Feminist Theory and STS

Convener: Anne Pollock
Possible Instructors: Wenda Bauchspies, Carol Colatrella, Narin Hassan, Anne Pollock, Robert Rosenberger, Lisa Yaszek

Introduction
This course is an advanced science, technology and society (STS) seminar in feminist theory. As a graduate level theory course, it both introduces students to the cannon of the field, and focuses on feminist theory as a method of analysis.

Science and Technology Studies (STS) matured in an historical period that saw an explosion of theoretical inquiry in humanities and social sciences, including the significant development of feminist theory. Therefore, much research in STS reflects and refracts issues and ideas related to principles of feminist theory. Moreover, feminist analyses have developed into a distinct mode of inquiry within STS, providing both original theoretical frameworks and essential critiques of established perspectives.

This course provides sustained attention to the productive intersections of STS and feminist theory. Many of the texts situate issues of gender within critical engagement with scientific ideology and technology in practice, for example by interrogating intersecting binaries such as nature/culture, femininity/masculinity, subjectivity/objectivity, affect/knowledge, specificity/universalism. Feminist theory in STS has both opened out to consider diverse aspects of difference – attending not only to gender but also to race, class, sexuality, disability, postcoloniality, and more – and honed in on fundamental issues of epistemology. Thus, feminist theory both helps to foreground attention to gender and other structures of inequality, and can inform inquiry into any topic.

Structure of the Course
It has been designed collaboratively, but will be taught by a single professor. The first half of the class explores key texts in feminist theory that either situate themselves within STS, as being in dialogue with STS, or have had a major impact on STS. The material in the second half of the class varies according to the professor teaching it that semester. Possible focal areas in that component might include: power and knowledge, new materialisms, feminist science fiction, reproductive technology.

Course Objectives
- To understand core concepts in the feminist theory of science and technology.
- To engage in-depth with one particular area of feminist STS work.
- To learn about historical and cultural influences on the development of feminist theory of science and technology.
- To apply concepts in feminist theory of science and technology in original essays about STS topics.
- To develop facility in research in feminist theory of science and technology.
Assessment:

- Active participation in the seminar discussion: 30%
- Blogs about the readings completed in advance of each class: 30%
- A final paper/project, according to student interest and professor approval: 40%
  
  Appropriate formats might include: a research paper that apply theories from this class to dissertation research; a review essay about books in student’s field in light of this class; a design project that engages and applies concepts from this class.
UNIT ONE: FOUNDATIONS OF FEMINIST SCIENCE STUDIES

Week 1: Introduction to the course

Week 2: Overviews
  Appropriate texts include:

Week 3: Gender and Science
  Appropriate texts include:

Week 4: Women and Science
  Appropriate texts include:

Week 5: Feminist Epistemologies
  Appropriate texts include:

Week 6: Cyborg Feminism
  Appropriate texts include:
UNIT TWO: KEY TOPICS IN FEMINIST SCIENCE STUDIES

Week 7: Theorizing Embodiment
Appropriate texts include:

Week 8: Feminism and Medicine
Appropriate texts include:

Week 9: Feminism and Technology
Appropriate texts include:
UNIT THREE: AT DISCRETION OF PROFESSOR

Example provided for New Materialisms

Week 10:
- Intro;
- Elizabeth Grosz, “Feminism, Materialism, and Freedom”;
- Rosi Braidotti, “The Politics of ‘Life Itself’ and New Ways of Dying”

Week 11:

Week 12:

Week 13:

Week 14:

Week 15: Discontents


Week 16: Wrap Up – Papers Due