

## Technopolitics

### HIST 254

Professor Dana Simmons

Fall 2015

Our world is increasingly technoscientific, mediated by technical knowledge and operations. In this course we delve into pathbreaking recent work in technology studies. We are concerned with things – from medical kits and genes to islands and IUDs - and their strategic uses. Technologies mobilize people, tools and knowledge. In this sense technologies are always political: they concretize certain political strategies and in their operation they are always producing forms of politics. Technologies require strategies and tactics from their users and consumers. To follow Timothy Mitchell, we will pursue the “unpredictable power effects of technical assemblages.” By the end of the quarter we will have developed our own tool kit for using and analyzing entanglements, assemblages, boundary objects, apparatuses, instruments and artifacts.

This course is a node in the 2015-2016 **FemTechNet Distributed Open Collaborative Course (DOCC.)** FemTechNet was founded in 2012 by Alex Juhasz (Pitzer College) and Anne Balsamo (New School) as a voluntary collaborative group of people at all levels in and outside academia. For a list of nodes of the DOCC15 see <http://femtechnet.org/docc/nodes/>

What does this mean for us? The nature of our participation in the DOCC is entirely up to us. It is an evolving, messy and multi-sited learning object. The only requirement (self-imposed) is that we add something in – by text, video, twitter, podcast, etc.

You can join the FemTechNet DOCC stream on Twitter: #femtechnet #DOCC15;

Or on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FemTechNet/>

See more on the FemTechNet DOCC below.

Other communities to which this course is connected:

**UCR Science Studies group:** a group of graduate students, faculty and affiliated researchers around questions of science, technology, medicine and society. Meets bi-weekly on Thursdays 4:30-5:30pm at the Center for Ideas and Society (South Campus Building, next to Parking Lot 3.) First meeting is October 8.

For upcoming events and to join the Science Studies Hour email list go to <https://ucrsts.wordpress.com> (currently migrating to [www.sts.ucr.edu](http://www.sts.ucr.edu))

**UCR Science Fiction and Technoculture Studies:** an undergraduate major and graduate Designated Emphasis. For more information see [www.sfts.ucr.edu](http://www.sfts.ucr.edu)

HACK THIS SYLLABUS

## **Keywords**

### **DOCC**

“FemTechNet Roadshow” blog entries:

<http://femtechnet.org/2015/08/femtechnet-roadshow-table-of-contents/>

read: “Feminist,” “Technology,” “Network,” “Distributed,” “Open,” “Collaborative,” “Course”

FemTechNet Manifesto, <http://femtechnet.org/publications/manifesto/>

DOCC 2015 Open Syllabus, <http://femtechnet.org/docc/collaborations-in-feminism-technology-sept-dec-2015/>

Call for Proposals, FemTechNet Distributed Open Collaborative Conference [for graduate students] <http://femtechnet.org/docc/ftn-docc-2016-conference/>

### **Technopolitics**

October 7

Gabrielle Hecht, ed. *Entangled Geographies: Empire and Technopolitics in the Global Cold War* (MIT, 2011) Chapters 1, 2, 4, 8, 10, 11.

October 14

Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (Verso, 2011)

### **Postcolonial Technoscience**

Warwick Anderson, “Postcolonial Technoscience” *Social Studies of Science* 2002 32 (5-6)

Peter Redfield, “The Half-life of Empire in Outer Space” *Social Studies of Science* 2002 32 (5-6)

Itty Abraham, “Introduction,” *The Making of the Indian Atomic Bomb: Science, Secrecy and the Postcolonial State* (1998)

Nicole Starosielski, *The Undersea Network* (Duke, 2015)

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

Clapperton Mavhunga, *Transient Workspaces: Technologies of Everyday Innovation in Zimbabwe* (MIT, 2014)

## **Cyberculture**

Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Duke, 2010)

Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto" in "Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991), pp.149-181.

<http://scalar.usc.edu/anvc/feminist-anti-mooc/haraway-cyborg-manifesto>

## **Naturecultures**

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, 2011)

Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Duke, 2009)

Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 35, No. 2 (Winter 2009), pp. 197-222

## **Feminist technoscience**

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

"Life Un(Ltd): Feminism, Bioscience, Race" *Scholar and Feminist Online*, Summer 2013 11(3) <http://sfonline.barnard.edu/life-un-ltd-feminism-bioscience-race/>

- "Más Bebés?": An Investigation of the Sterilization of Mexican American Women at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center during the 1960s and 70s by Renee Tajima-Peña
- Distributed Reproduction, Chemical Violence, and Latency by Michelle Murphy
- Metabolism, Reproduction, and the Aftermath of Categories by Hannah Landecker
- Bombyx and Bugs in Meiji Japan: Toward a Multispecies History? by Lisa A. Onaga
- "Yes to Life = No to Mining": Counting as Biotechnology in Life (Ltd) Guatemala by Diane Nelson

- “Genetics is a Study in Faith”: Forensic DNA, Kinship Analysis, and the Ethics of Care in Post-conflict Latin America by Lindsay Smith
- Double Exposure—Sex Workers, Biomedical Prevention Trials, and the Dual Logic of Global Public Health by Melinda Cooper
- Biopolitics of Adoption by Laura Briggs

## Waste

Vinay Gidwani and Rajyashree Reddy, “The Afterlives of “Waste”: Notes from India for a Minor History of Capitalist Surplus” in *Antipode* 43(5) 2001: 1625-1658.

Susan Strasser, *Waste and Want: a Social History of Trash* (Holt, 2014)

Steven J. Jackson, “Rethinking Repair” in *Media Meets Technology*, eds. Pablo Boczkowski, Kirsten Foot, and Tarleton Gillespie (MIT, 2013)

### Toolkit

#### Boundary objects

Susan Leigh Star and James Griesemer, “Institutional Ecology, 'Translations' and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology” 1989: 1907-39

Susan Leigh Star, “This is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept” *Science Technology and Human Values* 2010 35(5): 601-617.

Lisa Cartwright, “Susan Leigh Star: Boundary Objects” (unpublished ms.)

#### Situated Knowledges/ Entanglements

Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges : The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” *Feminist Studies* 1988 14(3): 575-599.

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

#### Co-construction

Sheila Jasanoff, *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order* (Routledge, 2004)

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvard, 1991)

Adele Clarke and Joan Fujimura. 1992. "Introduction: What Tools? Which Jobs? Why Right?" pp. 3-46 in their (Eds.) *The Right Tools for the Job: At Work in Twentieth Century Life Sciences* (Princeton, 2014)

Anne Balsamo, *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* (2011)

## OUR WORK

### **Hack this syllabus:**

1. Preview the readings (Google Books works great for this) and attach yourself to one or two readings/ keywords (on this syllabus or off it – bring your own too.) Be prepared to support them in class discussion on 9/30: explain why you consider them important for us and/ or for your work and interests.
  - a. You will notice that after 10/14 no dates appear on the syllabus. This is because we will not know what we're doing until we decide it.
  - b. Only the first two readings are fixed (Hecht and Mitchell.) This is so that we all have a two-week window to order books that we will need.
2. Bring project ideas to class on Day 1: we will collectively decide on the work we will do in this class. We will probably assemble affinity groups/ committees based on interests, field and/or type of project (e.g. podcast, Scalar publication, video, review essay, research project.) The only suggestion is that it be made accessible to other members of FemTechNet.

**Keyword Podcast:** individually or in groups of 2-3, ~20 minute session discussing one of the keywords (listed above or in the Toolkit) using Soundcloud (registration required at [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com) . Join the FemTechNet group; Soundcloud has the option to keep your work private to the group.)

**Keyword video:** Instead of a podcast you may choose to upload a video onto the FemTechNet Vimeo channel. Requires sign up at [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com) then once you are logged in you can join the FemTechNet group and watch previous student work here: <https://vimeo.com/groups/femtechnet>

**Scalar multi-media scholarly publication:** Scalar is a free, [open source](#) authoring and publishing platform that's designed to make it easy for authors to write long-form, born-digital scholarship online. Scalar enables users to assemble [media](#) from multiple [sources](#) and juxtapose them with their own writing in a variety of ways, with minimal technical expertise required. To see what's possible check out the Showcase: <http://scalar.usc.edu/scalar/showcase/>

**Zotero annotated bibliography:** Read and annotation a group of books around a common theme and post your bibliography and notes at <https://www.zotero.org/groups/femtechnet>. For instructions on how to sign up for the FemTechNet Zotero group see <http://femtechnet.newschool.edu/selfdirectedlearners/search-update-or-contribute-to-the-femtechnet-bibliography/>

Regardless of the FemTechNet component, if you are not already using a bibliographic management software app, I highly suggest that you sign up and install Zotero. It's free, open source and very effective. Especially for you new grad

students: this will become a lifesaver as your reading list expands beyond your ability to remember where your notes are.

**Collective annotations:** Use either Scalar ([www.scalar.usc.edu](http://www.scalar.usc.edu)) or Annotation Studio to collectively annotate PDFs and documents. Register at [www.annotationstudio.org](http://www.annotationstudio.org) and enter University of California, Riverside as your Affiliation and HIST254 (no spaces) under 'Class' in your profile. You should be able to see a document.

**Mapping:** Create a story on a map or a visual image. Two tools to use: StoryMap, <https://storymap.knightlab.com/> or Google Map, as exemplified by the FemTechNet Situated Knowledges Map <http://femtechnet.org/docc/feminist-mapping/situated-knowledge-map/>

Most important:

**Be present in this class every week, in mind and in body. Read, annotate, question, make connections and make conversation.**

More readings to play with:

Sveta Stoycheva, "Boundary Objects: A Field Guide"

<http://scalar.usc.edu/works/boundary-objects-guide/index>

Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (2013)

Sarah Franklin, *Dolly Mixtures: the Remaking of Genealogy* (Duke, 2007)

Catherine Waldby and Robert Mitchell, *Tissue Economies*

Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (UC Press, 1984)

Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (eds), *Making Things Public: Atmosphere of Democracy* (MIT Press 2005) especially Latour's Introduction

Lorraine Daston (ed), *Biographies of Scientific Objects*, The University of Chicago Press 2000, esp. introduction, pp. 1-14 and chapter by Latour, pp. 247-269

Wiebe Bijker, *Of Bicycles, Bakelites, and Bulbs: Toward a Theory of Sociotechnical Change*

Chikako Takeshita, *The Global Biopolitics of the IUD. How Science Constructs Contraceptive Users and Women's Bodies* (MIT, 2012)

Ken Alder, ed. "Thick things" (with contributions by Ken Alder, John Tresch, Gabrielle Hecht, Wiebe Bijker, Ken Alder, Bruno Latour) *Isis* 98 (2007), 80-142

Michelle Murphy, *Sick Building Syndrome and the Problem of Uncertainty: Environmental Politics, Technoscience, and Women Workers*

Donna Haraway,

*Modest-Witness@Second-Millennium.FemaleMan-Meets-OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience*

*Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science*,  
Routledge 1989; chapter on Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden  
of Eden, New York City, 1908-36, pp. 26-58

Aihwa Ong and Collier (Eds.) *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as  
Anthropological Problems*

Sharon Traweek

John Tresch, *The Romantic Machine: Utopian Science and Technology After Napoleon*  
(2013)

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*

Chris Otter, *The Victorian Eye: A Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800-  
1910*

James Rodger Fleming, *Fixing the Sky: The Checkered History of Weather and Climate  
Control*

Joseph Dumit, *Picturing Personhood: Brain Scans and Biomedical Identity* (2004)

Chandra Mukerji, *Impossible Engineering: Technology and Territoriality on the Canal  
du Midi* (2009)