

Queer Technologies

Instructor: Gerald Jackson

Course Description

Queer Technologies situates students at the intersection of three primary areas of research and study: gender and sexuality, media, and rhetoric. At this intersection, students will find new ways for rhetoric to engage digital media as a gendered, cultural process. At the forefront of this engagement are questions of political efficacy, agency, mediation, identity and identification, persuasion, circulation, and networks.

Requirements and Expectations

Queer Technologies will draw heavily from three primary intellectual fields: Theories of gender and sexuality (queer theory, feminist theory), Media Theory rooted in a materialist study of *medium*, and rhetorical theory working with networked culture, digital technology, and code. As such, this will be an intensive reading course. It is imperative that you arrive with the materials in hand and ready to discuss the day's topics.

Course assignments will break down into the following categories:

Session Leader and Response (30%): Each student will present a given reading or set of readings in a course-leading discussion focused on teaching and/or demonstrating that reading to the class. Furthermore, you will write a 2 page, single-spaced response to that reading.

Gender and Technology Assignment (20%): Each student will write and present a queer investigation of some piece of software or communication technology. This will include the application of course theory toward an understanding of digital technology—its operation, its social and epistemological formations, and the potential it invites for critique. Investigations of such software will focus on the communicative and gendered aspects of the technology.

Major Assignment (30%): Each student will complete a major assignment for the class. This can take the form of one of two choices:

- A **Seminar Paper** on a topic related to the class. If you are working in a similar area and are currently seeking to write a paper for publication, a conference, or as a chapter in your dissertation, this would be acceptable.
- A **Project proposal** that outlines the potential for a research project based on some topics discussed in the class. Proposals will include basic components such as an introduction, literature review, implementation discussion, and so on. Furthermore, this project will include some sort of multi-modal component: that is, we will seek to construct projects that perform and express the concepts in the class through various media.

In either of these cases, you must seek my approval for any project and/or topic beforehand. I will state here that Unless you are directly working on related topics and are preparing to write a concrete paper or chapter (that is, if you are significantly along in your studies) I will steer you towards the second option rather than the first.

Participation (20%).

Schedule

Week 1: Getting Started

Readings:

Blas, Zach, and Micha Cardenas. "Imaginary Computational Systems: Queer Technologies and Transreal Aesthetics." *AI and Society* (October 2013).

Stone, Sandy. "The 'Empire' Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto." Department of Radio, Television and Film, the University of Texas at Austin (1993).

Cox, Matthew B. and Michael J. Faris. "An Annotated Bibliography of LGBTQ Rhetorics." *Present Tense* 4, no. 2 (2015), <http://www.presenttensejournal.org/volume-4/an-annotated-bibliography-of-lgbtq-rhetorics>.

Week 2: Introduction I: Sexuality, Gender, Technology.

Readings:

Butler, Judith. *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York, NY: Routledge (1993).

Haraway, Donna. "Cyborg Manifesto." *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York, NY: Routledge (1991).

Gaboury, Jacob. "A Queer History of Computing." *Rhizome* (February 2013). <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/feb/19/queer-computing-1>.

Week 3: Introduction II: Media, Networks, Communications.

Readings:

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill (1964).

Kittler, Friedrich. "There is no Software." *CTheory* (October 1995). <http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=74>.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *My Mother was a Computer: Digital Subjects and Literary Texts*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (2005).

Week 4: Introduction III: Rhetoric, the Digital, and Code.

Readings:

Vee, Annette. "Text, Speech, Machine: Metaphors for Computer Code in the Law." *Computational Culture* (September 2012). <http://computationalculture.net/article/text-speech-machine-metaphors-for-computer-code-in-the-law>.

Kitchen, Robert, and Martin Dodge. *Code/Space: Software and Everyday Life*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press (2011).

Chun, Wendy Hui Kyong. *Programmed Visions: Software and Memory*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press (2011).

Week 5: Agency and Action I

Readings:

Munoz, Julio Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performances of Politics*. Minneapolis, MNL University of Minnesota Press (1999).

Rand, Erin. *Reclaiming Queer: Activist and Academic Rhetorics of Resistance*. Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press (2014).

Week 6: Agency and Action II

Readings:

Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press (1994).

Cooper, Marilyn. "Rhetorical Agency as Emergent and Enacted." *College Composition and Communication* 62 (2011): 420-449.

Weber, Karsten. "What is it Like to Encounter an Autonomous Artificial Agent?" *AI and Society* 28, no. 4 (2013): 483-489.

Week 5: Mediation

Readings:

Parikka, Jussi. *Insect Media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology*. Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press (2010).

Gill-Peterson, Julian. "The Technical Capacities of the Body: Assembling Race, Technology, and Gender." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (August 2014): 402-418.

Bowker, Geoffrey C. "Emerging Configurations of Knowledge Expression." *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*. Edited by Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J. Boczkowski, and Kirsten A. Foot. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press (2014): 99-128

Week 7: Knowledge and Practices I

Readings:

Grosz, Elizabeth. "Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crises of Reason." *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York, NY: Routledge (1993): 187-216.

Plant, Sadie. *Zeroes and Ones*. New York, NY: Doubleday (1997).

Week 8: Knowledge and Practices II

Readings:

Rhodes, Jacqueline and Jonathan Alexander. *Techne: Queer Meditations on Writing the Self*. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press (2015). <http://ccdigitalpress.org/techne>.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. *The Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press (1990).

Week 8: Articulation

Readings:

Stormer, Nathan. "Articulation: A Working Paper on *Taxis*." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (2004): 257-284.

Barad, Karen. "Posthuman Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Material Feminisms*. Edited by Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press (2008): 120-156.

Week 9: Spring Break

Readings: none.

Week 10: Literacy and Society

Readings:

Marino, Mark C. "Critical Code Studies and the electronic book review: An Introduction." *electronic book review* (September 2010). <http://electronicbookreview.com/thread/firstperson/ningislanded>.

Fabretti, Fedarica. "Does It Work? The Unforeseeable Consequences of Quasi-Failing Technology." *Culture Machine* 11 (2009). <http://www.culturemachine.net/index.php/cm/article/view/388/409>.

Wajcman, Judy. *Technofeminism*. Malden, MA: Polity Press (2004).

Week 11: Performances and Potentialities

Readings:

Ruberg, Bonnie. "No Fun: The Queer Potential of Video Games that Annoy, Anger, Disappoint, and Hurt." *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ Worldmaking* 2, no. 2 (2015): 108-114.

Halberstam, Jack. *The Queer Art of Failure*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press (2011).

Blas, Zach. *Queer Bombs*.

Week 13: Formations

Readings:

Deleuze, Gilles. "Postscript on the Societies of Control." *October* 59 (Winter 1992):3-7.

Terranova, Tiziana. 2004. *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*. Ann Arbor, MI: Pluto Press.

Kember, Sarah. *Cyberfeminism and Artificial Life*. New York, NY: Routledge (2003).

Week 14: Circulation

Readings:

Galloway, Alexander and Eugene Thacker. *The Exploit: A Theory of Networks*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press (2007).

Dingo, Rebecca. "Securing the Nation: Neoliberalism's U.S. Family Values in a Transnational Gendered Economy." *Journal of Women's History* 16, no.3 (2004): 173-186.

Week 15: Presentations

Readings:

none.