COMM 856.001: Feminism & Technology

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Office Hours:
M 11-12; T/Th 1-2pm

Description
This class will examine feminist theories of technology and read a number of example studies that use feminist principles, methodologies, and praxis. While “technology” is writ large, the class will generally focus on media and digital technologies. We will take an intersectional approach to feminism, using gender not as a primary lens but as one alongside race, class, and sexuality (among others) to examine how technology researchers de-center hegemonic perspectives when investigating technology. To that end, we will read ethnographic and historical accounts of various technologies and discuss a variety of projects—some successful, others less so—that involve queer, postcolonial and feminist approaches to design and deployment. This class draws from feminist philosophy of technology, science and technology studies (STS), human-computer interaction (HCI), feminist technology studies (FTS), material culture studies, the social history of technology (SHOT), and internet studies, among others. I invite students to keep an open mind about the interdisciplinarity of the works we will discuss.

Required Texts (in order of reading)

We will read a lot of journal articles, book chapters, and popular press articles in addition to these books, all of which are available on Sakai. Print the articles out and bring them to class.


Assignments & Class Policies

Participation 20%
Response Papers 30%
Final Paper
  Final Paper Topic
  Annotated Bibliography 10%
  Presentation 10%
  Final Paper 30%
TOTAL: 100%

Participation (20%)
This is a graduate seminar. Therefore, I expect that you will attend every seminar meeting, be prepared for discussion, do all the readings and have something to say about them, bring the books/articles under discussion to class that day, and do your work on time unless you’ve discussed alternate dates in advance. If you know you will have trouble meeting a deadline or if there is anything that will prevent you from fully participating in the seminar, please let me know within the first week of class.

Response Papers (15% each)
You will each sign up for two weeks in which you will write a response paper (approx. 1500 words) discussing the readings and making some sort of argument about them. At the end of each paper, include 2-4 questions to pose to the class. The paper will be due that day in class.

Final Paper (40%)
The course will culminate with a 20-25 page paper that makes an original argument about some aspect of feminism and technology.

You will turn in your topic for the final paper on 2/12 after four weeks of class (1-2 pages). An annotated bibliography, fleshing out your argument and including a list of 7-10 sources, will be due on 3/19 (5-6 pages). On the last day of class (4/23), you will give a 10-minute presentation about your paper. The final paper will be due at the end of exam period.
## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

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### Week One – Where is the Feminist in Feminist Technology Studies?

*Note that we have no class on 1/15 because it is MLK Jr. Day. Thus, I would like you to come to the first week of class having read the following readings:


### Week Two - Understanding Approaches to Gender and Technology

**Review Essays:**


**STS Basics:**


Project Examples:


Week Three - Technology Producing Gender, Gender Producing Technology


Optional:


Week Four - Technology and Masculinity

Paper Topics Due


Optional:


Project Example:


### Week Five – History of Computing


**Optional:**


### Week Six - Cyborg Feminism and Cyberfeminism


**Optional:**


**Project Examples:**


**Week Seven - Social Media**


**Optional:**


**Project Example:**

Feminist Principles of the Internet, 2016 http://feministinternet.net/

**Week Eight – Trolling and Harassment**

*Annotated Bibliography Due*
Phillips, Whitney. 2014. *This is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Intro, Chapters 1-3)


**Optional:**


**Project Examples:**

HeartMob
https://iheartmob.org/

Crash Override
http://www.crashoverridenetwork.com/

**Week Nine: Decolonizing Computing**


**Optional:**


**Week Ten: Queer/ing Technology Use**


*Project Examples:*


**Week Eleven - Feminist Game Studies**


**Week Twelve: Algorithms**


**Week 13: Paper Presentations**