

Feminist and Queer Technoscience

Module Outline

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ABOUT

This module explores the provocative and fraught encounters feminist and queer politics have with science and technology in the 20th and 21st centuries. We will consider intersectional interventions into the histories of science, technology, and digital media, with texts by Jack Halberstam, Sadie Plant, and Wendy Chun. We will study the biopolitical co-construction and co-evolution of the body with technology, focusing upon figures of the cyborg, posthuman, transgender body, and molecular body, in tandem with key texts by Donna Haraway, N. Katherine Hayles, Sandy Stone, and Paul Preciado. We will also engage the militarized, ideological, and sociopolitical underpinning of formal technological architectures, such as binary logic, computer code, and DNA. In addition, we will think through the recent materialist turn in feminist theory and its use of scientific discourse, particularly in the writings of Elizabeth Grosz and Jane Bennett. Throughout the module, we will turn to queer and feminist artistic practices as aesthetic interventions that powerfully impact the practices, discourses, and futures of science and technology. We will look at artwork by VNS Matrix, subROSA, Shu Lea Cheang, Beatriz da Costa, micha cárdenas, Pinar Yoldas, among others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete this module should be able to:

- define and analyze key concepts, such as feminist objectivity, cyberfeminism, cyborg, posthuman, artificial intelligence, code, cybertype, pharmacopornographic, and new materialisms
- critically analyze the relationships between feminist and queer politics and science, technology, and digital media
- demonstrate an extensive yet focused understanding of feminist and queer artistic practices that engage science, technology, and media
- perform close readings of major theoretical texts in feminist and queer theory as well as science and technologies studies and media theory

ASSESSMENT

Formative

1 x abstract and annotated bibliography (maximum 1000 words)

Summative

1 x 3000 word essay that comparatively analyzes a text and visual artwork

At the end of this document, you will find detailed information on assessment requirements.

GENERAL

Every student is expected to participate in every class. Class discussion and activities are an essential part of this module. It is important that you come to class every day having read the required material and prepared to discuss it.

While students are permitted to use laptops and tablets for the purposes of note taking, computer note-taking should not detract from your active vocal and visual participation in this class. I ask that you respect this regulation, or laptops and tablets will be banned from the classroom.

Students in this class are required to check their Goldsmiths email account at least once a day, in case there are any last-minute announcements or disruptions.

2 x 15 minute tutorials are available for each student. To schedule a tutorial, please fill out the Tutorial Sign-Up Sheet that will be circulated at the beginning of each class meeting. Tutorials will be available between 9:00am - 11:00am on Tuesdays in RHB 232.

I reserve the right to revise the module outline throughout the term, based on class discussions and your interest in the texts.

SCHEDULE

3/10 Genealogies & Methods I

Evelyn Fox Keller, "Feminism and Science," *Feminism and Science* (1982), pp. 28 - 40 [reader]

Kara Keeling, "Queer OS," *Cinema Journal* (2014), pp. 152 - 157 [reader]

Art:

Jennifer Willet, *InsideOut: Laboratory Ecologies* (2008)

Tagny Duff, *Living Viral Tattoos* (2008)

Suggested:

Helen E. Longino & Ruth Doell, "Body, Bias, and Behavior: A Comparative Analysis of Reasoning in Two Areas of Biological Science," *Feminism and Science* (1983), pp. 73 - 90

Elisabeth, A. Lloyd, "Pre-Theoretical Assumptions in Evolutionary Explanations of Female Sexuality," *Feminism and Science* (1993), pp. 91 - 102

10/10 Genealogies & Methods II

Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), pp. 183 - 201 [reader]

Beatriz da Costa, "Reaching the Limit: When Art Becomes Science," *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience* (2008), pp. 365 - 385 [reader]

Art:

Beatriz da Costa, *PigeonBlog* (2006) and *Anti-Cancer Survival Kit* (2012)

Kathy High, various, <http://kathyhigh.com/projects.html>

Suggested:

Sandra Harding, "Postcolonial and feminist philosophies of science and technology: convergences and dissonances," *Postcolonial Studies* (2009), pp. 401 - 421

Sandra Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is 'Strong Objectivity'?" *Feminism & Science* (1993), pp. 235 - 248

Sandra Harding, "Introduction: Beyond Postcolonial Theory: Two Undertheorized Perspectives on Science and Technology," *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader* (2011), pp. 1 - 32

17/10 Cyberfeminism

Sadie Plant, *Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture* (1997), excerpts pp. 3 - 37 [reader]

Maria Fernandez and Faith Wilding, "Situating Cyberfeminisms," *Domain Errors!: Cyberfeminist Practices* (2003), pp. 17 - 28 [reader]

Art:

VNS Matrix, *A Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century* (1991) & *Bitch Mutant Manifesto* (1996)

Cornelia Sollfrank, *Female Extension* (1997),

<https://wiki.brown.edu/confluence/display/MarkTribe/Cornelia+Sollfrank>

subROSA, various, <http://www.cyberfeminism.net/projects.html>

Suggested:

100 anti-theses (1997),

http://www.obn.org/reading_room/manifestos/html/anti.html

Claudia Reiche and Verena Kuni, *Cyberfeminism: Next Protocols* (2004)

Sarah Kember, *Cyberfeminism and Artificial Life* (2002)

Lynn Hershman-Leeson, *Conceiving Ada* (film, 1997)

24/10 Alan Turing and Queer Histories of Computation

Jacob Gaboury, "A Queer History of Computing: Part 1," *Rhizome* (2013) [reader], <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/feb/19/queer-computing-1/>

Homay King, "Keys to Turing," *Virtual Memory: Time-Based Art and the Dream of Digitality* (2015), pp. 18 - 46 [reader]

Suggested:

Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence," *The New Media Reader* (1950), pp. 49 - 64

Jack Halberstam, "Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine," *Feminist Studies* (1991), pp. 439 - 460

Jacob Gaboury, "A Queer History of Computing: Parts 2 - 5," *Rhizome* (2013), <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/mar/19/queer-computing-2/>

<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/apr/9/queer-history-computing-part-three/>

<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/may/6/queer-history-computing-part-four/>

<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/jun/18/queer-history-computing-part-five/>

31/10 The Cyborg

Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), pp. 149 - 181 [reader]

Suggested:

Jack Halberstam and Ira Livingston, "Introduction: Posthuman Bodies," *Posthuman Bodies* (1995), pp. 1 - 19

N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (1999)

Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (2013)

Rosi Braidotti, "Posthuman, All Too Human: Towards a New Process Ontology," *Theory, Culture & Society* (2006), pp. 197 - 208

Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (2003), pp. 801 - 831

7/11 Reading Week**14/11 Trans Technology**

Sandy Stone, "Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto" (1993), pp. 1 - 20 [reader]

Micha Cárdenas, *The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities* (2012), excerpts: "Introduction" pp. 21 - 56, "Becoming Transreal" pp. 57 - 79

Art:

Micha Cárdenas, *Becoming Dragon* (2008), <http://secondloop.wordpress.com/>

Shu Lea Cheang, *Brandon* (1998),

<http://rhizome.org/editorial/2012/may/10/shu-lea-cheang-on-brandon/>

Suggested:

Trans Technology: Circuits of Culture, Self, Belonging (2013), exhibition catalogue

21/11 Race and/as Technology

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Race and/as Technology; or, How to Do Things to Race," *Camera Obscura* (2009), pp. 7 - 35 [reader]

Art:

Mongrel, *Colour Separation* (1997), <http://www.mongrel.org.uk/colourseparation>

Jacolby Satterwhite, various videos, <https://vimeo.com/user2947668/videos>

Mendi & Keith Obadike, *Blackness for Sale* (2001),

http://www.blacknetart.com/index1_1.html

Nancy Burson, *The Human Race Machine* (2000),

<http://nancyburson.com/human-race-machine/>

Suggested:

- Lisa Nakamura and Peter A. Chow-White, "Introduction - Race and Digital Technology: Code, the Color Line, and the Information Society," *Race After the Internet* (2012), pp. 1 - 18
- Tara McPherson, "U.S. Operating Systems at Mid-Century: The Intertwining of Race and UNIX," *Race After the Internet* (2012), pp. 21 - 37
- Peter A. Chow-White, "The Informationalization of Race: Communication, Databases, and the Digital Coding of the Genome," *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History* (2012), pp. 81 - 103
- Abram Gabriel, "A Biologist's Perspective on DNA and Race in the Genomics Era," *Genetics and the Unsettled Past: The Collision of DNA, Race, and History* (2012), pp. 43 - 66
- Lisa Nakamura, "Cybertyping and the Work of Race in the Age of Digital Reproduction," *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (2002), pp. 1 - 30
- Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Orienting the Future," *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics* (2008), pp. 171 - 246

28/11 New Materialisms

- Elizabeth Grosz, "The Future of Feminist Theory: Dreams for New Knowledges," *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (2011), pp. 74 - 87 [reader]

Art:

- Pinar Yoldas, *Speculative Biologies* (2011) and *An Ecosystem of Excess* (2014)

Suggested:

- Sara Ahmed, "Open Forum / Imaginary Prohibitions: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Founding Gestures of the 'New Materialism'," *European Journal of Women's Studies* (2008), pp. 23 - 39
- Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2010), excerpts: "Preface" pp. vii - xix, Ch. 1: "The Force of Things" pp. 1 - 19
- Jasbir Puar, "'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess': Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory," *philoSOPHIA* (2012), pp. 49 - 66
- Elizabeth Grosz, "The Inhuman in the Humanities: Darwin and the Ends of Man," *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (2011), pp. 11 - 25
- Hito Steyerl, "A Thing Like You and Me," *e-flux* (2010), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/a-thing-like-you-and-me/>
- Isabelle Stengers, "Reclaiming Animism," *e-flux* (2012), <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/reclaiming-animism/>
- Malin Ah-King & Eva Hayward, "Toxic Sexes: Perverting Pollution and Queering Hormone Disruption," *O-Zone: A Journal of Object-Oriented Studies* (2014), pp. 1 - 12
- Michael O'Rourke, "'Girls Welcome!!!' Speculative Realism, Object Oriented Ontology and Queer Theory," *Speculations* (2011), pp. 275 - 312
- Luciana Parisi, *Abstract Sex: Philosophy, Bio-Technology, and the Mutations of*

Desire (2004)
 Nikki Sullivan, "Somatechnics," *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (2014), pp. 187 - 190

5/12 Testo Junkie

Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (2013), excerpts: "Introduction" pp. 11 - 12, "Your Death," pp. 15 - 22, "The Pharmacopornographic Era," pp. 23 - 54, "Testogel" pp. 55 - 67 [reader]

12/12 Xenofeminism

Laboria Cuboniks, *Xenofeminism: A Politics for Alienation* (2015) [reader],
<http://www.laboriacuboniks.net/>

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, & Technology, <http://adanewmedia.org/>

Jayna Brown and Alexis Lothian, *Social Text Periscope: Speculative Life* (2012),

http://socialtextjournal.org/periscope_topic/speculative_life/

FemTechNet, "Dialogues on Feminism and Technology,"

<https://vimeo.com/channels/femtechnetdialogues/>

Alexander R. Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* (2001)

Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" (1954)

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962)

Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (1987)

Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do With Our Brain?* (2008)

Laurel Ptak, *Wages for Facebook* (2013), <http://wagesforfacebook.com/>

Eugene Thacker, *Biomedica* (2004)

Charis Thompson, *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies* (2005)

Charis Thompson, *Good Science: The Ethical Choreography of Stem Cell Research* (2013)

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1 x abstract and annotated bibliography (maximum 1000 words)

All students will submit an abstract and annotated bibliography (maximum 1000 words) on a potential paper topic for their summative assessment. The abstract should articulate a central problematic and argument you wish to pursue, as well as highlight key texts and artworks you will analyze. The abstract should also sketch out how you plan to organize the summative assessment. For instance, will you consider a single artwork in relation to multiple theoretical concepts? Or, will you take up a single theoretical idea and utilize it to analyze multiple artworks?

Deadline: Your abstract and annotated bibliography must be received by 14 November at 4:00pm. More information will be provided during the term.

Submission details: Upload a digital copy at the appropriate formative submission website, as well as submit a printed copy on due date. The deadline is non-negotiable.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

1 x 3000 word essay

At the module's end, you will submit a 3000 word essay on a topic of your choosing related to the module. While there are no set questions, all essays are to be comparative analyses that critically engage at least 1 required text and 1 artwork listed on the module outline. Additionally, all essays must have a bibliography and references, which are not included in the word count.

Style Guide: Please consult the Chicago Manual of Style for information on proper formatting and citations: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Deadline: Your essay must be received by the official Goldsmiths summative deadline. More information will be provided during the term.

Submission details: Upload a digital copy of your essay at the appropriate summative submission website, as well as submit a printed copy on due date. The deadline is non-negotiable.