

Feminist and Queer Approaches to Science, Technology, and Art VS 500

Fall 2014

Wednesday, 2pm - 4:40pm

Clemens Hall 606

Dr. Zach Blas

zmbblas@buffalo.edu

Office: CFA 226A

Office Hours: Wednesday, 11am - 12pm; Friday, 1pm - 2pm; and by appointment

ABOUT

This Ph.D. seminar 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, Sandra Harding, 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 interrogate emerging technologies like genomics, biometrics, and nanotechnology, and their impact on queerness and feminism. Furthermore, 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 course, 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, Tagny Duff, Beatriz da Costa, micha cárdenas, Pinar Yoldas, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Victoria Vesna, and Jacolby Satterwhite. We will read additional texts by Judith Butler, Alan Turing, and Jasbir Puar.

REQUIRED TEXTS

micha cárdenas, *The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities*

Beatriz Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*

ASSIGNMENTS

class participation

presentation

essay

GRADING & EXPECTATIONS

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation (20%)

Attendance in this seminar is mandatory. You should plan on attending every meeting. You are allowed two unexcused absences over the course of the semester. After that, your class participation will drop a letter grade for each additional unexcused absence. Upon the fourth unexcused absence, you will receive a failing grade for the course. Four late arrivals to the seminar is equal to one unexcused absence.

Presentation (30%)

All students will make a presentation to the seminar on selected readings and artworks, highlighting core arguments and themes. On the day of your presentation, bring a PowerPoint, Keynote, or PDF file on a thumb drive, or make other arrangements with Zach in advance. Each presentation will be approximately 30 minutes, followed by group discussion.

Essay (50%)

Final essays must be 20 - 25 pages, written in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1 inch margins on all sides. Submit your essay via email, as a .doc file, on due date. A two paragraph paper proposal is due by November 5 via email, as a .doc file.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to abide by the terms of the student code of academic conduct, available online at <http://grad.buffalo.edu/Academics/Policies-Procedures/Academic-Integrity.html>. I urge you all to examine this material and consult me with any questions you may have about academic integrity before it becomes an issue. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism is not an acceptable excuse for plagiarism. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course.

ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

If you require classroom accommodations due to a disability, please contact Accessibility Resources, located at 25 Capen Hall. AR can be reached by phone at 716.645.2608 or by email at stu-accessibility@buffalo.edu. Please inform me as soon as possible about your needs so that we can coordinate your accommodations. More information is available online at <http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/>.

RESPECT

This classroom is a community. It is crucial that we treat each other with the appropriate level of courtesy and respect. No one should be made to feel unwelcome here. Failure to treat other students with the respect they deserve will severely, negatively impact your class participation grade.

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus through the semester, based on class discussions and your interest in the texts.

SCHEDULE

1. HISTORIES

8/27 **Beginnings, Genealogies, Methods I**

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

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

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

9/3 **Beginnings, Genealogies, Methods II**

Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Questions in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminism and Science* (1991), pp. 183 - 201

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

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

Beatriz da Costa, "Reaching the Limit: When Art Becomes Science," *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience* (2012)

art: Beatriz da Costa, *PigeonBlog* (2006), *Dying for the Other* and *Anti-Cancer Survival Kit* (2012)

9/10 **Cyberfeminism**

Sadie Plant, *Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture* (1997)

Maria Fernandez and Faith Wilding, "Situating Cyberfeminisms," *Domain Errors!: Cyberfeminist Practices* (2003)

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

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

Cornelia Sollfrank, *Female Extension* (1997),

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

Suggested:

"100 anti-theses" (1997),

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

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

9/17 Alan Turing and Queer Histories of Computation

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: Part 1," *Rhizome* (2013), <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/feb/19/queer-computing-1/>

Suggested:

Homay King, "Keys to Turing" (unpublished)

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/>

2. BODIES**9/24 The Cyborg & The Posthuman**

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

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

N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman* (1999, excerpts: Prologue, Ch. 1: "Toward Embodied Virtuality," Ch. 2: "Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers," Ch. 11: Conclusion: "What Does It Mean to Be Posthuman?")

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

Suggested:

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

10/1 The Transgender Body

Sandy Stone, "Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto" (1993), pp. 1 - 20
micha cárdenas, *The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities* (2012)

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

Eva Hayward, "More Lessons from a Starfish: Prefixial Flesh and Transspeciated Selves," *Women Studies Quarterly* (2008)

10/8 Race and/as Technology

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mendi & Keith Obadike, *American Cypher* (2012) & *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, *Cybertypes: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity on the Internet* (2002)

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Orienting Orientalism, or How to Map Cyberspace" (2003)

Tara McPherson, "U.S. Operating Systems at Mid-Century: The Intertwining of Race and UNIX," *Race After the Internet* (2012), pp. 21 - 37

3. THE NONHUMAN: TECHNICS & MATTER**10/15 Code & Software**

Judith Butler, "Critically Queer," *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993)

Adrian Mackenzie, "The Performativity of Code: Software and Cultures of Circulation," *Theory, Culture, & Society* (2005)

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "On Software, or Persistence of Visual Knowledge," *Grey Room* (2005)

Jeremy Hight, "Interview with Mez," *Leonardo Electronic Almanac* (2011), pp. 1 - 6

art: Mez Breeze, *mezangelle* (1993)

Suggested:

Radical Software Group, *Notes for a Liberated Computer Language* (2006), <http://r-s-g.org/LCL/>

Alexander R. Galloway, "Language Wants To Be Overlooked: On Software and Ideology," *Journal of Visual Culture* (2006)

N. Katherine Hayles, "Speech, Writing, Code: Three Worldviews," *My Mother Was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts* (2005)

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "On Sourcing and Source Codes," *Programmed Visions: Software and Memory* (2011)

10/22 Object-Oriented

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

Jasbir Puar, "'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess': Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory," *philoSOPHIA* (2012), pp. 49 - 66

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (2010, excerpts: Preface, Ch. 1: "The Force of Things," Ch. 2: "The Agency of Assemblages")

Hito Steyerl, "A Thing Like You and Me," *e-flux Journal* (2010),
<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/a-thing-like-you-and-me/>

Suggested:

Michael O'Rourke, "'Girls Welcome!!!' Speculative Realism, Object Oriented Ontology and Queer Theory," *Speculations* (2011), pp. 275 - 312

10/29 Ecology and the Anthropocene

Paul Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind" (2002)

Elizabeth Kolbert, "Enter the Anthropocene - Age of Man," *National Geographic* (2011),
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2011/03/age-of-man/kolbert-text>

Nigel Clark & Myra J. Hird, "Deep Shit," *O-Zone: A Journal of Object-Oriented Studies* (2013)

Malin Ah-King & Eva Hayward, "Toxic Sexes: Perverting Pollution and Queering Hormone Disruption," *O-Zone: A Journal of Object-Oriented Studies* (2013)

art: Pinar Yoldas, *Speculative Biologies* (2008) and *An Ecosystem of Excess* (2014)

Suggested:

Myra J. Hird, "Knowing Waste: Towards an Inhuman Epistemology," *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy* (2012)

11/5 Biometrics, Machine Vision, and Surveillance

Shoshana Amielle Magnet, *When Biometrics Fail: Gender, Race, and the Technology of Identity* (2011, excerpts: Introduction: "Imagining Biometric Security," Ch. 1: "Biometric Failure," Ch. 5 "Representing Biometrics," Conclusion: "Biometric Failure and Beyond")

Kelly Gates, "Introduction: Experimenting with the Face," *Our Biometric Future: Facial Recognition Technology and the Culture of Surveillance* (2011)

art: Jillian Mayer, "MakeUp Tutorial HOW TO HIDE FROM CAMERAS" (2013),
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGGnnp43uNM>

"Anti-Surveillance Feminist Poet Hair & Makeup Party" (2014),
<http://antirecognition.tumblr.com/>

Hito Steyerl, *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* (2013)

Suggested:

Toby Beauchamp, "Artful Concealment and Strategic Visibility: Transgender Bodies and U.S. State Surveillance After 9/11," *Surveillance & Society* (2009)

Simone Browne, "Digital Epidermalization: Race, Identity and Biometrics," *Critical Sociology* (2010)

Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen, "Securitizing Gender: Identity, Biometrics, and Transgender Bodies at the Airport," *Social Research: An International Quarterly* (2013)

*proposal for final paper due via email

4. BIOFUTURITIES

11/12 no class

art: Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Teknolust* (2002)

11/19 Paul Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (2008)

11/26 no class, Fall Recess

12/3 Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (2011, excerpts: Ch. 1: "The Inhuman in the Humanities: Darwin and the Ends of Man, Ch. 5: "The Future of Feminist Theory: Dreams for New Knowledges")

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

Natalie Jeremijenko, various, <http://nataliejeremijenko.com/projects/>

*final paper due via email by 2pm eastern time on December 10th

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

- Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, & Technology*, <http://adanewmedia.org/>
 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (2013)
 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* (2004)
 Sandra Harding, *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader* (2011)
 Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" (1954)
 Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962, excerpts Ch. 3 & 6)
 Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (1987, excerpt, pp. 1-29)
 Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do With Our Brain?* (2008)
 Luciana Parisi, *Abstract Sex: Philosophy, Bio-Technology and the Mutations of Desire* (2004)
 Laurel Ptak, *Wages for Facebook*, <http://wagesforfacebook.com/> (2014)
 Eugene Thacker, *Biomedica* (2004)
 Eugene Thacker, "Biophilosophy for the 21st Century," *Critical Digital Studies Reader* (2013)
 Charis Thompson, *Making Parents: The Ontological Choreography of Reproductive Technologies* (2005)
 Charis Thompson, *Good Science: The Ethical Choreography of Stem Cell Research* (2013)