

## **Feminist Theory and STS**

LMC6749/PUBP6749

Wednesdays, 5-8pm, Stephen C. Hall Building Room 106

Instructor: Anne Pollock

Office hours: Tuesdays 3-4:30pm or by appointment, TSRB320B

This course provides sustained attention to the productive intersections of feminist theory and Science, Technology, and Society (STS). Feminist theory can help to foreground attention to gender and other structures of inequality, and can inform inquiry into any topic, and students will have the opportunity to explore how feminist STS can inform their ongoing research. The first half of the course will be devoted to close attention to key texts of canonical feminist thinkers who helped to shape STS as a field, for example through analysis of such binaries as nature/culture and subjectivity/objectivity, and to feminist STS approaches to the touchstone spheres of reproduction and computing. The second half of the course will explore contemporary trends in feminist theory and STS, especially feminist new materialisms and feminist postcolonial STS, and will invite students to engage with current scholarship related to their own interests.

### **Course Objectives**

- To understand foundational concepts in the feminist theory of science and technology
- To understand the emergence and development of feminist STS as a field
- To engage in-depth with one particular area of feminist STS work while putting it into context
- To improve the ability to communicate about these issues, especially orally and in writing

### **Required Books**

Barad, Karen, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Duke 2007.

Foster, Laura, *Reinventing Hoodia: Peoples, Plants, and Patents in South Africa*, University of Washington Press 2017.

Subramaniam, Banu, *Ghost Stories for Darwin: The Science of Variation and the Politics of Diversity*, University of Illinois Press 2014.

Wilson, Elizabeth, *Gut Feminism*, Duke 2015.

One more book of your choosing (see below).

All other readings will be available on T-Square.

### **Assessment**

#### **3 components, equally weighted (each worth 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of final grade)**

##### **1. Class Participation**

This course is designed as a seminar in which active participation from all students is necessary; the benefits of this class come from talking as much as listening. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in depth, and to devote engaged attention to classmates' contributions.

##### **2. Weekly Reading Responses**

*Before* each class, each student writes an entry responding to the readings for that day on the blog section of T-Square. The weekly responses should be ~500 words each and should be posted by noon on the day of class. Each entry must: (1) demonstrate having done the reading, (2) note particular topics and questions that you would like to discuss in class.

##### **3. Final essay exam: 2 parts, 1500 words each – Due December 6**

Part One: Analysis of how concepts and approaches from feminist STS can inform a major research project of your own (e.g. in your dissertation research).

Part Two: A review essay on a recent book in the field of feminist STS broadly defined; each student will choose a different book, published since 2010.

## **August 23**

### **Week 1: Introductions**

In class film: "Gender and Science"

### **Week 2: August 30**

#### **Charting the Field**

Longino, Helen E., and Evelyn M. Hammonds, "Conflicts and Tensions in the Feminist Study of Gender and Science," in *Conflicts in Feminism*, edited by Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller, Routledge 1990, pp. 164-183.

Lykke, Nina, "Feminist Cultural Studies of Science: Portrait of an Implosion," in Anneke M. Smelik and Nina Lykke, eds., *Bits of Life: Feminism at the Intersections of Media, Bioscience, and Technology*, University of Washington Press, 2008, pp. 3-15.

McNeil, Maureen, "Roots and Routes: The Making of Feminist Cultural Studies of Technoscience," in Anneke M. Smelik and Nina Lykke, eds., *Bits of Life: Feminism at the Intersections of Media, Bioscience, and Technology*, University of Washington Press, 2008, pp. 16-31.

Subramaniam, Banu, "Moored Metamorphoses: A Retrospective Essay on Feminist Science Studies," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 34.4(2009), 951-980.

Wajcman, Judy, "Feminist Theories of Technology," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34 (2010): 143-152.

### **Week 3: September 6**

#### **Feminist Epistemologies**

Haraway, Donna, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies*, 14.3(1988): 575-599.

Harding, Sandra "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is Strong Objectivity?" from Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter, eds., *Feminist Epistemologies*, Routledge 1993, 49-82.

Keller, Evelyn Fox, "Gender and Science," *Reflections on Gender and Science*, New Haven: Yale, 1985, pp. 76-94.

Rose, Hillary, "Hand, Brain, and Heart: A Feminist Epistemology for the Natural Sciences," *Signs* 9.1 (1983): 73-90.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. "Dueling Dualisms," from *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, Boston: Basic Books, 2000, pp. 1-29.

### **Week 4: September 13**

#### **Cyborg Feminism**

Haraway, Donna, "Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 147-181.

Moya, Paula, "Postmodernism, Realism, and the Politics of Identity," *Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles*, University of California Press, 2002, pp. 23-57.

Haraway, Donna, "RACE: Universal Donors in Vampire Culture: It's all in the Family," in *Modest\_Witness @Second\_Milleium, FemaleMan@MeetsOncoMouse*, New York: Routledge, 1997: 213-165.

Hammonds, Evelyn, "New Technologies of Race," from Gill Krikup, Linda Janes, Kath Woodward, Fiona Hovendun, eds., *The Gendered Cyborg*, Routledge, 1999, pp. 305-318.

## **Week 5: September 20**

### **Thinking Reproductively**

- Martin, Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *Signs* 16.3(1991), 485-501.
- Thompson, Charis. "Strategic Naturalizing: Kinship in an Infertility Clinic," in Sarah Franklin and Susan McKinnon, eds., *Relative Values: Refiguring Kinship Studies*, Duke University Press 2001, pp. 175-202
- Franklin, Sarah, "The Cyborg Embryo: Our Path to Transbiology," *Theory, Culture & Society* Vol. 23.7-8(2006): 167-187.
- Waldby, Catherine, and Melinda Cooper, "From Reproductive Work to Regenerative Labour: The Female Body in the Stem Cell Industries," *Feminist Theory* 11.1(2010): 3-22.
- Roberts, Dorothy E., "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?" *Signs* 34.4 (2009): 783-804.

## **Week 6: September 27**

### **Thinking Computationally**

- Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong, "On Software, or the Persistence of Visual Knowledge," *Grey Room* 18 (Winter 2004): 26-51.
- McPherson, Tara, "U.S. Operating Systems at Midcentury: The Intertwining of Race and Unix," in Lisa Nakamura and Peter Chow White, eds., *Race After the Internet*, Routledge, 2012, pp. 21-37.
- Nakamura, Lisa, "Indigenous Circuits: Navajo Women and the Racialization of Early Electronic Manufacture," *American Quarterly* 66.4 (December 2014): 919-941.
- Turkle, Sherry, "Tinysex and Gender Trouble," from *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, Simon and Schuster 1995, pp. 210-232.
- Eglash, Ron, "Race, Sex, and Nerds: From Black Geeks to Asian American Hipsters," *Social Text* 20.2(2002): 49-64.
- Optional Supplemental Reading: Suchman, Lucy, "Feminist STS and the Sciences of the Artificial," in *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Edited by Edward J. Hackett, Olga Amsterdamska, Michael Lynch, Judy Wajcman. MIT Press, 2007.

## **Week 7: October 4**

### **Feminist New Materialisms 1**

- Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Duke 2007.

## **Week 8: October 11**

### **Feminist New Materialisms 2**

- Elizabeth Wilson, *Gut Feminism*, Duke 2015.

## **Week 9: October 18**

### **Feminist Postcolonial STS 1**

- Banu Subramaniam, *Ghost Stories for Darwin: The Science of Variation and the Politics of Diversity*, University of Illinois Press 2014.

## **Week 10: October 25**

### **Feminist Postcolonial STS 2**

- Laura Foster, *Reinventing Hoodia: Peoples, Plants, and Patents in South Africa*, University of Washington Press 2017.

**Week 11: November 1**

selections from books students have chosen for final essays (and supporting material if/as necessary)

**Week 12: November 8**

selections from books students have chosen for final essays (and supporting material if/as necessary)

**Week 13: November 15**

selections from books students have chosen for final essays (and supporting material if/as necessary)

**Week 14: November 22**

Thanksgiving – No Class

**Week 15: November 29**

final wrap-up class

**Take-home exam due Wednesday, December 6**

Submit take-home exam on T-Square by midnight

**Potential Books for Final Essay**

Each student will select a single-authored book published since 2010 that engages feminist STS, broadly defined. This list is not comprehensive – other books may be selected with professor's OK. Each student will read the whole of their chosen book, and also select a short excerpt for the class to read (generally one chapter).

Ahuja, Neel, *Bioinsecurities: Disease Interventions, Empire, and the Government of Species* (Duke 2016)

Alaimo, Stacy, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (Indiana 2010)

Alaimo, Stacy, *Exposed: Environmental Politics and Pleasures in Posthuman Times* (Minnesota 2016)

Almeling, Rene, *Sex Cells: The Medical Market for Eggs and Sperm* (University of California Press 2011)

Aristarkhova, Irina, *Hospitality of the Matrix: Philosophy, Biomedicine, and Culture* (Columbia 2012)

Bahri, Deepika, *Postcolonial Biology: Psyche and Flesh after Empire* (Minnesota 2017)

Benjamin, Ruha, *People's Science: Bodies and Rights at the Stem Cell Frontier* (Stanford 2013)

Brown, Simone, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness* (Duke 2015)

Cadena, Marisol de la, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds* (Duke 2015)

Chen, Mel Y., *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Duke 2012)

Cooper, Melinda, and Catherine Waldby, *Clinical Labor: Tissue Donors and Research Subjects in the Global Bioeconomy* (Duke 2014)

Crawford, Cassandra S., *Phantom Limb: Amputation, Embodiment, and Prosthetic Technology* (NYU 2014)

Davis, Georgiann, *Contesting Intersex: The Dubious Diagnosis* (NYU 2015)

Diedrich, Lisa, *Indirect Action: Schizophrenia, Epilepsy, AIDS, and the Course of Health Activism* (Minnesota 2016)

Dworkin, Shari L., *Men at Risk: Masculinity, Heterosexuality and HIV Prevention* (NYU 2015)

Ehlers, Nadine, *Racial Imperatives: Discipline, Performativity, and Struggles against Subjection* (Indiana 2012)

Fausto-Sterling, Anne, *Sex/Gender: Biology in a Social World* (Routledge 2012)

Franklin, Sarah, *Biological Relatives: IVF, Stem Cells, and the Future of Kinship* (Duke 2013)

Frost, Samantha, *Biocultural Creatures: Toward a New Theory of the Human* (Duke 2016)

Grosz, Elizabeth, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Duke 2011)

Fine, Cordelia, *Testosterone Rex: Myths of Sex, Science, and Society* (Norton 2017)

Jain, S. Lochlann, *Malignant: How Cancer Becomes Us* (California 2013)

Kroker, Arthur, *Body Drift: Butler, Hayes, Haraway* (Minnesota 2012)

Haraway, Donna, Preface by Cary Wolfe, *Manifestly Haraway* (Minnesota 2016)

Haraway, Donna, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke 2016)

Harding, Sandra, *Objectivity and Diversity: Another Logic of Scientific Research* (Chicago 2015)

Herzig, Rebecca, *Plucked: A History of Hair Removal* (NYU Press 2014)

Karim, Lamia, *Microfinance and Its Discontents: Women in Debt in Bangladesh* (Minnesota 2011)

Kirby, Vicki, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large* (Duke 2011)

Lee, Rachel C., *The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies* (NYU 2014)

Magnet, Shoshana, *When Biometrics Fail: Gender, Race, and the Technology of Identity* (Duke 2011)

McCann, Carole, *Figuring the Population Bomb: Gender and Demography in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Washington 2016)

Murphy, Michelle, *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience* (Duke 2012)

Murphy, Michelle, *The Economization of Life* (Duke 2017)

Myers, Natasha, *Rendering Life Molecular: Models, Modelers, and Excitable Matter* (Duke 2015)

Patel, Geeta, *Risky Bodies and Techno-Intimacy: Reflections on Sexuality, Media, Science, Finance* (Washington 2017)

Pitts-Taylor, Victoria, *The Brain's Body: Neuroscience and Corporeal Politics* (Duke 2016)

Pollock, Anne, *Medicating Race: Heart Disease and Durable Preoccupations with Difference* (Duke 2012)

Probyn, Elsbeth, *Eating the Ocean* (Duke 2016)

Puig de la Bellacasa, Maria, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds* (Minnesota 2017)

Richardson, Sarah, *Sex Itself: The Search for Male and Female in the Human Genome* (Chicago 2013)

Roberts, Elizabeth F.S., *God's Laboratory: Assisted Reproduction in the Andes* (California 2012)

Russert, Britt, *Fugitive Science: Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture* (NYU 2017)

Schuller, Kyla, *The Biopolitics of Feeling: Race, Sex, and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (Duke 2017)

Sheldon, Rebekah, *The Child to Come: Life after the Human Catastrophe* (Minnesota 2016)

Shim, Janet, *Heart Sick: The Politics of Risk, Inequality, and Heart Disease* (NYU Press 2014)

Squier, Susan, *Poultry Science, Chicken Culture: A Partial Alphabet* (Rutgers 2011)

TallBear, Kim, *Native American DNA: Tribal Belonging and the False Promise of Genetic Science* (Minnesota 2013)

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton 2015)

Vora, Kalindi, *Life Support: Biocapital and the New History of Outsourced Labor* (Minnesota 2015)

Wentzell, Emily A., *Maturing Masculinities: Aging, Chronic Illness, and Viagra in Mexico* (Duke 2013)

Weston, Kath, *Animate Planet: Making Visceral Sense of Living in a High-Tech Ecologically Damaged World* (Duke 2017)

Willey, Angela, *Undoing Monogamy: The Politics of Science and the Possibilities of Biology* (Duke 2016)