GWSS 490 Gender and Online Engagement Autumn 2015

Lecture: T Th 1:30-3:20 pm Condon Hall 110A

Professor: Dr. R.Y. Lee
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Office: Padelford B110D
Office Hours: M 12:20-1:20 pm and Th 3:30-4:30 pm

Course Description:

This course engages with specific instances and kinds of online interaction through intersectional feminist methodologies. The course develops a deeper understanding of how race, gender, class, and power are defined in contemporary online engagement through reading feminist theory, looking at case studies, and performing participant-observer ethnography, visual analyses, and rhetorical content analyses. As part of the FemTechNet Distributed Online Collective Course (DOCC) for Autumn 2015, this course considers technological interfaces as tools which have histories and which participate in creating and distributing knowledge through contemporary social norms of power and control. Part of our work through this course will be finding ways to identify, analyze, subvert, resist, and transform these stated online interaction norms in feminist ways.

Course Objectives:

- Learn how to identify and apply interdisciplinary scholarship about social difference, including issues of gender, sexuality, race, class, nation, ability, etc. Assessment by Discussion, Assignments.
- Address divisive topics with clarity, empathy, and depth. Assessment by Discussion, Assignments.
- Analyze gender as it intersects with other relationships of power. Assessment by Discussions, Final Project.
- Study, critique, and extend feminist scholarship through effective written, visual, and spoken work. Assessment by Assignment 1.
- Study, critique, and extend social justice theories and movements based on feminist activism and research. Assessment by Assignment 3.
- Understand the politics of knowledge production, different modes of inquiry, and related ethical considerations. Assessment by Assignment 2.
- Develop the capacity to link understandings of our lives and the skills developed in GWSS courses to careers and non-academic and academic communities. Assessment by Assignments, Discussions, Final Project.

Assignments:

Assignment 1   10%
Assignment 2   15%
Assignment 3   15%
Discussions   25%

Participation   10%
Final Project   25%

Assignments and the *Final Project* are described in the course schedule; rubrics will be provided for each assignment.

Discussions:
For the discussion posts, please post 1-2 paragraphs (*min* 1; *max* 2) for your response. Reference at least **ONE** of the past week's course readings in your response. Each thread will close by the following Monday at 10:00 am. Posts are worth five points each. No late posts are accepted, but everyone gets one bye.

While open and honest scholarly conversation is encouraged on the discussion boards, please do not indulge in *ad hominem* remarks. Check yourselves for racism, sexism, or bias against differences in class, ability, etc. Strive instead for intellectual work. Repeated hostile behavior will be grounds for immediate sanctions and a zero on this section of the course. Refer problems to mod (i.e. Dr. Lee).

Participation:
For participation, come to class having read the readings carefully, and demonstrate the results of your thought through your interactions and contributions during each lecture. Follow the class norms during seminar. Participate in class by asking thoughtful questions and letting others speak: help create an open and communal space for inquiry. Doing this consistently, in every class throughout the quarter, will gain you a minimum of 85% on this section of the course.

Grading Criteria:

4.0 – achievement *outstanding* relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

3.0 – achievement *significantly above* the level necessary to meet course requirements.

2.0 – achievement meeting the *basic* course requirements in every respect.

1.0 – achievement *worthy of credit* that does not meet basic course requirements.

Please see our course website for precise grade scale conversions.

Course Logistics:

Online Norms: Our course website is located on Canvas, and is accessible through your MyUW account. Course PDFs, grades, and announcements will appear on the website. Please familiarize yourself with the course website, since you will use it frequently. If you have questions about using Canvas, please consult the UW IT Helpdesk on the second floor of Odegaard Library, or at help@uw.edu.

Dr. Lee will respond to student emails within 48 hours. If there has been no response after that interval, please come see Dr. Lee during office hours.

Classroom Norms: During lecture, please respect the community around you. Bring your silenced note-taking apparatus every day. Come ready to discuss the readings. Keep mobiles silent (not on vibrate – *silent*), and screens dimmed.

Please do not record or upload any portion of our class without written permission. If you require specific accommodation, please see Dr. Lee.

Office hours by appointment: Please keep the appointments you make with Dr. Lee. If you are no longer able to meet, please let Dr. Lee know ASAP. Failure to keep an appointment may result in an inability to reschedule your meeting.

Incompletes: Taking an "incomplete" (I) for this class is strongly discouraged, and will be allowed only under extraordinary circumstances with prior arrangements. If you have any concerns about this class, instructor, or a teaching assistant, please see us as soon as possible.

Learning Accommodations: It is the University of Washington's policy to provide support services to students needing accommodations that encourage them toward self-sufficient management, including their ability to participate in course activities and meet course requirements.

Students with accommodations are encouraged to contact Dr. Lee in person during Weeks 1 and 2.

Students requiring accommodation and support may contact Disability Resources for Students at 448 Schmitz Hall, through their [website](#), or by calling them at (206) 543-8924 (voice) or (206) 543-8925 (voice/TTY).

Wellness and Crisis Help: There is an excellent [list of resources](#) at UW for students in need of assistance. Call Hall Health at (206) 543-5030 for appointments, or consult resources [online](#). UW also has Counseling services available: call them at (206) 543-1240 or head to 401 Schmitz Hall to set up a meeting.

If you need immediate help, please call the Hall Health Crisis Line at (206) 583-1551 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, or (206) 744-2500 at any time.

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense, subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories, including race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

UW Health and Wellness Advocacy
https://depts.washington.edu/livewell/saris/
email: hwadvoc@uw.edu

UW Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Resources
https://depts.washington.edu/livewell/saris/sexual-assault/

UW Title IX Complaint Reporting
http://compliance.uw.edu/titleIX/complaint

Late Policies:

All assignments are due on the course website by 11:59 PM of the due date. Late papers will receive a full grade deduction (e.g. from an A- to a B-) for each day late.

Students requesting a 48-hour deadline extension in extraordinary circumstances may petition Dr. Lee with a formal written request at least 72 hours in advance of the deadline. Extensions are rare, and should not be relied upon. No extension can be assumed without a response in writing.

Exams cannot be rescheduled except in cases of catastrophic personal emergency.

Policy on Academic Integrity:

Cheating tends to happen when students feel helpless and overwhelmed. If you are feeling this way, come to office hours as soon as possible. We will work together to get you back on track.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism (e.g. paraphrase or quotation without proper citation), and resubmission of one paper for more than one course. Academic dishonesty of any kind will result in grade sanctions (a zero on the assignment), disciplinary action at the University level, or both. Consequences can be serious. Please familiarize yourself with the student academic responsibility statement, which can be found here:
https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf

Readings:

Readings in PDF are available on our course website. Please come to seminar having prepared all the readings for that day.

We will screen all videos in class unless otherwise noted on the syllabus.

Some of our course readings are online links. Look for the clickable blue underlined link on your syllabus, and click them to access your readings.

Course Schedule: Subject to change with advance notice.

Week 1 9/30-10/02	Beginnings
Thursday	Introductions Syllabus and Course Structure Classwide Interaction Norms
	Discussion Thread: What should our Classwide Interaction Norms be? Please contribute at least one idea to this thread. Dr. Lee will pin it to the top of the discussion board for future reference.

Week 2 10/05- 10/09	Foundations: Intersectionality

Tuesday	John Scalzi, "The Lowest Difficulty Setting." (Link 1) (Link 2) (Link 3) Consider reading a few of the comments to Link 1, but beware toxic engagements. Scalzi addresses some of them in the followup posts.
	Lisa Nakamura, "Queer Female of Color: The Highest Difficulty Setting There Is? Gaming Rhetoric as Gender Capital." *Ada: a Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, No. 1. 2012. (Link)
	Optional but recommended: Lisa Nakamura, "Cyber-race." *PMLA: Proceedings of the Modern Language Association, Special issue on Comparative Racialization*, 2008. PDF.
Thursday	Chela Sandoval, "Cyborg Feminism." PDF.
	María Fernandez, "Cyberfeminism, Racism, Embodiment," *Domain Errors: Cyberfeminist Practices!*, Maria Fernandez, Faith Wilding, Michelle M. Wright, eds (New York: Autonomedia 2002). PDF.
	VIDEO: "Feminism, Technology, and Race." We will screen this in class.
	Discussion Thread: Responses to Video "Feminism, Technology, and Race."
	Reminders: • Threads close Monday at 10:00 am. • Reference at least ONE of the past week's course readings in your response. • Posts are worth five points. No late posts accepted. Everyone gets one bye. • Please post 1-2 paragraphs (min 1; max 2) for your response. • These are the standard length and format for all discussion thread posts from here on out.

Week 3 10/12-10/16	**Foundations: Online Practices Of Everyday Life.**
Tuesday	danah boyd, "superpublics" (link)
	Michel de Certeau, "'Making Do' : Uses and Tactics." From *Practices of Everyday Life*. PDF.
	Sherry Turkle, "Tinysex and Gender Trouble." From *Life on the Screen*. PDF.
Thursday	Henry Jenkins, "Our Avatars, Ourselves." (Link)
	Sarah Liao, "My Metamorphic Avatar Journey." PDF.
	Note: Begin reading the Chiang novella this weekend. (Link)

	Discussion Thread: How do your online and offline presences differ?

Week 4 **10/19-10/23**	**Case Study: "The Lifecycle of Software Objects"** **Recommended: Finish the Chiang novella ASAP this week.**
Tuesday	Ted Chiang, "The Lifecycle of Software Objects." Ch. 1-5. ([Link](#))
Thursday	Ted Chiang, "The Lifecycle of Software Objects." Ch. 6-10. ([Link](#)) Hopefully Our Guest Speaker: Ted Chiang _**Assignment #1**_: Please read through the assignment rubric and the assignment description below before posting your response. You will complete this assignment and post your findings to <u>BOTH</u> the Canvas assignment site AND our dedicated Canvas discussion thread by 11:59 on Sunday, October 25th, 2015. Online Autobiography: Avatar Photo Essay. (Credit to Ivette Bayo and FemTechNet.) Choose a suite of THREE personal images and explain their history, significance, and what each one does _for_ and does _to_ you in the online environment. How do your avatars demonstrate (or deny) your gender, sexuality, race, class, ethnicity, etc.? Discuss your avatars in light of our course to date; reference at least <u>ONE</u> of our readings. These images do not all need to be selfies, but they should all be avatars – that is, they must hold or have held self-identificatory purpose for you in your online environment. So these images can be selfies, or the picture next to your username, or a header or background image from your website, or a MMORPG avatar, etc. As you write, think about what each image hides as well as what it shows. If one or more images have historical significance (that is, you used to use them or identify with/by them, but now you don't), explain this as well. Word Count: max 600 words + at least 3 images.
Sunday	**Avatar Photo Essay DUE at 11:59 on Sunday, October 25th, 2015.**

Week 5 **10/26-10/30**	**Power/Knowledge**
Tuesday	[The Five Pillars of Wikipedia](#)

	Adrianne Wadewitz, "Looking at the Five Pillars" Part I and Part II
	Sarah Sentilles, "Writing Her In" (Link)
Thursday	Guest speaker: Sage Ross, Wikimedia Education Foundation.
	VIDEO: Feminism and Wikipedia. (Link)
	Discussion Thread: What work do the five pillars do in knowledge creation? What power does Wikipedia hold in Anglophone/USA media culture?
	You may also wish to discuss the possibility or desirability of making Assignment #2 a collaborative project via the thread. Bring results to class on Tuesday.

Week 6 11/02-11/06	Case Study: Wikipedia's handling of #gamergate
Tuesday	Consalvo, M. (2012). Confronting Toxic Gamer Culture: A Challenge for Feminist Game Studies Scholars. *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, No. 1. (Link)
	"#GamerGate: Here's Why Everybody in the Video Game World Is Fighting." *Vox*. 14 Sept. 2014. (Link)
	VIDEO: Screened in class. "Television Interview about Harassment in Gaming." *Feminist Frequency*. November 3, 2012. (Link)
	Recommended: Zoe Quinn. "5 Things I Learned as The Internet's Most Hated Person." *Cracked*. September 16, 2014. (Link)
Thursday	We will begin the analysis of the Wikipedia Talk page on the Gamergate controversy together in class today.
	Readings: Gamergate controversy. Article required. Read the Talk pages iff very motivated! Note that the Archives are considerable. You will not be required to analyze anything past Archive 16 (Dec 2014), but if you want to keep reading, please do.
	Arthur Chu, "Your Princess is in Another Castle." (Link)
	VIDEO: Screened in class. "Tropes vs. Women: Women As Reward." *Feminist Frequency*. Aug 31st, 2015. (Link) "DLC Special Edition." Feminist Frequency. Sept 14th, 2015. (Link)
	Assignment #2:

	Please read through the assignment rubric and the assignment description below before posting your response. You will complete this assignment and post your findings to BOTH the Canvas assignment site AND our dedicated Canvas discussion thread by 11:59 on Sunday, Nov 8th, 2015.
	Analyzing the Wikipedia Gamergate Controversy Talk Page:
	Go to the Wikipedia article on "Gamergate controversy." Read through it quickly again, just for the highlights.
	Then go back to the top of the article and click on the "Talk" page tab to begin your assignment.
	This document is very long. Choose **ONE** section from the Talk page, up to Archive 16 (Dec 2014). For that section, discuss one example **EACH** of the following:
	a) constructions of social categories (woman, man, person of color, queer person, gamer, feminist, expert, Wikipedian, etc.)
	b) structural oppressions or violences in your section's writing
	c) How a and b are interacting to create a(n) [*your conclusions here*] environment for feminists, women, and/or other minorities in (i) Wikipedia editor communities and (ii) in the production of public knowledge online.
	d) Reference at least two of our course readings to date.
	Do discuss among yourselves which section you intend to take on! Our current goal is to analyze <u>as many</u> of the first archived sections on this Wikipedia Talk page as possible.
	However, in consultation with Sage Ross and each other, the class may decide that depth is the better analytic strategy. If so, see below:
	If the class wishes to make this assignment collaborative, please discuss with Dr. Lee this week <u>BEFORE</u> handing in the assignment. Coworkers will receive the same grade; see Dr. Lee with problems or concerns.
	Word Count: Max 1200 words.
Sunday	**Gamergate controversy Talk page analysis DUE 11:59 on Sunday, Nov 8th, 2015.**

Week 7 11/09-11/13	**Free Labor and the Gift**
Tuesday	Qiu, Gregg, and Crawford, "Circuits of Labor." PDF.

	Standfill and Condiss, "Fandom And/As Labor." ([Link](#))
	Recommended: Tiziana Terranova, "Free Labour." PDF.
Thursday	Burgess and Green, "Youtube's Cultural Politics." PDF. Coppa and Tushnet, "How To Suppress Women's Remix." PDF. *Optional*: Hannah Howard, "Why Do We Only Care About Programmers?" ([Link](#)) *VIDEO: Screened in class.* FemTechNet: Feminism, Technology, Sexualities. ([Link](#))
	Discussion: What drives the division of online labor? How are forms of affective, play-based, or activist online labor gendered, nationalized, or otherwise marked by identity constructs?

Week 8 11/16-11/20	**Transnational Piracy**
Tuesday	Mizuki Ito, "Contributors vs. Leechers." PDF. *Recommended*: Jenkins et al., "Thinking Transnationally." PDF.
Thursday	Ian Condry, "Dark Energies." PDF.
	Discussion: Are online fansubbers doing something wrong as well as (perhaps) illegal, or is their labor helping to spread national products to a transnational audience? **If the class decides to focus on an alternate case study together, on the Train Man or *Densha Otoko* phenomenon, and would prefer the alternate Assignment #3, please let Dr. Lee know <u>by end of Week 8</u>.**

Week 9 11/23-11/25	**Case Study: Modding**
Tuesday	Poderi and Hakken, "Modding a free and open-source software game." ([Link](#)) Layne and Blackmon, "Self-Saving Princess: Feminism and Post-Play Narrative Modding." ([Link](#)) ***Assignment #3:***

	Please read through the assignment rubric and the assignment description below before posting your response. You will complete this assignment and post your findings to <u>BOTH</u> the Canvas assignment site AND our dedicated Canvas discussion thread by 11:59 on Friday, November 27th[th], 2015.
	
	Participant-Observer Ethnography
	
	Describe one instance of your own online labor. If you are more of an online passive consumer, consider what kinds of knowledge and skill acquisition are involved in that consumption.
	
	If your labor is current, log time spent over one week. If not, estimate amount of time spent over one week on a normal workflow.
	
	In both cases, document as many of the following as you can:
	    a) activities completed at your own instigation vs. done for others ("playbor" vs" gift" – do those categories make sense in your analysis?)
	    b) collaborations (discuss methods; no need to name names)
	    c) national or international spread,
	    d) platforms used,
	    e) skills acquired in order to complete,
	    f) skills required to upload or distribute.
	
	Then, discuss whether or not this free labor is worth it. Define your terms carefully; reference at least two of our course readings to date. If you also informed your online labor/fandom/etc. communities of your work, this is a type of labor. Discuss its parameters and stakes in your analysis.
	
	Word Count: Max 1000 Words.
	
	DUE: **11:59 pm Friday, Nov 27th[th], 2015**.

Thursday	HOLIDAY

Week 10 11/30-12/04	**Trolls: Reasons, Methods, Safety**
Tuesday	Sun Jung, "Fan activism, cybervigilantism, and Othering mechanisms in K-pop fandom." (Link). Whitney Phillips, "Dicks Everywhere: The Cultural Logics of Trolling." PDF. *Recommended*: Joshua Davis, "The Stalking of Korean Superstar Daniel Lee." (Link)

Thursday	Adrian Chen, "Unmasking reddit's Violentacrez" (Link) – **Trigger warnings throughout** for violent misogyny, homophobia, racism, incest, random cruelty, and other horrors due to the content of this troll profile. *Recommendations: Avoid the comments. Practice self-care while reading.*
	geekfeminisms, "Mitigating Internet Trollstorms" (link)
	VIDEO: Screened in class. FemTechNet, "Safety."
	Discussion: What do trolls show us about the intersections of race, gender, class/education, ability, etc. with structural oppressions on- and offline? What are some tactics for dealing with online violence?

Week 11 12/07-12/11	**Next Steps**
Tuesday	Final Project Workshop: Group I **The Final Project**: The final project is your chance to demonstrate what you've learned in this seminar. It may take the form of a final academic paper, or a photo essay, or a series of tumblr posts, or a video you intend to upload (consider Vimeo, which has password protection). Or it may be something else. You will pick one major topic (main idea) from our course, and one platform or medium (infrastructure) as the focus of your project. Cite at least <u>THREE</u> course readings in your project. Use MLA or APA citation styles; see Dr. Lee with any questions on citation. Sample topics: 1. Does the internet expand or contract our understanding of other people? 2. Given our discussions of power, knowledge, safety, and creativity, is the internet a useful medium for feminist activism? 3. How are masculinity and queerness constructed online? What structural violences are associated with those constructions? 4. What are some feminist tactics for resisting, subverting, or avoiding dangerous interactions online? 5. Your own topic, which you will discuss in detail at the Workshop! In *every* case, you will upload the written text of your project to Canvas (the paper, the script, the artist's statement, the text+photos, etc.) *and* include a link to the project as posted online, if relevant or necessary for formatting, sound, etc. Page Count: 7-10 pages double-spaced in Word, **<u>not</u>** including images or citations. The Workshop presentation counts for 10% of the Final Project grade.

	Final Projects are due at 11:59 PM on Canvas Thursday, December 17th, 2015. **Please come to your workshop <u>ready</u> to present your Main Idea and your Major Infrastructure. Bring your draft; we'll work on it together.** **If you are using your laptop, please bring a computer dongle to connect your laptop to the projector.**
Thursday	Final Project Workshop: Group II **<u>The Final Project</u>**: The final project is your chance to demonstrate what you've learned in this seminar. It may take the form of a final academic paper, or a photo essay, or a series of tumblr posts, or a video you intend to upload (consider Vimeo, which has password protection). Or it may be something else. You will pick one major topic (main idea) from our course, and one platform or medium (infrastructure) as the focus of your project. Cite at least <u>THREE</u> course readings in your project. Use MLA or APA citation styles; see Dr. Lee with any questions on citation. Sample topics: 1. Does the internet expand or contract our understanding of other people? 2. Given our discussions of power, knowledge, safety, and creativity, is the internet a useful medium for feminist activism? 3. How are masculinity and queerness constructed online? What structural violences are associated with those constructions? 4. What are some feminist tactics for resisting, subverting, or avoiding dangerous interactions online? 5. Your own topic, which you will discuss in detail at the Workshop! In *every* case, you will upload the written text of your project to Canvas (the paper, the script, the artist's statement, the text+photos, etc.) *and* include a link to the project as posted online, if relevant or necessary for formatting, sound, etc. Page Count: 7-10 pages double-spaced in Word, **<u>not</u>** including images or citations. The Workshop presentation counts for 10% of the Final Project grade. Final Projects are due at 11:59 PM on Canvas Thursday, December 17th, 2015. **Please come to your workshop <u>ready</u> to present your Main Idea and your Major Infrastructure. Bring your draft; we'll work on it together.**

	If you are using your laptop, please bring a computer dongle to connect your laptop to the projector.

FINAL PAPER OR PROJECT DUE AT 11:59 PM ON CANVAS THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 2015.