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.

Professor Nathan Ensmenger

nensmeng@indiana.edu

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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
Turkle:1984hack

Supplemental Readings

The chapter on amateur radio operators in **Douglas1987** provides a fascinating complement to the Turkle chapter on hackers that describes a similar phenomenon without reference to the uniquely immersive characteristics of electronic digital computers.

II   January 18
Scott:1986ik Cowan:1976wda Oldenziel:1997to

Supplemental Readings

For further development of her argument on the (lack of) industrialization in female domestic work, see **Cowan:1983vm**. **Lerman:1997ui** 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:2007cb Kleif:2003wg Fischer:1988wl

Supplemental Readings

Wajcman:2000vq provides a complementary overview of the historiography on technology and gender. **Bray:1997wl** is Francesca Bray's history of women and work in late Imperial China. **Florman:1996um** explores male pleasure in engineering, and **Pirsig:1974vs** is a literary/philosophical take on the same subject that has become something of a hacker bible. **Ullman:1997vv** shows that taking pleasure in technology is not an exclusively male domain.

IV   February 1
Oldenziel:1999vk

Supplemental Readings

Rossiter:1982vn explores the history of women in science, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between professionalization and masculinization. **Tichi:1987wb** provides a cultural and literary history of the engineer as a male hero. **Hacker:1989tm** explores the links between feminism, co-operatism and technology. **Maines:1999uw** is a classic history of the vibrator.

V   February 8
Strom:1992wx

Supplemental Readings

Davies:1982vb focuses on the typewriter as a gendered technology. **Milkman:1987tl** argues that women do not replace men during war; new and gendered positions are created for them. **Benson:1987wl** describes women's work in retail. **Tone:2001to** is a history of birth control, and includes a section on female

entrepreneurs in this technology.

VI   February 15
Hicks:2016uj

Supplemental Readings

Both **Ensmenger:2010te** and **Abbate:2012wq** cover the analogous story of the development of computer programming in the United States during this period. **Agar:2003wf**, while not explicitly about gender, provides the context for the turn towards "machinic" thinking in the British Civil Service. **Edwards:1990ua** is a pioneering work on the gendering of computer programming, and **Light:1999wg** traces the erasure of the ENIAC women from the history of computing.

VII   February 22
Nakamura:2014gp Ensmenger:2010tc Haraway:1991uz Bernstein:1980wf

Supplemental Readings

For other accounts of the roles that women played in the early computer industry, see **Shetterly:2016vl**, **Grier:2005tq**, and **Gurer:1996it**.

VIII   March 1
Levy:1984ut (selected excerpts); **Eglash:2002wk Lagesen:2008vy Ensmenger:2015wx**

Supplemental Readings

Kidder:1981tj was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for its gripping tale of computer engineers as Wild West heroes. **Kocurek:2015cg** provides the larger context for understanding masculinity and video games. **Losse:2012um** updates these narratives for the Facebook era. If you have trouble understanding Haraway, read **Gibson:1995un**, which covers some of the same territory in the form cyberpunk science fiction. In fact, read the Gibson anyway. It is beautiful, insightful, and powerfully influential in its own right.

IX   March 8
Hayles:2008wq

Supplemental Readings

For more on the relationship between embodiment and virtuality, see **Stone:1996wp** and **Balsamo:1996uc**. For an overview of the history of cybernetics and its relationship to contemporary information technology, see **Kline:2015ti**. For an interesting foreshadowing of our section on queer computing, **Wilson:2009wm** explores the "confluence of sexual and intellectual matters" that swirled around the tragic genius Walter Pitts, one of the key members of the early Cybernetics group. And in case you were not intrigued enough by last weeks's discussion to read Gibson's *Neuromancer*, read it now.

X   March 22
Pascoe:2011cj

Supplemental Readings

For a more general history of American masculinity, see **Rotundo:1994ts**. **Mellstrom:2004ur** focuses more specifically on the role of technology in shaping masculine norms, and **Burrill2008** even more specifically on the performance of masculinity in video game culture.

XI   March 29
Cohn:1993wq Nafus:2012gg Adam:2003tx Beran2017

Supplemental Readings

For a brief history of games in the contest of military defense intellectuals, see **GhamariTabrizi:2000wh** and **JenniferLight:2008ck**. **Mead:2013vv** explores the use of video games as a recruitment, training, and therapeutic tool within the United States military.

XII   April 5

Cassell:2000vw

Supplemental Readings

Salter:2012fa discusses the "hypermasculine" practices of video game culture. **Bardzell:2010dv** outlines a feminist approach to computer interface design. **Varney:2002en** explores the history of masculine toys for boys.

XIII   April 12

Kafai:2008wl

Supplemental Readings

Shaw:2015dr argues that gamers necessarily experience the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality. **Kocurek:2015cg** situates video game culuter in the larger history of video game arcades.

XIV   April 19

Gaboury:2015uv Nooney:2013vu Wu:2007gs Gray:2014uj

Supplemental Readings

Ruberg:2017ww is an anthology of essays on queer game studies.

XV   April 26

TBD.

What follows is a list of relevant resources related to gender and computing. It includes the full citation information for all of the readings listed in the syllabus above, but also many supplemental materials.
In addition, you might find useful the list of women and gender non-conforming people writing about technology found at urlhttps://goo.gl/m6J2dm.