSCP 81601 (21996): Feminism & Technology
The Graduate Center, CUNY
Fall 2013: Tuesday 11:45 AM-1:45 PM

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Course Description

This seminar on gender, new media, and technology will examine the relationship between digital technology, democracy, and movement building. The course is designed to provide an overview of contemporary, cutting-edge theorizing about gender, race, technology, and power to construct a framework for examining how feminists use social media to engage in activism around issues such as health, body image, labor, education, poverty, and human rights. We will consider the implications and possibilities of new digital tools and methods for grassroots organizing and coalitional politics and will problematize issues of community-building, access, identity, and representation. Further, we will look at the multiple ways that individuals and groups use new media to represent gender, racial, ethnic and/or sexual identities. And finally, we will consider how digital mapping and archiving can contribute to the building of an online feminist scholarly community.

The format of this class will be hybrid, which means that it will include both face-to-face and online sessions and will engage with traditional and digital scholarship. Projects will involve analyzing and creating digital media and will feature opportunities for collaborative writing and interpretation, both within the course itself and across institutions.

The class is a nodal course within the first Distributed Online Collaborative Course (DOCC), "Dialogues on Feminism and Technology," taught at more than fifteen institutions and organized collectively by FemTechNet. In this model, a feminist rethinking of the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course), the idea is to create a shared learning experience across multiple campuses through collaborative teaching and learning. Students will have the opportunity to engage in intellectual exchange with a global network of scholars who are committed to creating an online space that is truer to feminist theorizing and process. All DOCC activities are coordinated through the FemTechNet Commons: http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/

The syllabus, additional readings, and course blog will be available on the course group site on the FemTechNet Commons: http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/groups/cuny-grad-center-wscp-81601/ **You must join the group for our course, which you can do by requesting membership on the FemTechNet Commons or by emailing me your email address so I can send you an invite.

Learning Goals

Through this course, students will
- Gain experience in online teaching and lesson planning using the principles and methods of feminist pedagogy;
- Create digital teaching tools that reflect the collaborative and participatory nature of feminist pedagogy;
- Work collaboratively to contribute to an online body of scholarship on feminism and technology; and
- Gain familiarity with venues for scholarship focusing on feminism and technology and prepare to participate in one or more of these venues.

Required Texts

Anne Balsamo, *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* (Duke UP, 2011)

Virginia Eubanks, *Digital Dead End: Fighting for Social Justice in the Information Age* (MIT Press, 2011)

Fernandez, Maria, Wilding, Faith and Wright, Michelle M. 2003. *Domain Errors!: Cyberfeminist Practices* (Autonomedia, 2003)

Radhika Gajjala, *Cyber Selves: Feminist Ethnographies of South Asian Women* (AltaMira P, 2004)

Radhika Gajjala and Yeon Ju Oh, eds. *Cyberfeminism* 2.0 (Peter Lang Publishing, 2012)

Judy Wajcman, *TechnoFeminism* (Polity Press, 2004)

Recommended:

Amanda Lock Swarr and Richa Nagar, eds. *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis* (SUNY, 2010)

Beatirz DaCosta and Kavita Phillips, eds. *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism and Technoscience* (MIT Press, 2008)

Additional readings are available on the FemTechNet Commons course web site:
http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/groups/cuny-grad-center-wscp-81601/

Course Assignments

"With a few exceptions, we remain content to comment *about* technology and media, rather than to participate more actively in constructing knowledge *in and through* our objects of study."
Tara McPherson, "Media Studies and the Digital Humanities"

McPherson's challenge to media studies and humanities scholars will inform the assignments, as we strive to create and share knowledge about gender, new media, and technology.

Weekly blog posts	30%
Online discussion facilitation	10%
Digital Teaching Tools	10%
Mapping project	50%

1.) **Weekly blog posts:**

Face-to-face classes: You are expected to contribute to the class discussion by posting on our collaborative course blog. Posts should be roughly 300 words in length and should be a critical reflection of the week's reading and/or discussion. In addition to your well written

text, each blog post should also contain hyperlinks to news, scholarly articles, visual images (via Flicker, You Tube), and other blogs. Blog posts are due each week by **Thursday, 11:59 PM** (that is, two days after the scheduled face-to-face class session). You are encouraged to respond to classmates' posts in order to build on each others' contributions and expand the discussion.

Online classes: On weeks when you are not a discussion facilitator, you will need to respond to the questions posed by that week's facilitator. Posts should be roughly 300 words in length and should also contain hyperlinks to news, scholarly articles, visual images (via Flicker, You Tube), and other blogs. Blog posts are due for online class sessions by **Tuesday, 11:59 PM** (that is, the day of the scheduled class session). In addition to your own post, you will also need to respond to at least <u>two</u> of your classmates' posts. These responses will create opportunities for a productive and engaged discussion based on the questions posted by the facilitator. Response posts are due by **Thursday, 11:59 PM** (that is, two days after the scheduled class session).

2.) **Online Discussion Facilitator:** You are expected to serve at least once as discussion facilitator for an online class session (you will sign up for a specific class session the second week of class). On the week when you facilitate, you will need to provide an overview of and analytical reflection on the week's reading (at least 750 words or 3-4-minute video) and pose discussion questions by **Sunday 11:59 PM** (2 days before the scheduled class). During the week, you will need to moderate the online discussion by responding to your classmates' posts, re-directing the discussion when/if necessary, and providing a wrap-up post at the end of the week (by **11:59 PM the following Sunday**, 5 days after the scheduled class).

3.) **Digital Teaching Tools:** Based on the lesson plan you create for your online discussion facilitation, you will create a digital teaching tool that could be used by a future class: either a keyword video or an annotated reader for a chapter or article from that week, using Comment Press or Scalar. ****Your digital teaching tool will be due within two weeks of your online class facilitation.**

4.) **Feminist mapping project:** All class members will collaborate on a map project, "Mapping Feminist Activism and Social Media." Specifically, you will use Google Maps to map the local and global networks that specific groups and individuals have created by using social media to effect feminist social change. Collectively, we will need to decide whether to map one issue (e.g., health, body image, labor, education, poverty, human rights), or to construct a map looking at online feminist activism more broadly. In addition to the map, which will be a collective effort, each class member will need to:
  - Construct a preliminary proposal, listing the 3-5 groups or individuals you will add to the map and providing a brief summary that can be used for each location point or network. This proposal is due **October 22**, and on that date in class, we will have a Google Maps workshop to prepare for constructing the map. At this session, we will also discuss how to share the collective work of constructing the map.
  - Contribute a Wikipedia entry on one of the groups or individuals you add to the map (see FemTechNet "Storming Wikipedia" assignment—we will have a Wikipedia workshop on November 12, with your entry due on **December 3**)
  - Prepare a conference or article proposal that includes the following elements: 1.) name and description of intended conference or journal, 2.) 300-500 word abstract of

your proposed topic, 3,) literature review, which you will post on the FemTechNet Zotero bibliography

The completed map is due on **December 10**, at which we will also workshop each other's proposals (to be submitted the following class, **December 17**)

ACADEMIC INTERGRITY

Written and online work must avoid plagiarism. To make sure that your work follows appropriate citation procedures, please see the GC's "Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism: A Guide for Graduate Students and Faculty, available on our FemTechNet Commons course site.

CALENDAR
PLEASE NOTE: Both the DOCC and this course are experimental and thus will likely change over the course of the semester. I will announce all changes on our FemTechNet course group.

VIDEO DIALOGUES: The *Video Dialogues* will be released weekly via the FemTechNet Commons. Please watch these videos before coming to class each week and be prepared to discuss how they intersect with our current or previous readings and discussions.

1.) Tues. 9/3
Introductions and Overview of the DOCC

2.) Tues. 9/10
Read: M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of Knowledge and
      Power: Transnational Feminism as Radical Praxis"
      Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in
      the Late Twentieth Century"
      Emily Nussbaum, "The Rebirth of the Feminist Manifesto: How the Blogosphere Has
      Transformed the Feminist Conversation"
Workshop: Comment Press and Scalar
Due: Register for the FemTechNet Commons and request membership to course Commons site

3.) Tues. 9/17—ONLINE CLASS
Read: Judy Wajcman, *TechnoFeminism*

4.) Tues. 9/24
Read: Anne Balsamo, *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* (Duke UP,
      2011)
Video Dialogue: *History of the Engagement of Feminism & Technology* (avail. 9/23)
Judy Wacjman interviewed by Anne Balsamo

5.) Tues. 10/1—ONLINE CLASS
Read: selected essays from Maria Fernandez, Faith Wilding, and Michelle M. Wright, eds.
      Domain Errors!: Cyberfeminist Practices
Video Dialogue: *Sexualities*, Faith Wilding and Julie Levin Russo (avail. 9/30)

6.) Tues. 10/8—ONLINE CLASS
Read: selected essays from Maria Fernandez, Faith Wilding, and Michelle M. Wright, eds.
      Domain Errors!: Cyberfeminist Practices
      Michelle M. Wright, "Finding a Place in Cyberspace: Black Women, Technology, and
      Identity"
Video Dialogue: *Race*, Maria Fernandez and Lisa Nakamura (avail. 10/7)

Tues. 10/15—NO CLASS—M schedule

7.) Tues. 10/22
Read: Jessie Daniels, "Rethinking Cyberfeminism(s): Race, Gender and Embodiment"

Chela Sandoval, "New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed"

<u>Video Dialogue</u>: *Bodies*, TBA (avail. 10/21) and *Difference*, Kim Sawchuk and Shu Lea Cheang (avail. 10/14)

<u>Due</u>:   **Map proposals**

<u>Workshop</u>: Google Maps

8.) Tues. 10/29—ONLINE CLASS

<u>Read</u>: Radhika Gajjala, *Cyber Selves: Feminist Ethnographies of South Asian Women*

<u>Video Dialogue</u>: *Machines*, Wendy Chun and Kelly Dobson (avail. 10/28)

9.) Tues. 11/5—ONLINE CLASS

<u>Read</u>: Virginia Eubanks, *Digital Dead End: Fighting for Social Justice in the Information Age*

<u>Video Dialogue</u>: Systems, Janet Murray and Brenda Laurel (avail. 11/4)

10.) Tues. 11/12

<u>Read</u>: Tess Pierce, "Singing at the Digital Well: Blogs as Cyberfeminist Sites of Resistance"
        Rita Stephan, "Creating Solidarity in Cyberspace: The Case of Arab Women's Solidarity Association United"

<u>Video Dialogue</u>: *Place,* Radhika Gajjala and Sharon Irish, LIVESTREAM

<u>Workshop</u>: Storming Wikipedia (with special guest Jessie Daniels)

11.) Tues. 11/19

<u>Read</u>: Rebecca S. Richards, "'I Could Have Told You *That* Wouldn't Work': Cyberfeminist Pedagogy in Action"
        Rachel Leow, "Reflections on Feminism, Blogging, and the Historical Profession"

<u>Video Dialogue</u>: *Infrastructures*, Lucy Suchman and Catherine Gibson-Graham (avail. 11/18)

<u>Workshop</u>: Zotero

12.) Tues. 11/26—ONLINE CLASS

<u>Read</u>:   selected essays from Radhika Gajjala and Yeon Ju Oh, eds. *Cyberfeminism* 2.0

<u>Video Dialogue</u>: *Archive,* Lynn Hershman and B. Ruby Rich (avail. 11/25)

13.) Tues. 12/3

<u>Read</u>:   selected essays from Beatirz DaCosta and Kavita Phillips, eds. *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism and Technoscience*

<u>Video Dialogue</u>: *Transformations*, Donna Haraway, Catherine Lord, and Beatriz DaCosta (avail. 12/2)

<u>Due</u>: **Storming Wikipedia entry**➔email me a screen shot by Tuesday, 11:59 PM

14.) Tues. 12/10

Map Project presentation

Proposal workshop

Celebration of Wikistorming activities

15.) Tues. 12/17

**Proposals due, with Zotero bibliography contributions completed