



**ACS 3000/WS 3000: Feminism, Technology and American Culture  
3 Credit Hours, Fall 2013**

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Dr. Radhika Gajjala, Ph.D.

**Office Phone:** (419) 372-0586

**E-mail:** radhika@cyberdiva.org

**Skype ID:** cyberdivaskype

**Google hangout ID:** gRadhika2012

**Virtual Office Hours:** Skype, by appointment

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

In this course, we'll be exploring the ways that gender and technology have defined and redefined each other socially and culturally. The course therefore introduces students to some key issues in Feminism and Technology within the context of American Culture and Globalization. Students will explore key themes along suggested frameworks (from existing research related to Feminism and Technology) in the context of how American Culture shapes and is shaped by Globalization.

This course is one version of a Distributed Open Collaborative Course (DOCC) being taught at approximately 15 institutions, organized collectively by FemTechNet. This course will use technology for interdisciplinary collaborative creation and peer-to-peer sharing while still valuing local issues and face-to-face connections. Built around a shared set of recorded dialogues with preeminent thinkers and artists who consider technology through a feminist lens, the course will investigate both the histories and cutting edge scholarship on technology produced through arts, sciences and humanities. The course will be customized for BGSU, and we'll also add to a growing database of materials. One of the course's basic pedagogic instruments is the use of Boundary Objects that Learn. (On "boundary objects," see citation below.) The BGSU version will use the Zotero platform and the local Canvas course management system as needed. Thus, please note that this course is part of a larger project that will expose students to further collaborations in feminism, technology, art and craft and will include Wikipedia article analyses and editing from feminist perspectives. Some of the best projects will be showcased worldwide in online portals and offline in feminism and technology related websites.

We have three main hands-on projects and a series of reading and discussion assignments (at least two a week). We will explore several themes over the semester. These themes are: Archive, **Body, Ethics**, Difference, **Discipline**, Labor, **Place**, Race, **Sexualities, Transformation**. We may (or may not) modify some themes as the course continues and discussions shift our focus. The frameworks through which we explore these themes are in relation to various

intersections in American Culture and Global Cultures, such as gender, sexuality, race, political economy, foreign policy, culture and identity, everyday practices and social media.

### **Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes for this course run parallel to the BGSU Learning Outcomes that ask that students learn to investigate, connect, write, present, participate, and lead proficiently. From these overall learning outcomes, you will meet the specific objectives of this course detailed below.

You will:

- Investigate the interplay of technology and everyday materiality and its relationship with American culture and Globalization. Through this investigation, you will become critical consumers of media and sensitive and articulate global communicators, with an awareness of how intersections of race, gender, class and culture shape the use and production of technologies world-wide.
- Connect theory and practice of feminism along the key themes presented in this class. You will also connect with the world by communicating and collaborating in research with other students on current concerns about feminism and technology. Through this connection, you will relate one's self and culture to diverse cultures.
- Learn to edit the Wikipedia and understand the culture of the Wikipedia in relation to gendered hierarchies. Thus you will acquire hands-on skills.
- Learn to make keyword videos using easily available digital tools (or apps) of your choice. Once again learning applied skills through doing class work.
- Virtually present your written work and ideas to the classes involved in this collaboration.
- Learn to work in virtual collaborative teams, a very necessary skill for the effective function of global organizations in present day American economic conditions.
- Participate actively and with sophistication in class through the use of social media and other online tools.
- Lead discussions through online communication with your peers. You will lead learning in the course by suggesting engaging, innovative and meaningful discussion topics. You will lead by contributing to the discussions suggested by others.

### **REQUIRED READINGS AND RESOURCES**

- Readings, multimedia content and bibliographies will be posted on the Zotero group at [http://www.zotero.org/groups/feminism\\_and\\_technology](http://www.zotero.org/groups/feminism_and_technology).
- View and examine the keywords (both as content for this class and as samples for how you should be doing your own keyword video assignments)  
<http://archive.org/details/FemtechnetKeywordVideos>

**You will need:**

- A BGSU e-mail account, which you check regularly.

- MyBGSU account with access to our Canvas site.
- A Wikipedia login account. You will have to create one, so go to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page) and create one and e-mail your login id (**not your password**) at [Radhika@cyberdiva.org](mailto:Radhika@cyberdiva.org) in an e-mail message with a subject line that contains your real name and the course name “ACS/WS 3000: Wikipedia login id \_ your name.”
- A Zotero ([www.zotero.org](http://www.zotero.org)) account and membership to the course group.
- Reliable and dependent access to the course websites and materials (i.e., access to a computer with the requirements discussed below, and a reliable Internet connection).

### COMPUTER SKILL PREREQUISITES AND SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

To be successful in the course, you must have the right specifications for your computer system and Internet access.

To be successful in this 100% online class you should be comfortable using a computer for the following functions:

- Good familiarity with the Canvas platform, including knowledge of discussion board, assignment tool, ability to find feedback via Grades, etc. Canvas is relatively new for BGSU, so take some extra time to browse our entire Canvas site throughout the introductory week.
- We will also be using Skype and Zotero and will be editing Wikipedia – you must take time to familiarize yourself with these spaces.
- Using a word processor (changing font, spell check). Most importantly – save your files in .doc, .docx or rtf formats.
- Be comfortable with BGSU e-mail system.
- Be able to navigate the Internet, download appropriate plug-ins for video and audio assignments.
- The following link will provide you with the computer system specifications that will be required for taking this online class:  
<http://www.bgsu.edu/its/software/page10725.html#q1>

### COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

This is an online course, and we will use various forms of online interaction to supplement Canvas modules as a way to prepare for and to continue the distance learning culture. However, (n)etiquette and class protocol must be followed in all online settings – **this is an American Culture Studies class that is cross-listed with Women’s Studies, so content is focused on gender issues.** Communication with fellow students and with instructors must be respectful, allowing for dialogue and debate. There are ways to agree and disagree to allow the conversation to continue respectfully. Turn-taking and relevance to course content will be emphasized in both online and face-to-face settings.

I will post announcements on the Canvas Announcement page, or communicate them via e-mail. You should check the Zotero group site, the Canvas **Announcements Page** and your **BGSU e-mail** regularly in order to access course related content. Announcements may

include reminders, suggestions for improvement and general reminders on course guidelines. Occasionally, you may also find information about relevant events on campus.

### **E-mail**

E-mail will be utilized only for private conversations. However, students should not use the internal Canvas e-mail to send out mass e-mail to all other class members (unless it is a class-assignment requirement). As a rule, general course announcements will be distributed via the course announcements page on Canvas (as indicated above). In any case, again, you should check your e-mail and course announcements page regularly. All questions relating to course readings, assignments, surveys, etc. should be discussed in a private setting during virtual office hours or they can also be posted on the course discussion board titled "Q & A about the Class" (discussed below).

I will check e-mail regularly in order to access communications from students. I will typically respond to communications within 24-48 hours. However, any communication sent after 4:00 pm on Friday through Sunday may not receive a response from me until the following Monday. Please do not leave important questions about assignments or materials until the last minute as I may not respond immediately, particularly if you sent an e-mail over the weekend. If you need to talk to your instructor privately, the preferred way of contact is e-mail or privately during virtual office hours. I will check the office phone messages once a week and will be checking my e-mail several times a day during normal business hours. E-mails will ONLY merit a response if they arrive in the following format (free from slang and grammatical errors):

Subject\*: ACS 3000/WS 3000 (or default Canvas subject) <Brief description of e-mail content>

Hello <Dr. Gajjala >

I'm having a problem with...  
I would like more information on...  
I really like...  
Could you help me...?  
Can I schedule an appointment to meet at another time outside of your virtual office hours because...?

Thank you,  
<Insert Your Name>

**\*Note:** However, if you have an emergency, please put "ACS 3000/WS 3000: Emergency" into your e-mail heading and I will endeavor to respond outside of business hours. Please try not to misuse the "emergency" feature.

### **Virtual Office Hours**

This is a completely distance learning class, so I will also hold office hours online, by appointment, for students wishing to discuss course materials or particular concerns about the course, referred to as "Virtual Office Hours". Please treat this time as you would a face-to-face office visit. 'Virtual Office Hours' will be held throughout the week in mutually agreeable time slots based after initial skype sessions (to happen within the first two weeks

of class) with each student. I will be responding to e-mails once a day between 11 and noon and checking the Canvas discussion assignments, your zotero note entries (to be described later in class discussion) and also addressing Discussion Board questions/comments.

Additionally, virtual office hours will be conducted via Skype by appointment. If you do not have Skype installed on your computer, please visit [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com) and install a free copy of the program. Each instructor's Skype ID is listed with their instructor contact information at the top of the syllabus. It is necessary that each student in class contact me during the first week of class to schedule a Skype or Google Hangout appointment before we move further into the semester and assignments.

### **A Few Words About Online Discussion Board**

The online discussions are the "heart" of the online course -- the place where the true process of shared inquiry is reflected. Think of these posts as our class discussion in which you will engage your understanding with the course material. Your posts should alternate between answering the different assignments requirements and engaging in conversation with your peers.

Each week, new assignments (questions) will be posted on the Discussion Board. These Discussions are the online equivalent of in-class group conversations in which we share ideas and questions about the course materials. In general, you need to **read all the posts** (listen to what others have said) and **determine what you can ADD to the conversation** (answer questions, provide examples, raise a new question, etc.). As long as your comments add something new, useful, and pertinent, you are adding high-quality content. (See grading criteria in "Assignment Overview").

Remember:

- A post that merely agrees with an already expressed opinion will not receive credit.
- A post that merely asserts the author's opinion about a topic will not receive credit.

### **How to succeed in online discussions**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read posts every day</li> <li>• Get involved early and often</li> <li>• Be willing to initiate</li> <li>• Raise appropriate, interesting, and provocative topics</li> <li>• Support your views</li> <li>• Take responsibility for keeping the conversation going</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be willing to listen and respond to your classmates (not just the instructor)</li> <li>• Be open to learning from others</li> <li>• Show respect for difference</li> <li>• Be nice</li> <li>• Be willing to change your mind</li> <li>• Write clear and careful posts</li> </ul> |
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### **Submitting Assignments**

All assignments are to be submitted in their designated areas on Canvas or in the DB. Your corrected (graded) assignments with instructor's comments will be posted in the same area where the assignment was submitted. Scores will also be visible in grade books (Grades).

**No e-mail submissions will be accepted.**

### **Note on the Nature of Writing Assignments (including postings on the board)**

As this is a 3000-level course, readings, discussion and writing assignments are expected to be of a high quality throughout. You will be treated like graduate students – given responsibility to contribute significantly to the course and to the overall body of knowledge of social media research. Reading assignments are expected to be complete before response posts are due, and you must demonstrate your knowledge of readings in discussions.

You are required to follow appropriate citation style for all writing assignments requiring citations. Although I prefer APA, you are welcome to use any other citation style you are most familiar with, as long as you use it consistently and correctly. Since many of your citations will come from Internet sources, here are a couple of links that will help you find appropriate citation format for your sources:

<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/online/citex.html>

<http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/workshop/citation.htm>

### **Evaluation Techniques / Grading**

Your grade will consist of exams, assignments and discussion board participation, and your weekly blog and journal. No “letter” grades will be given for any single assignment. Please be aware that grades and other confidential material should NOT be sent by e-mail. Use the tools in Canvas to exchange confidential information.

## **ASSIGNMENTS OVERVIEW**

**Note:** During Week 1, you will be required to complete the Canvas tutorials, the Wikipedia tutorial and the Zotero tutorials. These are required assignments and will be graded as Complete/Incomplete. Assessment of your completion of this requirement will be based on what you post to the relevant discussion spaces that will be set up and how well you follow the directions. **You will also need to get your Wikipedia login id and Zotero id and e-mail these to me.**

### **Canvas-based discussions – 10%**

**Regular participation** in the online classroom is essential for maintaining the best learning environment. Learning occurs in relationship not only between student and course materials, but, just as importantly, peer to peer, professor to student, and student to professor. You are expected to log on to the course site 2-3 times per week. If you fail to do so, the Instructors may withdraw you from the course. This online class demands that the student be self-motivated and self-disciplined. You are responsible to keep up with the reading schedule, as well as deadlines for assignments and exams. Discussion board is where you will spend most of your time online.

**Posting QUALITY Expectations:** A high-quality posting to the DB or a reply to any Discussion Board post is well developed (at least a couple of paragraphs), provides relevant information (content that adds to the conversation in a meaningful way), and is carefully written (demonstrates correct and fluent writing). Also, be sure that your feedback/comments to other classmates are not merely your agreement or disagreement with their posts. Instead, you consider doing the following: focus on a specific issue that was raised; you may challenge an assumption that was made; you may tie the topic to a particular reading from the respective module; or engage, in some way, a conversation with the author.

Further, roughly each week, the instructor will upload content (e.g., YouTube clips, website links, etc.) into the “Points for Discussion” area. You will be required to watch/read/browse each piece linked to this section and post a reactionary comment for each, responding to the prompts, in no less than 75 words for each individual response. Unless otherwise indicated in that week’s prompt, you will follow these guidelines. **Your responses will be due by midnight on Thursday and the entire response will be worth 10 points.**

### **Zotero-based classwork - 40%**

### **Gender Analysis of Wikipedia content - 10%**

### **Wikipedia Edits - 25%**

Details to be explained in weekly modules – you will have assignments for each week and will be graded based on your reports in the relevant discussion board space and the tracked edits that I will be able to view on wikipedia.

### **Virtual/Material Artefact Project -15%**

Each week, each student will produce a virtual or material artifact that is their well-thought-out representation of the theme for that week. The artifact can be a knitted item, spun yarn creation, wood creation, lego creation, manga model based, a drawing, a 3D visual graphic, a short video, machinima, sound clip.... However, the content should adhere to basic considerations of etiquette and social inclusion in the context of a multicultural global social environment. I will expect you to e-mail me your artifact (and when it is a material offline object like a wood carving, lego object or other crafted item – you will send me pictures of course). You will be graded on how it connects to the issues raised in the reading material and other discussions in class and must be clearly related to issues of Gender and Technology. You will have to provide a clear explanation of what you tried to represent through this artifact in a one page word document that you will send to me through Canvas every Saturday by midnight at [Radhika@cyberdiva.org](mailto:Radhika@cyberdiva.org) . Further details of this assignment will be explained in our Skype sessions.

The best of the material artefacts from this assignment will be showcased in Exhibits related to Femtechnet projects.

### **Grading Scale**

F (below 60 %)

A (90 to 100%)

B (80-89%)

C (70-79%)

D (60-69%)

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Instructors and Students: Partners in Learning**

This course is designed to foster a genuinely collaborative, dialogic learning environment, where both students and instructors are partners in active learning, and thus become jointly responsible for the process of learning. And in this course, while the instructors have the qualifications and experience to teach and provide graded feedback, students are not merely passive recipients of concepts and information transmitted by the instructors, alone. Their different experiences and interpretations of topics under scrutiny will contribute to a mutually enriching learning experience. Students are therefore “critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (Paulo Freire). Also, when posting on the DB, don’t be embarrassed to give an answer that you may think is “wrong.” The instructors will not always have an answer either. This is how we all learn. And while the instructors will be grading and giving you feedback throughout the course, your discussion grades are not affected by “wrong” answers, but by answers that demonstrate lack of reading and preparation of the class study materials.

### **Student Conduct / Discussion Conduct**

Students are expected to display tolerance for others’ views on Discussion Board forums and through e-mails. Converse with others the same way you would in a traditional classroom. Comments and language should be respectful and appropriate for a college community. All comments should also follow acceptable grammar and spelling standards.

That is, whenever students speak, they should be considerate of other students’ feelings, use appropriate language, and make their points without being combative or confrontational. As well, students should not use discriminatory language regarding their fellow students’ gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or anything else. The use of discriminatory language will not be predicated on the presence or absence of a person belonging to a group outside the ‘norm’. In other words, if what you say could hurt another’s feelings (whether they can hear you or not), do not say it. Students should listen to one another, ask questions, and explain their disagreements without attacking others.

As you can see, your Zotero contribution grade (based in readings and discussion of them) and Canvas participation grades together form more than 50% of your final grade. You must participate thoughtfully in the online discussion forums if you wish to pass. Meaningful participation means that you are submitting well-thought-out responses to questions or are asking questions in the forums that show you are grappling with the material at hand. Please do not simply respond to a fellow student’s post with “I agree” and nothing more – discussion responses should be just that, a “discussion.”

### **(Dis)abilities Statement**

If you have a documented disability, which might require modifications in a particular assignment, please contact me at least a week prior to the assignment’s due date to assist you with its realignment. The Disability Services for Students Office is to help provide equal access and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities attending BGSU. Students wishing to discuss their eligibility for such accommodations are encouraged to contact the office at 419/372-8495.

### **Late Work**



I accept late work; however, your grade will be lowered by 10 percent for each calendar day your assignment is late. Late assignments will be returned at my convenience (i.e. they will be returned later than the grades for those who completed work on time). The assignment is considered late even if it is submitted within a few minutes after the deadline. Any work submitted after the 10-day period, will not receive any credit.

### **Academic Honesty**

Each student is expected to uphold the standards of academic honesty. For a complete review of this, please refer to the Codes of Conduct in the BGSU student handbook (<http://www.bgsu.edu/downloads/sa/file15768.pdf>). Any violation of this code (including forgery, plagiarism, cheating, etc.) will be vigorously pursued. The *minimum* penalty is a zero for the violating project; however, it is more likely that such a violation will result in a failure for the course and possible expulsion from the university. If there is a violation, charges will be filed with the administration. The instructors for this course will not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form. All work must be original. If in doubt, please talk to your instructors.

### **Student Veteran-Friendly Campus**

BGSU educators recognize student veterans' rights when entering and exiting the university system. If you are a student veteran, please let me know if accommodations need to be made for absences due to drilling or being called to active duty.

## **LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

### **Technology Support Center**

The Technology Support Center (TSC) provides a central point of contact for faculty, staff and students for questions, problem reports, service requests and inquiries for University computer systems and communications technologies at BGSU.

e-mail: [tsc@bgsu.edu](mailto:tsc@bgsu.edu)

Open Mon-Thur: 7:30am-12 midnight, Fri: 7:30am-5pm, Sat-Sun: Closed

Phone: (419) 372-0999

### **Student Tech Center**

Students looking for more in-depth assistance with computer technology needed for a class project or tutoring should contact the Student Technology Center or consult their web page at URL <http://www.bgsu.edu/studenttech>.

e-mail: [student-tech@listproc.bgsu.edu](mailto:student-tech@listproc.bgsu.edu)

Open Mon-Fri: 8am -8pm, Sat-Sun: 1pm-6pm

Phone: (419) 372-9277

### **BGSU Learning Commons**

Located on the first floor of Jerome Library, the Learning Commons is a valuable resource which provides students with individual tutoring assistance in writing, reading and study skills, math and stats, and content courses – free of charge. Within the Learning Commons, Writing Support works to create a space where writers feel comfortable discussing and developing their ideas and communication skills. Writing consultants work with writers collaboratively, rather than serving as a proofreading or editing service. Because the Commons will be very busy, you should call ahead to make an appointment well in advance of when you would like to meet with a writing consultant: 419-372-2823. You may also submit your writing to an online writing consultant by following this link:

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/writingctr/page76151.html>

**Additional Useful Links**

Online Learning @ BGSU:

<http://online.bgsu.edu/>

What Does an Online Course Look Like?- Orientation for Online Learners:

[http://online.bgsu.edu/exp\\_online.php](http://online.bgsu.edu/exp_online.php)

Student FAQ's Link:

<http://www.bgsu.edu/its/software/page10721.html>

My BGSU Portal Self-HelpLink:

<http://www.bgsu.edu/its/tsc/self-help/page10888.html>

BGSU Library services are available online:

<http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/>

BGSU's Office of Distance Education

<http://online.bgsu.edu>