Course Description and Syllabus

DIALOGUES ON FEMINISM AND TECHNOLOGY
[Gender and Women’s Studies; Media and Cinema Studies; Library and Information Science; GWS 590 meets with MDIA 590 + LIS590]

Moodle site: https://learn.illinois.edu/course/view.php?id=2393

4 graduate credit hours; no pre-requisites

Instructors: Sharra Vostral, CL Cole, Sharon Irish

Fall 2013 | Monday, 2-5pm | Lincoln Hall 4057

- Sharon—331 LIS Building (501 E. Daniel Street), office hour: 4-5 Tuesdays, or by appointment: slirish@illinois.edu
- Cole--236 Gregory Hall, 217-244-1418, ccole@illinois.edu
- Sharra—1205 W. Nevada St., 217-333-2990, vostral@illinois.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Dialogues on Feminism and Technology is one version of a Distributed Open Collaborative Course (DOCC) at approximately 15 institutions, organized collectively by FemTechNet. http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/ The lead organizers (Anne Balsamo, New School; Alexandra Juhasz, Pitzer College; and a 12-member subcommittee) have led a feminist rethinking of the concept of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs): to de-emphasize size, to focus upon multidirectional collaboration, and to attend to the values and diverse expertise distributed throughout our networks.

This seminar is an experiment—rather like a laboratory for interdisciplinary collaborative creation and peer-to-peer sharing. Built around a shared set of recorded video dialogues with preeminent thinkers and artists who consider technology through a feminist lens, the course will use the non-linear publishing platform, Scalar http://scalar.usc.edu/ to structure our explorations. We will use the videos as starting points to diagram/chart our interests and concerns off-line and online, moving back and forth between group work and individual work. Participants will tailor the material to suit their needs and goals and we will investigate interconnections among us. Scalar will be the form of our exploration, with iterative assessments of how we are making meaning with this form. One possible model for our course: http://scalar.usc.edu/maker/english-507/index

One of the DOCC’s basic pedagogic instruments is the use of Boundary Objects that Learn. (On “boundary objects,” see citation below.) Our course will add to a growing database of shared materials. The videos will be the central “objects that learn.” Periodically throughout the course, we will reflect on our contributions and aim to discover new connections, using tags and new links.

Our class may meet occasionally with the seminar, Communication 529, “What is a System?” taught by Sally Jackson and Ned O’Gorman.

NOTE: Readings will be found on the Moodle site: https://learn.illinois.edu/course/view.php?id=2393 or in the required texts

Readings for each session should be read prior to meeting that week.
Required Texts:


Schedule of activities, readings and conversations (subject to change)
Cole, Sharra and Sharon will take turns facilitating the sessions, as indicated.

Week 1 (August 26, 2013; SHARRA; Labor Day is September 2—no class meeting)

Introduction
READ: Background information on FemTechNet DOCC
- Press coverage of the DOCC so far (and peruse the comments): [http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/08/19/feminist-professors-create-alternative-moocs](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/08/19/feminist-professors-create-alternative-moocs); [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/16/femtechnet-online-courses-teach-feminist-technology_n_3763863.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/16/femtechnet-online-courses-teach-feminist-technology_n_3763863.html)
Recommended:
- Skim Introduction of Layne and Vostral

**Week 2 (September 9; COLE)**

*Process: Scalar* with Kevin Hamilton

**Explore** Scalar [http://scalar.usc.edu/](http://scalar.usc.edu/) in preparation for today:
- Watch brief videos, especially the 14-minute one (4:31 in length; 14:27 video is here: [http://scalar.usc.edu/guide/guided-tour/](http://scalar.usc.edu/guide/guided-tour/))
- Look at sample publications, [http://scalar.usc.edu/](http://scalar.usc.edu/)scalar/showcase/, and this course project: [http://scalar.usc.edu/maker/english-507/index](http://scalar.usc.edu/maker/english-507/index)

**READ:**

**Recommended:**
- This summer’s DHPoco discussion may be of help: [http://dhpoco.org/summerschool/classdiscussions/](http://dhpoco.org/summerschool/classdiscussions/)
  Sharon excerpted a couple of links of interest:

**Week 3 (September 16; SHARON)**

*Practices*

Seminar participants will start leading discussions this week and on 10 subsequent weeks (marked with asterisk, instructions below)

**DUE:** Draft of Semester Contract; see template
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

READ:


**Explore** [http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/wikistorming/](http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/wikistorming/)

**Week 4** (September 23; COLE)

*Anne Balsamo will be on campus September 21-24.*

Anne will meet with our seminar and discuss FemTechNet, DOCC, and the video dialogues. We will view the DOCC Dialogue: LABOR, Judy Wacjman

READ: Gregg, *Work’s Intimacy*

**Recommended:**


*Week 5* (September 30; SHARRA)

**Sexualities**

DOCC Dialogue: SEXUALITIES, Faith Wilding and Julie Levin Russo

READ:


**Explore** [http://j-l-r.org/research](http://j-l-r.org/research) [Julie Levin Russo’s research];
**Week 6 (October 7; COLE)**

**Race**

DOCC Dialogue: RACE, Maria Fernandez and Lisa Nakamura

**DUE:** Wikipedia proposal with timeline (discussed in class, September 16)

**READ:**

- Tara McPherson, “Why Are the Digital Humanities So White? or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation”

**Week 7 (October 14; SHARRA)**

**Difference**

DOCC Dialogue: DIFFERENCE: Kim Sawchuk and Shu Lea Cheang (shoot: Toronto, Sept)

**READ:**


**Week 8 (October 21; COLE, Sharra out of town)**

**Machines**

*Tara McPherson will be on campus, Oct 21/22*

DOCC Dialogue: MACHINES: Wendy Chun and Kelly Dobson

**READ:**

- Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women:*
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign


- Jamie Cross Technological intimacy: Re-engaging with gender and technology in the global factory *Ethnography* (2011) [http://eth.sagepub.com/content/13/2/119](http://eth.sagepub.com/content/13/2/119)

*Week 9* (October 28; SHARON)

**Systems**

Kevin Hamilton on Scalar

DOCC Dialogue: SYSTEMS: Janet Murray and Brenda Laurel (shoot: Toronto, Sept)

READ:


**Recommended:**


*Week 10* (November 4; SHARON)

**Body**

Dorothy Roberts, November 7

DOCC Dialogue: BODY: scheduled with Dorothy Roberts for November 8 at UIUC
READ:


Recommended:

- 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* (November 11; SHARON)

**Place**

DOCC Dialogue: PLACE: Sharon Irish and Radhika Gajjala (live stream from LA on Nov 14)

READ:

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/655914


**Recommended:**


**Week 12** (November 18; SHARRA fall break is Nov 25-Dec 1)

**Infrastructures**

DOCc Dialogue: INFRASTRUCTURES: Catherine Gibson-Graham and Lucy Suchman (shoot: Fall, NY)

READ:


**Week 13** (December 2; SHARON)

**Archive**

DOCc Dialogue: ARCHIVE, with Lynn Hershman and Ruby Rich

READ:

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign


*Week 14* (December 9; COLE)

**Transformations**
DOCC Dialogue: TRANSFORMATIONS: Catherine Lord, Donna Haraway about the legacy of Beatriz DaCosta (shoot LA, Sept)

**READ:**

**Week 15** Finals week SHARRA

**Logistics, Due Dates and Assessment**
The course instructors will divide seminar participants into three groups after our first meeting. In other words, about six students will meet individually twice during the semester with Sharra, Cole, or Sharon. We want this course to serve your goals, needs and interests: each student will draft a contract specifying their semester work using the template. Your draft of the contract is due on **September 16.** We will then schedule an initial meeting with you in late September/early October, during which we will refine the contract. The second session will be in late November to consider what you have done, what else you need to do, and any problem areas.

The contract will include four parts:
- Identify your goals, with specific outcomes (e.g. progress toward degree)
- Facilitate discussion in relation to the readings for one or two sessions
  - Session facilitator(s) will meet with Sharra/Cole/Sharon (see our names associated with the weeks above). **You or your team will need to schedule this meeting with Sharra/Cole/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 DOCC2013 communities (including a required Storming Wikipedia effort)
  - Your proposal with a timeline for your participation in Storming Wikipedia will be due **October 7**.
- Expand your comfort zone (try something new, such as visiting and trying something at the Fab Lab or Makerspace, writing a commentary about a Krannert Art Museum exhibit, interviewing a campus staff member for a research project, demonstrate proficiency in a new subject area, collaborate with someone at another DOCC institution, the list is long.)

### Schedule of Additional, Course-Related Events

**September 11-13** is African Studies conference on ICTs, distance learning and Africa in which Sharon Irish is participating along with Radhika Gajjala from the DOCC course at Bowling Green

**September 13-14** is a mini-conference on representations of Native Americans in gaming

**Monday, September 23**, Public Lecture, Anne Balsamo, *Designing Digital Memorials*, 7PM, LIS Building 126

**Tuesday, Sept 24**: WITS Panel, 10AM, Peterson Room, 228/231 Gregory Hall
With Anne Balsamo, a dialogue about the UIUC WITS (Women, Information Technology and Scholarship) group from the 1990s

**October 17, 2013**, Body/Bodies Lecture Series: Toby Beauchamp (Gender and Women’s Studies, Oklahoma State University) 4 p.m., Knight Auditorium, Spurlock Museum Series co-organized and sponsored by IPRH and the Department of Gender and Women’s Studies, with co-sponsorship by the Spurlock Museum. A reception will follow the lecture.

**October 21**

- SCALAR Workshop 9 a.m. to 12 noon Venue TBD Presenters: Tara McPherson (Gender and Critical Studies, University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts), Kevin Hamilton (IPRH, Art + Design, UI)
- Inside Scoop Series: Cultural Dimensions of Media, A Conversation with Tara McPherson (Gender and Critical Studies, University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts) 5:00 p.m., Intersections Living Learning
Community, Saundis Lounge, 131 PAR

October 22 Lecture: Tara McPherson (Gender and Critical Studies, University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts) 4:30 p.m. 1092 Lincoln Hall

Public Lecture, Charrette, and Exhibition: Towards a National Cold War Monuments and Environmental Heritage Trail
Public lecture: October 24, 2013
Charrette: October 26, 2013
Exhibition: November 1, 2013
Organizers: Kevin Hamilton, Art + Design Ryan Griffis, Art + Design, with Sarah Kanouse (University of Iowa)

November 7, 2013 Body/Bodies Lecture Series: Dorothy Roberts (George A. Weiss University Professor of Law and Sociology, and the Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Professor of Civil Rights, University of Pennsylvania) 4:30 p.m., Knight Auditorium, Spurlock Museum Series co-organized and sponsored by IPRH and the Department of Gender and Women's Studies, with co-sponsorship by the Spurlock Museum. A reception will follow the lecture.

Symposium: December 5–6, 2013
Hip Hop and Punk Feminisms: Genealogy, Theory, Performance
Organizers: Ruth Nicole Brown, Gender and Women's Studies, Education Policy, Organization & Leadership; Karen C. Flynn M, Gender and Women's Studies and African American Studies; Mimi Thi Nguyen, Gender and Women's Studies; Fiona I. B. Ngô, Asian American Studies and Gender and Women’s Studies

Partial List of Course-Relevant Activities
Participants may choose to work with the Ethnography of the University initiative, http://www.eui.illinois.edu/, taking advantage of its umbrella IRB for course-based research.

People who might be invited to Skype in/visit: Monica Casper, Virginia Eubanks, Ray Fouché, Linda Layne, Lisa Nakamura, Paula Treichler, among many others

Visit the C-U Community Fab Lab cucfablab.org and/or Urbana Makerspace http://makerspaceurbana.org/

Krannert Art Museum exhibit (after August 30): http://www.kam.illinois.edu/exhibitions/current/hello_world.html

Attendance/ Participation Policy
If you find you must miss class, contact the instructors 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)

**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 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**
We support 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.