



Graduate Studies – Course Syllabus

DIGF 5B90 Dialogues in Feminism and Technology **Number of credits: 3**
Tuesdays 11:50-14:50
205 Richmond Rm 7511 (fifth floor)

Professor: Dr. Maria Belén Ordóñez
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GRADUATE COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

“Dialogues in Feminism and Technology” offers the opportunity to engage with key feminist theoretical and methodological research in science, technology and media that, despite its formative role in scholarship, is rarely considered as a coherent collection. Uniquely, the course offers recently created dialogues of key feminist scholars in conversation on key topics in the areas of science, media and technology study, including difference, identity, race, sexuality, archives, labour, and more. As one of 15 course sections being taught internationally, this course invites students to participate in an international learning community of others studying the same content during the term”

EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION:

“Dialogues in Feminism and Technology” stems from a feminist collaborative and networked initiative (FemTechNet) that aims to create physical, virtual, and situated spaces of engagement with science, technology and the media. This is to be accomplished through an open and networked learning experiment called DOCC: Distributed Open Collaborative Course. The narrative of the course traces the contributions of feminist epistemologies, practices and methodologies for (new) conceptualizations of the body, difference, sex, race, labour, objectivity, machines, place, queer animation and becomings. *Video Dialogues* are included as a way to highlight the production of feminist knowledge *in the making*, while also incorporating emerging feminist perspectives across and between participating institutions. In tracking connections, students are encouraged to create virtual publics; to rupture singular knowledge claims and to disperse shared knowledges. *Dialogues* provide a framework for productive feminist interventions that are polyvocal and partial, thus, inspiring the capacity to be *in relation* with difference. This course challenges global capitalist and liberal discourses of science and technology that appropriate “*dialogue*” for the purpose of maximizing profits; simultaneously creating precarious situations for those who fail to embrace a corporate logic. Contrarily, the commitment to *dialogues* in this course is critical of a market driven logic or of “resolutions” that silence and expel difference. True dialogues are contingent upon who speaks and who risks speaking, therefore, dialogues are ongoing and without fixed destinations; always connecting and recombining (deliberately and accidentally). The aim is not to garnish

“results” but rather to keep moving, experimenting and (re)searching in and through networks. Feminist dialogues insist on imagining something other than what we think we *know*; inspiring potentials, concepts, new methods and practices. We start by paying attention to technologies that mark the body through labour, visualization and self-fashioning; we end with assemblages that intersect politics, poetics and practices of embodiment in science, media, and technology.

ABOUT MARIA-BELÉN ORDÓÑEZ:

Through unofficial channels of public pleasure, desire, affect and corporeal politics, Maria Belén Ordóñez' research broadly explores alternative sexual citizenships, the destabilization of (hetero)normativity and the formation of publics in mediascapes. Her ethnographic research has been based in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver where she engages with the affective impacts of events in disparate locations such as media headlines; queer identified spaces of pleasure and activism, and the contested zones of censorship and regulation. Her research has included the investigation and tracking of affect in Canadian legislative challenges dealing with sex, sexuality and morality. Specifically, the cases of *R v. Sharpe* (child pornography), *R v. Bedford* (bawdy house laws), the police raid of the Taboo gay strip club (homophobic targeting of young gay strippers) in Montreal and Canadian legislation that raised the age of consent from 14-16. Ordóñez uses feminist methodologies and multi-sited ethnography to think and write about the emergence and undoing of public events. Currently, she is writing a chapter on media circuits of power, desire and sex scandal as an emergent event in a globalized context, vis-a-vis the political undoing of the former director of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Khan.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES:

In conversation with a larger community of FemTechNet scholars, students and activists, this course supports student's interest in feminist analysis for critical engagements with science and technology. Through close readings, critical writing and exploration, discussions of articles; (video) dialogues; blog design and creative content/posts, students will:

- Build and contribute to feminist knowledges and perspectives
- Develop situated and embodied narratives pertaining to local experience
- Consider and apply feminist theories to science and technology
- Gain confidence in articulating feminist theoretical terms and ideas
- Acquire critical feminist perspectives that facilitate more nuanced understandings of (global) power
- Contribute to technocultural histories of the future

COURSE WEBSITES:

FemTechNet Commons: <http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/>

Canvas: <https://canvas.ocadu.ca/>

Student Blogs

TEACHING METHODS AND DELIVERY:

This graduate seminar is based on a collaborative model of learning which entails active class participation and preparation of weekly readings and blog entries. You are also being asked to browse (follow) the blogs of your peers, since blogs are used as texts for class discussion. The professor, Maria Belén, will browse and read your blogs; facilitate and structure class discussions and provide a weekly framework based on the readings. Invited OCADU faculty will participate and partake in selected class dialogues.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Blogs:** create, develop and maintain a course blog (weekly submissions).

The blog documents feminist engagement by actively observing everyday life. More specifically, the themes to be pursued are those which interweave situated, feminist and queer understandings of difference, combined with the materiality and lived experience of technology and science. The context of Toronto serves as an important element in identifying local productions of feminist knowledge. Your blog will reflect thought process and applications of feminist theoretical concepts in the context and space of Toronto. You may be asked to post other class assignments on your blog.

Blog entries must address the following:

-weekly readings and/or femtechnet video dialogues

-the themes, topics and questions that were discussed in class (summaries are not necessary, but rather, reflections on what was discussed and where your mind travelled each week.)

- what did the themes/topic/discussion inspire when you were out and about? What did you find interesting each week and how might you analyse these points of interest using feminist perspectives?

You are encouraged to insert any and all forms of expression that you consider useful, this includes but is not limited to: public images, graffiti, doodles, videos, photography, animations, text, multiple text, nonsensical text, poems, stories, links, reviews of all kinds: an exhibit you saw, a film you watched, a media story that peaked your interest etc.

Reflexive, journal style entries can also be posted. The class will browse and read peer blog sites and may engage and respond to ideas presented in blogs, and/or respond to visual images. Blog content and conversations can also spill over into the classroom as feminist resources to draw and learn from, therefore, you are responsible for browsing your peer's blogs before class. Your blog will also be made available to other institutions offering this course and/or in the Femtechnet circuit, unless you opt out.

Discussion about setting up; preferred blog sites, tips, tools etc. will be set up on Canvas in mid August. Other interface blogs may also be discussed.

Weekly blog entries should have a minimum of 300 Words.

2. **You will sign up for a chosen reading** and propose a question to the class that will generate class discussion. A 500 word report based on the question/discussion is to be posted/submitted by the following class (facilitator should outline the question posed to the class and the critical observations made about the reading).
3. **Students will video record a 12-15 minute conversation about a selected course reading with a peer.** The dialogue must address course themes and integrate questions/comments/critiques. You can organize the conversation around a pre-determined question/s if this makes it easier to stay within the time limit. The video must be uploaded to Vimeo and/or blog and it must be titled with a key word.
4. After viewing "Forbidden Voices: How to Start a Revolution with a Laptop" starring Yoani Sanchez from Cuba, Zeng Jinyan from China, and Farnaz Seifi in Iran. (Written and Directed by Barbara Miller, 2012) you are being asked to **choose one of three bloggers from the film and write a 1000 Word essay on virtual labour/resistance.** This assignment can be submitted and posted on your blog.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCHEDULE

	% of Grade	Dates
Class Participation*	10%	
Video Dialogue	20%	Oct. 22
Virtual labour/resistance paper	20%	Nov. 12
Weekly Blogs	30%	Nov. 29
Facilitation Question/500 Word Blog post	20%	_____ (sign up)

***Participation** is based on: classroom discussions and online presence; timely and appropriate submission of blog posts and assignments; and appreciable endeavours to develop academic and learning skills.

GRADING SCHEME:

The following grades are used at the graduate level:

A+	95-100
A	85-94
A -	80-84
B+	75-79
B	70-74
C	60-69
F	0-59
P	Pass (Summer Off-Campus Only)*
I	Incomplete**
W	Withdrawn without Academic Penalty

*A grade of P is not used in grade point average (GPA) calculations.

**Incomplete work must be completed no later than the end of the following term.

Please note that as per Section 5.3 of the Graduate Studies General Policies, students in graduate programs are required to maintain a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 75% (B+).

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All articles will be available through the OCADU library databases, library reserve or Canvas.

REQUIRED RESOURCES:

It is recommended that students bring laptops to class. Ongoing access to the internet is required.

Advance preparation: Prior to the commencement of classes, students must reasearch blog platforms and select one to use for the course. You should be prepared to blog the first week of class. Source sharing and discussion will start on Canvas in mid August.

Other blog sharing options will be further considered in September.

“Five Best Blogging Platforms”: <http://lifehacker.com/5568092/five-best-blogging-platforms>

“Top Ten Free Online Blogging Platforms”: <http://sixrevisions.com/tools/top-free-online-blogging/>

WEEKLY READINGS/SCHEDULE:

Week 1

- Sept. 10: Introductions
Overview of course and FemTechNet.
Discussion: MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) vs. DOCC (Distributed Open Collaborative Course)

Week 2

- Sept. 17: Judy Wajcman "From Women and technology to Gendered Technoscience" in *Information, Communication & Society* Vol. 10, No. 3, June 2007, pp. 287–298.

Manning, Erin "Engenderings: Gender, Politics, Individuation" in *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty*. pp. 84-109. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: History of the engagement of feminism and technology](#). Labour. (Judy Wajcman and Anne Balsamo).

Week 3

Corporeal Reconfigurations

- Sept. 24: Ruth Holliday and Joanna Elfving-Hwang "Gender, Globalization and Aesthetic Surgery in South Korea" in *Body & Society* 18(2): 58-81. 2012.

Kathy Davis, 'My body is my Art': Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia? in Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick (eds.) *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. pp. 454-465. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Balsamo, Anne, "On the Cutting Edge: Cosmetic Surgery and New Imaging Technologies" in *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*. pp. 56-79. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997.

Latour, Bruno "How to Talk about the Body? The Normative Dimensions of Science Studies" in *Body and Society* 10(2-3): 205-229. 2004.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Body \(TBD\)](#)

Recommended Reading:

Shohat, Ella " 'Lasers for Ladies': Endo Discourse and the Inscription of Science" in *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*. pp. 139-165. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.

Week 4
Differences

Oct. 1: M'charek "Fragile Differences, Relational effects: Stories about the Materiality of Race and Sex" in *European Journal of Women's Studies* 17(4) 307-322. 2010.

Braidotti, Rosi "Signs of Wonder and Traces of Doubt: On Teratology and Embodied Differences" in Nina Lykke and Rosi Braidotti (eds.). Between Monsters, Goddesses and Cyborgs: Feminist Confrontations with Science, Medicine and Cyberspace. pp. 135-152. London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1996.

Recommended Reading:

Braidotti, Rosi "Post-Humanism: Life Beyond the Self" in The Posthuman pp. 13-54. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Differences](#), (Kim Sawchuk and Shu Lea Cheang)

Week 5
Sex and the (Techno)Politics of Reproduction

Oct. 8: Martin, Emily The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles in *Signs* (April 1991), 16 (3), pg. 485-501.

Bryld, Mette and Nina Lykke "From Rambo Sperm to Egg Queens: Two Versions of Lennart Nilsson's Film on Human Reproduction" in Bits of Life: Feminism at the Intersections of Media, Bioscience, and Technology pp. 79-93. Anneke Smelik and Nina Lykke (eds.). Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008.

Celia Roberts "Fluid Ecologies: Changing Hormonal Systems of Embodied Difference" in Bits of Life: Feminism at the Intersections of Media, Bioscience, and Technology pp. 45-60. Anneke Smelik and Nina Lykke (eds.). Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008.

Haraway, Donna "Fetus: The Virtual Speculum in the New World Order" in Modest Witness@Second Millennium. FemaleMan@Meets OncoMouse™: Feminsim and Technoscience. pp. 173-212. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.

Recommended Reading:

Cooper, Melinda "Labors of Regeneration: Stem Cells and the Embryoid Bodies of Capital" in Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era. pp. 129-159. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Sexuality](#), (Faith Wilding and Julie Levin Russo)

Week 6

Race: Feminist Methodologies and Disruptions

Oct. 15: Eglash, Ron "Race, Sex, and Nerds: From Black Geeks to Asian American Hipsters" in *Social Text* (June 2002), 20 (2), pg. 49-64.

Sandoval, Chela "New Sciences: Cyborg Feminism and the Methodology of the Oppressed" in Jenny Wolmark (ed.) *Cybersexualities: A Reader on Feminist Theory, Cyborgs and Cyberspace*. pp. 247-263. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999.

Recommended Reading:

Shohat, Ella "Gender and the Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema" in *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*. pp. 17-69. Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2006.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Race](#), (Maria Fernandez and Lisa Nakamura)

Week 7

Feminist Labour in the Virtual

Oct. 22: **Film:** "Forbidden Voices: How to Start a Revolution with a Laptop" starring Yoani Sanchez from Cuba, Zeng Jinyan from China, and Farnaz Seifi in Iran. Written and Directed by Barbara Miller. Switzerland, 2012.

*** Students will be asked to choose one of three bloggers from the film and write a 1000 Word report on virtual labour/resistance. This assignment can be submitted and posted on student blogs.**

Fusco, Coco "Who's afraid of Yoani Sanchez" March 27, 2013 . Retrieved April, 2013. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/coco-fusco/whos-afraid-of-yoani_sanc_b_2950637.html?utm_hp_ref=fb&src=sp&comm_ref=false

Terranova, Tiziana "Free labour: Producing culture for the digital economy" in *Social Text*, 18(2):33-58. 2000.

*Student **Video Dialogues are due** and must be uploaded to Vimeo or blogs.

Recommended Reading:

SubRosa "Common Knowledge and Political Love" in Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism and Technoscience. pp. 221-242. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008.

Week 8

Feminist Epistemologies, Practices, and the Expansion of "Objectivity"

Oct. 29: Harding, Sandra "After Absolute Neutrality: Expanding 'Science'" in Feminist Science Studies: A New Generation pp. 291-320. Eds. Maralee Mayberry, Banu Subramaniam, Lisa H. Weasel. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Luletz, Valerie "Feminist Science Studies, Objectivity and the Politics of Vision" in Feminist Science Studies: A New Generation pp. 321-338. Eds. Maralee Mayberry, Banu Subramaniam, Lisa H. Weasel. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Recommended Reading:

Harding, Sandra Sciences from Below: Feminisms, Postcolonialities, and Modernities. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008. (See especially "Women as Subjects of History and Knowledge").

Week 9

Feminist Machines

Nov. 5: Haraway, Donna "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the 1980s" in Linda Nicholson (ed.) Feminism/Postmodernism. pp.190-233. New York and London: Routledge, 1990.

Cooper, Melinda "Preempting Emergence: The Biological Turn in the War on Terror" in Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era. pp. 74-100 Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2008.

Halberstam, Judith "Automating gender: postmodern feminism in the age of the intelligent machine" in *Feminist Studies*, 3, 439-60. 1991

Recommended Reading:

Margaret Grebowicz and Helen Merrick; with a "seed bag" by Donna Haraway (eds.) Beyond the Cyborg: Adventures with Donna Haraway. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Machine \(Wendy Chun and Kelly Dobson\)](#)

Week 10

Place: Situating Feminist Practice

Nov. 12: Gajjala, Radhika "Snapshots from sari trails: cyborgs old and new" in *Social Identities* (May 2011), 17 (3), pg. 393-408.

*"Forbidden Voices": Virtual labour/resistance **assignments due**. Students should be prepared to discuss their papers in class.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Place-live stream: \(Radhika Gajjala and Sharon Irish\)](#)

Week 11

Animating Sexuality: Queer Potentials

Nov. 19: Halberstam, Judith. Animal sociality beyond the hetero/homo binary in *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*. Vol. 20, No. 3, November 2010, 321–331.

Barad, Karen. "Nature's Queer Performativity" in *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 19(2):121-158, Spring/Summer 2011.

Recommended Reading:

Halberstam, Judith "Animating Revolt and Revolting Animation" in The Queer Art of Failure. pp. 27-52. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011.

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Systems \(Janet Murray and Brenda Laurel\)](#)

Week 12

Becomings

Nov. 26: Braidotti, Rosi "Met(r)amorphoses: becoming Woman/Animal/ Insect" in Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming. pp. 117-171. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002.

Beatriz DaCosta "Reaching the limit: When Art becomes Science" in Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism and Technoscience. Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip (eds.). pp. 365-382. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008.

Haraway, Donna "Sowing Worlds: A Seed Bag for Terraforming with Earth Others" in Margaret Grebowicz and Helen Merrick Beyond the Cyborg: Adventures with Donna Haraway. pp. 137-146. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013

Recommended Reading:

Margaret Grebowicz and Helen Merrick; with a “seed bag” by Donna Haraway (eds.) “Politics” in Beyond the Cyborg: Adventures with Donna Haraway. pp. 77-94. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013

FemTechNet [Video Dialogue: Transformation \(Catherine Lord, Donna Haraway about the legacy of Beatriz DaCosta\)](#)

***All blog posts, including posts about the final readings must be completed by Nov. 29th 2pm EST.**

LATE WORK

This is a graduate level course and it is anticipated that all presentations, projects, and papers should be presented and handed in, in a timely manner, as per the course schedule. If for any reason this is not possible, please anticipate and discuss the matter with your instructor. Medical cases which present problems with deadlines require confirmation in writing from a health care professional. Late work is normally subject to a 10% penalty per week, and will be accepted solely by arrangement, and with the discretion of the instructor.

INCOMPLETE GRADES

An incomplete grade is considered when students encounter unexpected difficulty completing course work within the semester. Students must discuss their situation with their instructor and request an incomplete grade prior to the end of the semester. Incomplete grades are filed at the discretion of the teaching faculty. Students with incomplete grades must complete all course work no later than the end of the following term.

ATTENDANCE

The university requires that students attend classes on a regular basis and that they participate fully in them.

RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION

A student who foresees a conflict between a religious obligation and any scheduled class assignments, including the final examination or critique, must notify his/her instructor in writing and in the case of final examinations and critiques must make a written request to the Office of Graduate Studies within three weeks of the first class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students may not re-submit previously graded work without permission, or submit work produced for other courses for evaluation. Plagiarism, misrepresenting personal performance or status and/or any conduct which damages the integrity of scholarly and artistic activity is unacceptable. Academic penalties will result. See the OCAD U Academic Calendar for details.

Academic freedom is a fundamental right in any institution of higher learning. Honesty and integrity are necessary preconditions of this freedom. Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offences.

RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

Graduate students who conduct research that involves human participants may require the approval of the OCAD Research Ethics Board prior to the initiation of any such research. For more information on research involving human participants, please visit the OCAD U website at: www.ocad.ca/research/research_ethics_board.htm

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

The syllabus, schedule, and course outline may be amended, altered, or changed as the course proceeds. The weekly schedule is open and will be developed in response to the ongoing concerns of the participants. Guest speakers and student presentations will be organized as the term progresses. The class will be notified and when possible, consulted about developments and changes.