GWS 449: Feminist Science and Technology Studies

Mondays/Wednesdays
5:30pm – 6:45pm
Fall 2020

Assistant Professor LiLi Johnson
lili.johnson@wisc.edu
Office Hours: Through UW Zoom
Wednesdays 2pm – 3pm or by appointment
Zoom Link: Meeting ID 944 4611 0692, Passcode 2468

Credit Hours: 3
Designations: Level – Intermediate, Breadth - Humanities
Course Prerequisite: Sophomore standing, a GenWS course, or permission of instructor
Instructional Mode: Online with optional face-to-face components, Carnegie definition
CanvasURL: https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/215796

Course Description
This course will use feminist theory and foundational thinkers in the field of Feminist Science and Technology Studies to examine the social, cultural, and political contexts in which scientific knowledge and technologies are produced and used. Considering the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality, we will focus on topics including binaries of nature/culture and subjectivity/objectivity, new materialism, digital technologies, postcoloniality, and race in science. The course will build a theoretical foundation and critical lens for understanding, analyzing, and critiquing the scientific and technological worlds around us.

Course Objectives:

- Locate and identify the key works and development of Feminist STS as an interdisciplinary field
- Examine and analyze how fields of scientific and technological development are shaped by social, political, and cultural forces
- Analyze and apply theoretical concepts about race, gender, and sexuality to topics related to science and technology
- Practice and improve analytical reading and writing skills with regard to social and cultural analysis
Organization of the class in Fall 2020
This course CAN be completed online only and will be primarily conducted online. We will be piloting an optional face-to-face outdoor discussion for credit in September with the possibility for it to continue (see below for details).

In addition to standard writing assignments and weekly discussion posts, this course will have:

- One online live synchronous class session held on WEDNESDAYS on UW Zoom, in which attendance and participation will be required
- One weekly asynchronous online module, posted on Mondays and must be completed that week

Weekly Course Rhythm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly Unit Finishes</td>
<td>New Weekly Unit Begins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Module</td>
<td>Module Posted Monday, Complete module before Weds discussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Discussion Post Due</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Write discussion post for following week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Requirements for ALL Students:

1. Weekly Synchronous Class Attendance and Participation: On Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:45, we will have live synchronous class session held online on UW Zoom. You must come to class having read and processed the reading for the week and you will be expected to participate. Come prepared to discuss what you wrote in your discussion post for that week. **You are expected to have your camera on for the session.**

You may miss 2 course meetings no questions asked without an effect on this portion of your grade, and you don’t need to notify me. However, you will still be expected to complete your weekly discussion post and online module. Each additional unexcused absence will result in five (5) percentage points reduced off your semester grade (i.e. a 90% AB would become an 85% B). See Attendance policy below for further information about absences.

**LINK TO ZOOM CLASSROOM:**
Meeting ID: 960 4329 9040, Passcode: 2468

2. Weekly Online Module: In lieu of our Monday meeting session, each week I will post an online module to the Canvas by **Monday at noon**, usually a short recorded lecture by me, clip to watch, or presentation with a short assignment/activity, related to themes for that week. They should take you about the time of one class session (1hr 15min). **You will be expected to complete the module by the Wednesday meeting**, but
you will have until Friday at noon to receive credit for completing it. There will be 15 modules (each counting 1% of your course grade), graded as Complete or Incomplete, and late completions will not be accepted or counted.

In September, I will be piloting face-to-face discussion sessions, which will be optional for students and will count for module credit that week. For that week, students will be given the option to complete the module online (most likely some form of live discussion with a classmate) OR attend the face-to-face discussion, which will be held outside physically distanced. More details to follow.

3. **Discussion Posts**: By Monday at noon you are required to post to the “Discussions” section of the Canvas on the course readings for the current week. Posts should be approximately 1-2 paragraphs, directly reference or cite the readings, and must include at least 1 open-ended discussion question. Some weeks there will be a prompt or additional information to direct your post. Your post may be in response to another student’s post as long as it includes the aforementioned requirements. Postings will receive Full credit, Half credit, or No credit, and late posts within 1 week will receive Half credit.

4. **Analytical Paper**: A 4-5 page analytical paper on course readings. Guidelines and topics will be distributed at least three weeks in advance.

5. **Final Project**: The final project may take one of the following forms:
   1) An analytical paper of 5-6 pages
   2) A substantial creative project (art, creative writing, performance, film, etc.) accompanied by a 3-4 page paper relating the project to the themes of the class

More instructions and guidelines to follow. Work Plans are due Wednesday, November 18

**Additional Course Requirements for Honors Students**

Students may earn honors credit by completing ONE of the following options:

1. Academic Monograph Book Review: Complete a 4-5 page book review of an entire academic monograph, either of one of the books excerpted in class or another book approved by the instructor (further instructions will be posted on Canvas)

2. Complete both the critical and creative project options for the final project (creative project plus 5-6 page analytical paper).

**Additional Course Requirements for Graduate Students**

1. Complete TWO Academic Monograph Book Reviews: Complete a 4-5 page book review of an entire academic monograph, either of one of the books excerpted in class or another book approved by the instructor (further instructions will be posted on Canvas)
2. Final Project: The final paper should be a seminar length paper, 15-20 pages, critical research paper. If you would like to include creative work into this paper, please consult with me before the Work Plan for the Final Project is due.

**Grading Breakdown**

15% Live Class Attendance and Participation  
15% Completion of weekly online modules  
15% Discussion Posts  
20% Analytical Paper  
10% Work Plan for Final Project  
25% Final Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>88-92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>78-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course Policies and Resources**

*Attendance and Participation:* Attendance in the weekly live class session is vital to the success of the course. These sessions will be discussion-based; I will not be lecturing. You will be expected to have your camera on during our Wednesday live session.

As mentioned above, you may miss **two** Wednesday live sessions with no questions asked. However, you are responsible for any material missed due to absence from class. Religious observances do not count towards your two absences but please let me know in advance.

If you test positive for COVID-19 and/or are too ill to complete the components of the course, regardless of your number of absences, please let me know as soon as possible. We will discuss a plan moving forward.

I expect everyone to listen actively, participate respectfully, and be engaged throughout our live sessions. The course can engage with sensitive and sometimes personal topics. If you are triggered at any point during the course, uncomfortable with the material in a way that hinders your learning, please contact me.

**COVID-19 Resources:** You can find more information about campus COVID-19 testing at [https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/medical/testing/](https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/medical/testing/). For any in-person meetings or sessions, you must wear a mask covering your nose and mouth and maintain physical distancing.
Resources and Support: I am here to help! The best way to get help from me is office hours. I will be holding office hours and meetings online through Zoom all semester and piloting in person outdoor office hours in September. Please feel free to stop by my open online office anytime during the hours listed above to discuss any readings, ask me questions, ask for feedback, or give feedback about how the course is going. When you sign in, you will automatically be put into my Zoom “Waiting Room.” I will let you into the session as soon as I am available but if I do not respond right away, it is because I am meeting with another student. You can also make an appointment with me via email.

Late Work Policy
For graded written assignments (critical paper, final project, honors work), any late work will result in five (5) percentage points reduced off the grade for that assignment per day (i.e. a 90% AB would become an 85% B; rounded up per 24 hour period, i.e. 12 hours late would be rounded up to one day late). Extensions must be discussed and approved by me BEFORE the scheduled deadline.

Accessibility: University of Wisconsin-Madison facilitates accommodations for students with documented disabilities through The Office of Disability Services. You can find more information here: https://mcburney.wisc.edu/. Additionally, I am committed to principles of universal learning and will do my best to make the course as inclusive as possible. Please feel free to contact me regarding any individual learning needs you may have and how we might be able to accommodate them.

Academic Integrity: I take issues of plagiarism, cheating, and academic dishonesty very seriously. More resources on avoiding plagiarism can be found at https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/student-resources/ and https://lo.library.wisc.edu/plagiarism/. If you are unsure of how to properly cite a source or have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please don’t hesitate to ask me. A shorthand definition is the submission of written work that either is or contains samples of work or ideas that are not your own and lacks recognizable citations. Any evidence of plagiarism may result disciplinary action.
Course Schedule

Please note that readings are subject to change. All updates will be posted to the course Canvas. For the schedule below, come to class that week having read and prepared to discuss the readings listed.

Getting Oriented

Week 1: Introduction
Wednesday 9/2:
- Introduce course and material
- Review organization of the course and syllabus
- Answer any questions

Week 2: Thinking Theory
Wednesday 9/9:
- Kyla Wazana Tompkins, “Some Notes on How to Ask a Good Question About Theory”
- bell hooks, “Theory as Liberatory Practice”

Week 3: What is Science? What is Science and Technology Studies?
Wednesday 9/16:

Gender and Science

Week 4: Gender and Knowledge Production
Wednesday 9/23

Week 5: Sciences of Gender
Wednesday 9/30
- Chris Barcelos, “Transfeminist Pedagogy and the Women’s Health Classroom” (2019), 1-24

Emergence of Feminist STS as a Field

Week 6: Historical Development of Feminist STS
Wednesday 10/7

Week 7: Situated Knowledges  
Wednesday 10/14  
• Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” (1988), 575-599  
• Sandra Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is ‘Strong Objectivity’?” (1992), 437-470

Week 8: Agential Realism  
Wednesday 10/21  
• Karen Barad, “Posthumanist Performativity,” 801-831

Week 9: Naturecultures  
Wednesday 10/28  

Critical Paper Due  
Feminist STS and New Media  
Week 10: Technofeminism  
Wednesday 11/4  
• Judy Wajcman, “Male Designs on Technology,” From TechnoFeminism (2004), 10-31

Week 11: Race, Gender, and the Digital I  
Wednesday 11/11:  
• Nishant Shah, “The Selfie and the Slut: Bodies, Technology and Public Shame” (2015), 86-93

Week 12: Race, Gender, and the Digital II  
Wednesday 11/18  

Work Plan for Final Project Due  
Intersections of Feminist STS  
Week 13: Genetics and DNA  
Wednesday 11/25
• Catherine Lee, “The Unspoken Significance of Gender in Constructing Kinship, Race, and Nation,” 32-42.
• Priscilla Ward, “Cells, Genes, and Stories: HeLa’s Journey from Labs to Literature,” 247-263 (focus on 247-258)

**Week 14: Feminism STS and Even Newer Materialisms**
Wednesday 12/2:

**Week 15: Conclusions and Class Wrap Up**

Final projects due on the date of the scheduled final exam, December 16, 2020 at 3pm