

# Technology & Gender

INFO I-590 • Spring 2017

In this seminar we will explore the literature on the history of gender and technology, with a particular focus on information technology. From the “computer girls” of the early 20th century to the hyper-masculine culture of contemporary computing, ideas about gender have reflected and transformed our understanding of sexuality and gender. Our goal in this seminar is to survey the best of the emerging literature on gender and computing, with an eye towards the practical application of gender theory into your future research projects.

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## Course Schedule:

In addition to doing the required readings and preparing for discussions, you will be responsible for writing a short (1-2 pg) reading response paper each week.

The supplementary readings and extended bibliography are meant to make you aware of the larger literature, and to provide a guide for those of you who need further preparation for your qualifying exams or dissertation research.

A note on books: all of the articles listed below will be made available electronically. The books you are responsible for borrowing, purchasing, or otherwise acquiring. I did not order them via the bookstore, as in most cases you can find better bargains elsewhere.

### I January 11

Introduction and in-class primary source exercise.  
Turkle, "Hackers: Loving the Machine for Itself"

### II January 18

Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis"; Cowan, "The 'Industrial Revolution' in the home: household technology and social change in the 20th century"; Oldenziel, "Boys and their toys: The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild, 1930-1968, and the making of a male technical domain"

#### *Supplemental Readings*

For further development of her argument on the (lack of) industrialization in female domestic work, see Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technologies from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*. Lerman, Mohun, and Oldenziel, "Versatile tools: Gender analysis and the history of technology" provides an introduction to their influential special issue of *Technology & Culture* on women and technology in which the Oldenziel article above first appeared.

### III January 25

Bray, "Gender and Technology"; Kleif and Faulkner, "'I'm No Athlete [but] I Can Make This Thing Dance!' Men's Pleasures in Technology"; Fischer, "Gender and the Residential Telephone, 1890-1940: Technologies of Sociability"

#### *Supplemental Readings*

Wajcman, "Reflections on Gender and Technology: In What State is the Art?"; Bray, *Technology and Gender*; Edwards, "The Army and the Microworld: Computers and the Politics of Gender Identity"; Pirsig, *Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance: an inquiry into values*; Ullman, *Close to the machine: technophilia and its discontents : a memoir*; Florman, *The Existential Pleasures of Engineering*

### IV February 1

Oldenziel, *Making Technology Masculine: Men, Women and Modern Machines in America, 1870-1945*

#### *Supplemental Readings*

Maines, *The technology of orgasm : "hysteria," the vibrator, and women's sexual satisfaction*; Rossiter, *Women scientists in America : struggles and strategies to 1940*; Tichi, *Shifting Gears: Technology, Literature, Culture in Modernist America*; Hacker, *Pleasure, Power and Technology: Some tales of Gender, Engineering, and the Cooperative Workplace*

### V February 8

Strom, *Beyond the typewriter : gender, class, and the origins of modern American office work, 1900-1930*

#### *Supplemental Readings*

Davies, *Woman's place is at the typewriter : office work and office workers, 1870-1930*; Rakow, *Gender on the line: women, the telephone, and community life*; Pursell, "'I am a Lady or an Engineer?'" The Origins

of the Women's Engineering Society in Britain, 1918-1940"; Tone, *Devices and desires : a history of contraceptives in America*; Benson, *Counter Cultures*

**VI February 15**

Hicks, *Programmed Inequality*

**VII February 22**

Nakamura, "Indigenous Circuits: Navajo Women and the Racialization of Early Electronic Manufacture"; Ensmenger, "Making Programming Masculine"; Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century"; Bernstein et al., "Silicon Valley: Paradise or Paradox"

*Supplemental Readings*

Ensmenger, *The Computer Boys Take Over*; Milkman, *Gender at work: the dynamics of job segregation by sex during World War II*; Shetterly, *Hidden Figures: The Untold Story of the African American Women Who Helped Win the Space Race*

**VIII March 1**

Hackers: *Heroes of the Computer Revolution*, (selected excerpts); Eglash, "Race, Sex, and Nerds: From Black Geeks to Asian American Hipsters"; Lagesen, "A cyberfeminist utopia? Perceptions of gender and computer science among Malaysian women computer science students and faculty"

*Supplemental Readings*

Kocurek, *Coin-Operated Americans: Rebooting Boyhood at the Video Game Arcade*; Losse, *The Boy Kings*; Kidder, *The Soul of a New Machine*

**IX March 8**

Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*

**X March 22**

Pascoe, *Dude, You're a Fag*

**XI March 29**

Cohn, "War, Wimps and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War"; Nafus, "'Patches don't have gender': What is not open in open source software"; Reagle, "'Free as in sexist?': Free culture and the gender gap"

**XII April 5**

Cassell and Jenkins, *From Barbie to Mortal Kombat*

*Supplemental Readings*

Burrill, *Die Tryin': Videogames, Masculinity, Culture*

**XIII April 12**

Kafai, *Beyond Barbie and Mortal Kombat*

*Supplemental Readings*

Shaw, *Gaming at the Edge: Sexuality and Gender at the Margins of Gamer Culture*

**XIV April 19**

Gaboury, "On Uncomputable Numbers: The Origins of a Queer Computing"; Nooney, "A Pedestal, A Table, A Love Letter: Archaeologies of Gender in Videogame History"; Wu et al., "Beyond Virtual Carnival and Masquerade: In-Game Marriage on the Chinese Internet"

*Supplemental Readings*

Ruberg and Shaw, *Queer Game Studies*

**XV April 26**

TBD.

## XVI Additional Resources

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