

# „In the Belly of the Monster“: Feminist Perspectives on Science and Technology

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## **Course Description:**

Feminist and queer inquiries into the nature of scientific knowledge production have in many ways demonstrated that science is a powerful source of images and imaginations about our world. Moreover, a specific, hegemonial form of scientific knowledge production has been identified as “god trick of seeing everything from nowhere” (Haraway). In a similar way, technology has been theorized as “masculine culture” (Wajcman) and therefore as always political. “We're inside of what we make, and it's inside of us. We're living in a world of connections — and it matters which ones get made and unmade”, Donna Haraway reminds us.

In this course, we will investigate the complex relationships between science, technology and gender in historical and contemporary contexts. We will discuss key concepts and theoretical approaches of feminist science and technology studies by examining how feminist scholars have problematized the ways in which difference according to sex/gender, race, and dis/ability is embedded into and at the same time also produced by science and technology. Moreover, we will engage with current feminist and queer approaches and ask how they provide new ways of understanding science and technology. By exploring different approaches on the question of how technologies shape and simultaneously are shaped by social, economic, political, and other factors, and how values and power relations are embedded into technologies and technical systems, we will ask what science and technology have to do with social justice, equality, and democracy. How are bodies and identities, and with them also politics, produced through technologies and technoscientific practices? How do assumptions about sex/gender, race, and dis/ability shape science and technology, and how are they, in turn, shaped by science and technology? How do technologies and technoscientific practices not only produce knowledge about bodies but simultaneously also materialize specifically reconfigured bodies—that is, bodies marked by sex/gender, race, ethnicity, dis/ability, and much more?

## **Methods and Goals:**

This course will be run as a reading and discussion intensive seminar. There is no need for previous training in Science & Technology Studies or Gender Studies, although some rudimentary understanding may prove useful. Preparation for class discussion by careful reading of the week's literature is required. Through a close reading of the literature, discussions and group work, the students will get introduced into key concepts of current feminist approaches on the dynamic interrelationships of science, technology and gender. At the end of the seminar the students will be familiar with the key arguments of the required readings and be able to develop their own thoughts about how gender dynamics shape and are shaped by particular technologies and technoscientific practices as well as how regimes of knowledge in their entanglement with technoscientific practices enact bodily materialities.

**Requirements:**

Each student is expected to a) attend the classes and participate in ongoing discussions, b) present the key arguments of a paper (~30 min.) and lead the class discussion on that paper, c) prepare a short (2-3 pages) critical commentary as well as 2-3 discussion questions on the presented paper, and d) write a final term paper (8-10 pages) in which the readings are related to each other OR three short essays (each 3 pages) on the papers to be read for the course. The final term paper and the three short essays can be written either in English or in German language. The deadline for uploading the discussion questions and the critical commentary on Moodle is the Saturday before the discussion class. The deadline for handing in the final term paper OR the three short essays is June 30, 2016.

**Grading:**

Attendance & participation (incl. commentaries, discussion leading & group work): 20 points

Co-chairing and presentation of a paper: 25 points

Short critical commentary (2-3 pages): 15 points

Final term paper (8-10 pages) OR three short essays (each 3 pages): 40 points

All requirements mentioned above must be met in order to pass the course.

**Grading Scheme:**

100-88 Points: Very Good (1)

87-75 Points: Good (2)

74-62 Points: Satisfactory (3)

61-50 Points: Sufficient (4)

49-0 Points: Failed (5)

**Class Schedule:****Monday March 7**

Introduction 13:30-16:45 (Room: LS 15.01)

**Monday March 14**

Class 10:00-12:00 | Break 12:00-14:00 | Class 14:00-16:00 | Break 16:00-16:30 | Class 16:30-18:30 (Room: LS 15.01)

**Monday April 11**

Class 10:00-12:00 | Break 12:00-14:00 | Class 14:00-16:00 | Break 16:00-16:30 | Class 16:30-18:30 (Room: SR 15.33)

**Monday April 25**

Class 10:00-12:00 | Break 12:00-14:00 | Class 14:00-16:00 | Break 16:00-16:30 | Class 16:30-18:30 (Room: LS 15.01)

## Course Syllabus

March 7, 2016

### **Introduction and Semester Schedule**

Class 13:30 – 16:45 | Room: LS 15.01

March 14, 2016

### **Gender, Science, and Nature**

Class 10:00-12:00 | Room: LS 15.01

Readings:

Keller, Evelyn Fox (1995): “Gender and Science: Origin, History and Politics”, *Osiris* 10: 27–38.

Harding, Sandra (1996): *The Science Question in Feminism*, Cornell Univ. Press: Ithaca and London; chapter one: “From the Women Question in Science to the Science Question in Feminism”, pp. 15–29.

Break 12:00-14:00

### **Situated Knowledges and Objectivity**

Class 14:00-16:00 | Room: LS 15.01

Readings:

Haraway, Donna (1991): *Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature*. Routledge: New York and London; chapter nine: “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective”, pp. 183–201.

Harding, Sandra (1991): *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*, Cornell Univ. Press: Ithaca and New York; chapter six “‘Strong Objectivity’ and Socially Situated Knowledge”, pp. 138–163.

Break 16:00-16:30

### **Gender and Technology**

Class 16:30-18:30 (Room: LS 15.01)

Readings:

Faulkner, Wendy (2000): “The Power and the Pleasure? A Research Agenda for ‘Making Gender Stick’ to Engineers”, *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 25 (1): 87–119.

Wajcman, Judy (2004): *TechnoFeminism*, Polity Press: Cambridge and Malden, Mass; chapters: “Introduction” and “Male Designs of Technology”, pp. 1–31.

April 11, 2015

### **Biopolitics: Medicine and Reproduction**

Class 10:00-12:00 | Room: SR 15.33

Readings:

Murphy, Michel (2012): *Seizing the Means of Reproduction. Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience*, Duke Univ. Press: Durham and London; chapter one: "Introduction: Feminism in/as Biopolitics", pp. 1–24.

Clarke, Adele (1995): "Modernity, Postmodernity and Human Reproductive Processes c1890-1990, or 'Mommy, Where do Cyborgs Come From Anyway?'" , in: Hables Gray, Chris (Ed.): *The Cyborg Handbook*, New York: Routledge, pp. 139–156.

Wilson Lowry, Deborah (2004): "Understanding Reproductive Technologies as a Surveillant Assemblage: Revisions of Power and Technoscience", *Sociological Perspectives*, 47 (4): 357–370.

Break 12:00-14:00

### **Cyborgs and Technoscience**

Class 14:00-16:00 | Room: SR 15.33

Readings:

Haraway, Donna (1997): *Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millennium: Feminism and Technoscience*, Routledge: New York and London; chapter two: "FemaleMan@\_Meets\_OncoMouse™. Mice Into Wormholes: A Technoscience Fugue in Two Parts", pp. 49–118.

Break 14:00-16:00

### **Feminist Science (and) Fiction**

Class 16:30-18:30 | Room: SR 15.33

Readings:

Merrick, Helen (2010): "Science Stories, Life Stories: Engaging the Sciences Through Feminist Science Fiction", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 33: 141–148.

Hollinger, Veronica (2003): "Feminist Theory and Science Fiction", in: James Edward and Farah Mendelsohn (Eds.): *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*, Cambridge Univ. Press: Cambridge, pp. 125–137.

McCaffrey, Anne (1969): *The Ship Who Sang*, Bloomsbury: London, pp. 7–25.

April 25, 2016

### **Posthumanism and New Materialism**

Class 10:00-12:00 | Room: LS 15.01

Readings:

Ferrando, Francesca (2013): "Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Antihumanism, Metahumanism, and New Materialisms", *Existenz: An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts* 8 (2): 26–32.

Haraway, Donna (2006): "When We Have Never Been Human, What Is to Be Done? Interview with Donna Haraway", *Theory, Culture & Society*, 23 (7–8): 135–158.

Barad, Karen (2007): "Getting Real: Technoscientific Practices and the Materialization of Reality", in: *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Duke Univ. Press: Durham, pp. 189–222.

Break 12:00-14:00

### **Race and Postcolonial Perspectives**

Class 14:00-16:00 | Room: LS 15.01

Readings:

Roberts, Dorothy (2011): *Fatal Invention. How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century*, The New Press: New York and London; chapter one: "The Invention of Race" and chapter two "Separating Racial Science from Racism", pp. 3–54.

Thompson, Charis (2006): "Race Science", *Theory, Culture & Society* 23 (2-3): 547–549.

Harding, Sandra (2008): *Sciences From Below. Feminism, Postcolonialities, and Modernities*, Duke Univ. Press: Durham and London; chapter: "Women on Modernity's Horizons: Feminist Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies", pp. 155–170.

Break 16:00-16:30

### **Course Wrap-Up and Reflection**

Class 16:30-18:30 (Room: LS 15.01)

Readings:

Subramaniam, Banu (2009): "Moored Metamorphoses: A Retrospective Essay on Feminist Science Studies", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 34 (4): 951–980.