DIGFS5002FA Dialogues in Feminism and Technology  
Number of credits: 0.5

Wednesdays 11:50-2:50  
RHA 205 Richmond Rm 511

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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 recombing (deliberately and accidently). 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. Her most recent research is in an edited volume, Reworking Postcolonialism: Globalization, Labour and Rights (2015). Here, Belén Ordóñez' chapter is on media circuits of power, desire and labour as a rhizomatic event in a globalized context, vis-a-vis 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 through work with online feminist networks

COURSE WEBSITES/Online Forums:

FemTechNet.org
EdCast
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 browse (follow) the blogs of class peers and consider blog content for class discussions. Maria Belén will browse and 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.

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 may be asked to post class assignments to your blogs. You will need to work with your partner to develop blog content and conversations 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/or FTN video dialogues
  - Themes, topics and questions that were discussed in class. Summaries are not necessary, but rather, reflections on what was discussed and where your mind travelled, in conversation and individually, each week.
  - Themes/topic/discussion that inspired you when you were out and about. What did you find
interesting each week 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 partner shares on the blog.

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 can also spill over into the classroom as feminist resources to draw and learn from therefore, you are responsible for browsing your peer's blogs before 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 should write a minimum of 300 Words in their weekly blog.

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.

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 a pre-determined question/s in order to stay within the time limit. The video must be uploaded to Vimeo and/or blog and it must be titled with a key word.

4. Cross-Class Assignments As part of an ongoing effort to connect simultaneous nodal courses, the class will connect and engage with the DOCC course taught by Dr. Sharon Irish, “Collaborations in Feminism and Technology” at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Sharon Irish is a project coordinator and adjunct lecturer at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA. She serves as co-facilitator of FemTechNet (2014-15), as well as an advisory editor for the journal, Technology and Culture. An art and architectural historian, Sharon is at work on a book on the London-based artist, Stephen Willats, with funding from Creative Capital/Andy Warhol Foundation and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. She wrote Suzanne Lacy: Spaces Between (University of Minnesota Press, 2010) as well as a monograph and many articles on the architecture of Cass Gilbert. [http://sharonirish.org](http://sharonirish.org)

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
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 Illinois will also prepare their introductions in connection with the introduction by Maria Lugones in Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition Against Multiple Oppressions (2003).

b) Video Dialogue Responses

Another exercise will entail recording and uploading a short 15-20 min. class conversation in response to the FTN “Difference” Video Dialogue, and then sharing with students at Illinois.

5. FemTechNet/Online Presence

Students are required to sign on to ED Cast (FTN collaborations). Student efforts to connect and collaborate in discussions with other students enrolled in DOCC 2015 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*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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is based on: 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 the DOCC class at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (Chicago) via video/audio recordings. 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 class and Illinois (Due Sept. 30). After listening to the introductions from students at Illinois, students will be asked to post a 500 Word reflection on their blogs that engages with questions of subjectivity and becoming (Due Oct. 7). 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 class conversation that responds to the ideas discussed in the FTN Video Dialogue, “Difference”. Recorded conversations will be uploaded and shared with students at Illinois and also FTN forums (Class exercise Oct. 7). The recorded conversation must focus primarily on readings by Shildrick, M'charek and Sandoval. These readings are then used to think with and alongside the FTN Video
Dialogue. A 500 word report in response to the discussions that transpired at OCADU and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will be shared on blogs (Due Oct. 21).

Student Video Dialogue 20% uploaded no later than midnight Nov. 18th
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. 4 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 the curation of their blogs and also on how the overall course themes are engaged, thus students are encouraged to include diverse digital forms (i.e images, sound, video, etc.) that best illustrate their overall questions and observations. 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:

Sep. 9 Week 1

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


Recommended:
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

Sep. 16 Week 2

**Recommended:**


* In-class time to work on “Introductions”

**Sep. 23 Week 3 Corporeal Figurations**


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

**Sep. 30 Week 4 Differences**


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. 7 Week 5 Race: Feminist Methodologies and Disruptions**


Video record response to FTN “Difference” Video Dialogue using Shildrick, M’charek and Sandoval.

500 Word response to Illinois’ “Introduction” and “Introduction-In-Relation” assignment (to be posted and shared on blog by midnight)

October 12-16: Study Break

**Oct. 21 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.

FemTechNet Video Dialogue: Race, (Maria Fernandez and Lisa Nakamura)

500 Word response to Illinois’ discussion of “Difference” video dialogue (to be posted and shared on blog)

Oct. 23-25: Students will be expected to attend Karen Barad’s lecture at the Through Post-Atomic Eyes Conference being held at OCADU and UofT and it is recommended that students attend the graduate workshop. Some aspects of this conference will be discussed and considered in Week 9 (Machines).

For details on speakers, venues, registration, and the schedule of events, please visit the symposium website at www.postatomiceyes.net.

From the conference website:
“Through Post-Atomic Eyes brings together an interdisciplinary group of artists and scholars to explore the complex legacy of the atomic age in contemporary art and culture. In what ways do photography and other lens-based art practices shed light on this legacy in the 21st century, and how has atomic culture shaped contemporary intersections of photography, nuclear industries, and military technocultures? Join us as we explore some of the most urgent issues of our time, from climate change and the Anthropocene to surveillance culture and the advent of drone warfare, through a post-atomic lens. Through Post-Atomic Eyes is scheduled to coincide with John O’Brien’s groundbreaking exhibition, Camera Atomica, the first substantial exhibition of nuclear photography to encompass the postwar period from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 to the meltdown at Fukushima in 2011. Now on view at the Art Gallery of Ontario (until November 15, 2015).”

Oct. 28 Week 7 Feminist Labour in the Virtual


Nov. 4 Week 8 Feminist Epistemologies, Practices, and the Expansion of “Objectivity”


Nov. 11 Week 9 Feminist Machines


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

**FemTechNet Video Dialogue: Machine (Wendy Chun and Kelly Dobson)**

**Nov. 18 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)**

**FemTechNet Video Dialogue: Place (Radhika Gajjala and Sharon Irish)**

**Nov. 25 Week 11 Animating Sexuality: Queer Potentials**


**Dec. 2 Week 12 Becomings**


**FemTechNet Video Dialogue: Transformation (Catherine Lord, Donna Haraway about the legacy of Beatriz DaCosta)**

**DOCC Blogs Due December 4th 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
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.