

COMS 472/521 Communication Technologies and Gender

Concordia University

Department of Communication Studies

Dr. Stefanie Duguay

Fall 2020

Tuesday 4:15pm – 7:00pm (Remote/Online)

Office Location: #workfromhome

Office Hours: Over Zoom on Wednesdays from 1:00-3:00pm; use [url] to book – email to arrange a different time if necessary.

Email: stefanie.duguay@concordia.ca

Include COMS472/521 in subject line; responses generally sent within 24 business hours.

Calendar Description

Feminist theories of communication technologies are used to critique the impact and meanings of these technologies in various spheres of cultural activity. Topics include the mass media, technological mediations in organizations and institutions, and the re-articulation of domestic and public spaces, such as the Internet and the World Wide Web. Special attention is paid to these electronic and digital technologies - or new media - and the communicational and representational possibilities they enable or foreclose. The class is conducted as an intensive seminar. Completion of a prior course in women's studies or gender studies at the university level is recommended.

Prerequisites

400-level courses, unless otherwise indicated, are open to students who have successfully completed 48 university credits or who have received permission from the Department.

Course Description

This course will embark on two strands of analysis by examining: a) the role of gender in the design, development, and deployment of communication technologies; and, b) how communication technologies shape gendered practices, communities, and representations. While considering a range of communication technologies, we will focus on new and digital technologies, analysing their possibilities, constraints, and implications for the construction and reinforcement of gender identities, roles, scripts, and inequalities. Our examination of communication technologies will draw on multiple feminist lenses of analysis while also interrogating popular notions of feminism, postfeminism, and masculinity. Identifying gender-related power imbalances, violence, and discrimination embedded in and perpetuated through communication technologies will allow us to reimagine digital practices and reinvent technologies with the aim of addressing inequality.¹

Course objectives/learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Critically analyze the role of gender in the development, design, and implementation of communication technologies;

¹ This course has been developed with input from scholars who have taught similar courses and experts in this area, including Mia Consalvo, Amy Johnson, Brooke Duffy, Andrew Schrock, Sharon Greenfield, Kate Miltner, and Tarleton Gillespie. Thank you for your suggestions and for sharing past syllabi.

- Critically analyze gender-related practices pertaining to digital technologies, including practices involving the construction of identity, surveillance, sexism, gender-based violence, resistance, and activism carried out through the use of communication technologies;
- Reimagine and reinvent communication technologies and practices using feminist perspectives;
- Apply and fortify critical thinking, formal writing, and multi-modal communication skills.

Course materials

All readings and related materials will be available on Moodle and through Concordia Reserves. **Required readings** are listed first for each week; additional readings are provided for further exploration and for application to course assignments. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus during the semester as necessary, with the goal of fully addressing class needs and improving your learning experience.

Format of the Course

As part of emergency COVID-19 measures, this course will be taught remotely and not in-person. It will involve mainly asynchronous tasks (e.g. readings, discussion board responses) that you can work through independently along with some synchronous discussions over Zoom. Unless otherwise noted in Moodle, each week you will need to:

1. **Read** – Complete the week’s required reading and/or any preparatory video/audio, and skim the additional readings (check out introductions, abstracts, and section titles to see what they’re about, as they may be helpful for assignments). Submit a reading reflection following the instructions below.
2. **Watch** – View the lecture recordings, taking notes and identifying any points, questions or clarifications you would like to discuss during the weekly Zoom session.
3. **Engage** – Navigate to the week’s discussion board where your classmates have posted short talks about the additional readings along with questions. Leave at least one comment on two reading-specific discussion threads after watching the talks and contribute to the overarching topic thread, responding directly to the questions the discussion leaders pose and/or building on others’ responses. Note: Discussion boards start in Week 4.
4. **Do** – Complete any other activities in Moodle in order to apply the week’s concepts and extend your learning.
5. **Discuss** – Attend the weekly Zoom session to discuss concepts with the instructor and classmates, ask questions, and receive clarification about lessons and assignments.

You are expected to complete steps 1-4 prior to the weekly Zoom session, which will take place on **Tuesdays from 6:00-7:00pm** (unless otherwise posted). You may wish to schedule the same block of time as you would if the class were taking place in person (Tuesdays from 4:15-7:00pm), doing the readings beforehand and completing steps 2-4 that day prior to the Zoom session.

Assignments and Grading

Assignment	Weighting (%)	Due date
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading reflections • Discussion board • General participation 	20	Ongoing
Discussion leader	20	Sign up before Sept. 15
Gender design analysis	20	October 9
Open book quiz	15	Open Nov. 11 – Nov 16
Gender practices journal and critical reflection	25	December 8

Course Participation – 20%

This is an interactive class that focuses on active learning through participation. In this format, you will learn from each other as well as the lectures and course readings. Your participation grade will be split between the following components:

- **Reading Reflections – 10%**
 For (at least) five weeks of your choosing, you will need to post a short reflection about one of the required readings (or audio/video, etc) for that week. Your reflection should be 150-200 words (maximum) and should identify something that caught your attention (e.g. an important point or concept; something you agree or disagree with). The reflection must end with a **question** that will contribute to our discussion over Zoom. To receive full marks, it must be clear that you have done the reading and paid close attention – you can make this clear by referring to page numbers, quoting the text, discussing specific ideas, and defining all concepts included in your reflection. If it is not clear that you have done the reading, or if either part of the reflection is missing, you will receive partial marks.
 Reflections must be submitted in Moodle by **8:00am Tuesday morning** before the class to which they relate.
- **Discussion board – 8%**
 Most weeks, there will be class discussion leaders who will post short video or audio presentations about the additional readings to the discussion board. You will need to leave at least one comment on two discussion threads and a comment on the overall topic thread (three comments total) for at least eight weeks. Your comments should contribute to the discussion and reflect your understandings of the topic in relation to the video lectures and required readings (bring your classmate’s talk together with these other ideas!).
- **General participation – 2%**
 Your general participation will be noted through your completion of activities in Moodle as well as your contributions during Zoom discussions.

Discussion leader – 20%

Once during the semester, you will co-lead the discussion for that week's topic (see Moodle for the sign-up sheet). This **does not** include a summary of the required readings, since I will cover these in my introduction of the topic. Instead, this entails the following steps:

1. Each discussion leader for that week must pick one of the additional scholarly readings and create a 5 to 7-minute video or audio presentation. Your presentation should clearly summarize the key points of the reading, define its central concepts, and explain these using relevant examples. It should also connect your chosen reading to the week's required readings. End your presentation by posing **one question** relating to your chosen reading for the class to discuss. You can use any device and program for recording your talk so long as the file can be uploaded to Moodle (max file size 250MB) or linked for students to watch/listen.
2. Create a thread on the week's discussion board, using the reading's title as the title for your thread. In the thread, write out the full reference for your reading (author, date, etc) and the question that you pose at the end of your talk. Upload or link to your presentation and submit your entry on the discussion board.
3. Coordinate with the other discussion leaders for the week to create one more discussion thread that provides at least one additional resource (link to a video, article, audio piece/podcast, etc) about the week's topic. In this thread, the discussion leaders should formulate and post one overarching question about the week's topic for discussion.
4. Monitor and engage with your own discussion thread and the overarching discussion thread throughout the week, building on classmates' ideas and responding to subsequent questions they raise.

Talks are due to be posted in the discussion forum **one week prior** to the class for which you have signed up. See Moodle for grading sheet.

Gender design analysis – 20%

Choose a communication technology (e.g. hardware device/phone/console; software program/app; social media platform; website, etc.) and compose an analytical paper that examines gendered aspects of its development, design, intended use, popular framing, and/or marketing. Drawing from class topics and readings, examine how gender has played a role in these different aspects of the technology's deployment in society over time. In your conclusion, propose at least one recommendation for re-inventing (changing the design, framing, etc.) the technology that addresses gender inequalities arising from its current state. You will not need to conduct extensive outside research for this paper but you will need to incorporate class concepts and readings, and do some investigative work to learn about the history and development of your chosen technological object. See Moodle for grading sheet.

1,200-1,500 words (excluding reference list). Cite relevant course readings in your paper.

Open book quiz – 15%

This short Moodle quiz will require you to respond to long answer questions by applying theories and concepts covered in the course. You will need to make sense of scenarios through the application of feminist lenses that we have explored. You will be able to take the quiz at a time of your choosing. You will have a limited duration for completing the quiz once you start, so it is important to have a solid grasp of course concepts. Further information will be provided closer to the quiz date.

Gender practices journal and critical reflection – 25%

Maintain a journal throughout the semester recording gendered practices in relation to communication technologies in your everyday life. Use the class readings to help you identify these practices, which may include friends' self-representational choices on social media (do not use real names), gender-related surveillance, gender-based online discrimination, gendered digital labour, or gender biases in gaming. Based on your observations, compose a paper that explains and critiques the role of gender in three of these communication practices by drawing on course readings and additional outside sources. Reimagine these gender-related practices with attention to what alternatives might be feasible, how they could be carried out (e.g. such as through acts of resistance or activism) as well as their possible impact on individuals and related institutions/stakeholders (e.g. law enforcement, schools, platforms). See Moodle for grading sheet.

Paper of 1,500-1,700 words (excluding reference list) and at least 3 journal entries (300+ words each). Cite relevant course readings and at least 2 outside scholarly sources in your paper.

Guidelines for written assignments:

- Unless otherwise specified, all written work must follow APA formatting and referencing (<https://library.concordia.ca/help/citing/apa.php>)
- Respect the word limit and include your total word count at the end of the paper before your reference list; word counts exceeding +/- 10% of the word limit will affect your grade
- All written work should be in 12-point font, Times New Roman (Arial, Calibri, and Cambria are also acceptable) and double-spaced with regular (MS Word default) page margins
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page
- Electronic submissions **must** be Microsoft Word documents (**not PDF** or other formats)
- File names should follow the format lastname_short assignment title_course code (e.g. Duguay_Design Analysis_COMS 472)

Attendance and participation – These are not regular circumstances. As a result, flexibility is built into the course's participation requirements (i.e. it is ok if you miss a reading reflection or one discussion board thread). The course content is available online and you can work through it at your own pace asynchronously each week. Your contributions will be graded on a weekly basis. You will be expected to have completed the reading reflections and discussion board posts **prior to the weekly Zoom discussion** from 6:00-7:00pm on Tuesdays.

Weekly Zoom discussions are not mandatory and it is possible to receive full participation grades without attending them. However, they will help you to think through and apply course concepts with your peers and to prepare for the assignments. If you miss a Zoom session, it is recommended that you contact a classmate to hear about what you missed just as you would if you could not attend an in-person class session.

When participating in Zoom, please be aware of the following:

- These sessions will be primarily for discussion as a class and in small groups. These discussions will help you to approach questions and apply concepts in

ways that will enhance your learning and prepare you for the assignments. You will get the most from engaging in active participation during these times;

- You can change your screen name to the name you prefer to be called;
- You can attend without your video on;
- Zoom sessions will not be recorded;
- Please mute yourself unless you are speaking;
- Anything written in the chat box can be downloaded and seen by the instructor (and possibly other Concordia admins or Zoom employees) after the session, even if you use private messaging;
- Zoom sessions will end on time; if you have further questions, please send them by email or arrange to discuss during office hours;
- It is important to treat your classmates with the same respect that you would in person and to do everything possible to contribute to making this a safer space and a welcoming learning community.

Late assignments – All assignments are due on the date specified and must be submitted by the deadline. If you will require an extension, you must bring this to my attention by email **in advance** of the deadline and generally **one week or more in advance**. If I have not granted an extension, the following late policy will apply: 1 grade point will be deducted from the total grade for every 24 hours that an assignment is late for up to 72 hours (accumulating a maximum 3-point deduction). Assignments more than three days late will receive a **zero** grade. Late assignments may not receive written comments or feedback. Note: There are no extensions for participation-related grades or the Discussion Leader presentation since these assignments are time-sensitive. The quiz must be completed in the duration when it is available on Moodle.

Questions, emails, and grade reassessment – Feel free to ask questions over email and during our weekly Zoom sessions. If you pose questions live during the Zoom sessions, your classmates will also benefit from hearing the responses. If you send a question by email, you may have to wait up to 24 business hours for a response. If you wish for an assignment to be reassessed, you will need to send me a written explanation over email for why the piece should be reassessed and then arrange to discuss the assignment during office hours or by appointment. If you experience any technical difficulties, issues accessing links/resources/readings, or any other challenges to participating in the course, please get in contact as soon as possible.

[Official university policies removed from this version – if you are a student in this course, please use the version distributed to you]

Schedule

WEEK 1: September 8 – Gender, technology, and definitions

In this introduction to the course, we will explore what we mean by the terms “gender” and “technology.” We will discuss Wajcman’s overview of feminist Science and Technology Studies (STS) and her focus on the “mutual shaping of gender and technology.” We will also spend time discussing the expectations and responsibilities necessary for you to attain the courses’ learning outcomes.

Required reading:

Wajcman, J. (2010). Feminist theories of technology. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 34, 142-152.

Additional reading:

- a) Beasley, C. (2005). Ch.1 Gender and feminism: An overview, pp. 11-27. *Gender and sexuality: Critical theories, critical thinkers*. London: Sage.
- b) Feminist Media Histories. (2018). *Genealogies of Feminist Media Studies* (special issue), 4(2). Retrieved from: <http://fmh.ucpress.edu/content/4/2>

WEEK 2: September 15 – Technological development

We will discuss gender inequalities in the technology sector, examining how women’s contributions to technological development have been obscured and minimised over time. We will consider attitudes, values, and cultures in the technological sector and Silicon Valley that produce gender inequalities.

Required reading:

- a) Ensmenger, N. (2015). “Beards, sandals, and other signs of rugged individualism”: Masculine culture within the computing professions. *Osiris*, 30(1), 38-65.
- b) WATCH: Hicks, M. (2017). Book talk: Programmed inequality [40:25]. *Oxford Internet Institute*. Retrieved from <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/videos/book-talk-programmed-inequality/>

Additional reading:

- a) Marwick, A. (2013). Chapter 6 – Designed in California: Entrepreneurship and the myths of Web 2.0. *Status update: Celebrity, publicity, and branding in the social media age*, pp. 245-273. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.
- b) Eglash, R. (2002). Race, sex, and nerds: From Black geeks to Asian American hipsters. *Social Text*, 20(2), 49-64.
- c) Jeong, S. & Becker, R. (2017, August 16). Science doesn’t explain tech’s diversity problem – history does. *The Verge*. <https://www.theverge.com/2017/8/16/16153740/tech-diversity-problem-science-history-explainer-inequality>
- d) READ/LISTEN: Ghaffary, S. & Johnson, E. (and Swisher, K.). (2018). After 20,000 workers walked out, Google said it got the message. The workers disagree. *Recode*. Retrieved from <https://www.recode.net/2018/11/21/18105719/google-walkout-real-change-organizers-protest-discrimination-kara-swisher-recode-decode-podcast>

Course add/drop deadline September 21

WEEK 3: September 22 – Cyborgs and cyberfeminism

This week we will grapple with different perspectives regarding the futures that technology makes possible in relation to gender. Taking Kafer's analysis of Haraway's iconic "Cyborg Manifesto," we will ask the question, "Are we all cyborgs?" and assess the implications of different responses.

Required reading:

- a) Kafer, A. (2013). Chapter 5: The cyborg and the crip: Critical encounters. *Feminist, queer, crip*, pp. 103-128. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- b) WATCH: PBS Idea Channel. (2016). "Are we all cyborgs?" [16 min]. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xs4d6AilVPQ>

Additional reading:

- a) Haraway, D. (1991). A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the late twentieth century. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, pp. 149-181. New York: Routledge.
- b) Daniels, J. (2009). Rethinking cyberfeminism(s): Race, gender, and embodiment. *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, 37(1-2), 101-124.
- c) Paasonen, S. (2011). Revisiting cyberfeminism. *Communication*, 36, 335-352.
- d) Wissinger, E. (2017). Wearable tech, bodies, and gender. *Sociology Compass*, 11(11), 1-14.
- e) Kunzru, H. (1997). You are a cyborg. *Wired*. Retrieved from <https://www.wired.com/1997/02/ffharaway/>
- f) Marsh, S. (2018). Extreme biohacking: The tech guru who spent \$250,000 trying to live forever. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/sep/21/extreme-biohacking-tech-guru-who-spent-250000-trying-to-live-for-ever-serge-faguet>

WEEK 4: September 29 – Technological design

We will focus on how gender biases and stereotypes become embedded in technological design. This will include an exploration of platforms' gender settings, looking at how certain features become involved in the co-construction of users' gender identity.

Required reading:

- a) Bivens, R. & Haimson, O. L. (2016). Baking gender into social media design: How platforms shape categories for users and advertisers. *Social Media + Society*, 2(4), 1-12. Open access: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2056305116672486>
- b) Tinder. (2016). Introducing more genders on Tinder [including video – 4:23 min]. *Tinder Blog*. <http://blog.gotinder.com/genders/>

Additional reading:

- a) Woods, H.S. (2018). Asking more of Siri and Alexa: Feminine persona in service of surveillance capitalism. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 35(4).
- b) Noble, S.U. (2018). Ch. 2 – Searching for Black Girls. *Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*, pp. 64-109. New York: NYU Press.

- c) Ley, B.L. (2015). Mothers, fathers, and the pregnancy app experience: Designing with expectant users in mind. In E. Levine (Ed.), *Cupcakes, Pinterest, and Ladyporn: Feminized popular culture in the early twenty-first century*, pp. 95-115. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- d) Oudshoorn, N., Rommes, E., & Stienstra, M. (2004). Configuring the user as everybody: Gender and design cultures in information and communication. *Science, Technology & Human Values* 29(1), 30-63.
- e) Hern, A. (2019). Apple made Siri deflect questions on feminism, leaked papers reveal. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/sep/06/apple-rewrote-siri-to-deflect-questions-about-feminism>
- f) *Not for Discussion Leaders but for reference*: Light, B., Burgess, J., & Duguay, S. (2018). The walkthrough method: An approach to the study of apps. *New Media & Society*, 20(3), 881-900.

WEEK 5: October 6 – Feminist reinvention and (re)designing for justice

This week considers multiple routes to reinventing and redesigning communication technologies in alignment with feminist and social justice perspectives. From platform content moderation to the data that feeds AI, we will consider alternative approaches to developing, making, and managing technologies based on intersectional participation and equity rather than bias and discrimination.

Required reading:

D'Ignazio, C. & Klein, L. (2020). Chapter 2 – Collect, analyze, imagine, teach. *Data Feminism*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Additional reading:

- a) Costanza-Chock, S. (2020). Introduction: #TravelingWhileTrans, design justice, and escape from the matrix of domination. *Design Justice: Community-led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- b) Bardzell, S. (2010). Feminist HCI: Taking stock and outlining an agenda for design. *CHI 2010*, April 10-15, Atlanta, Georgia, USA.
- c) Gerrard, Y. (2020). Social media content moderation: Six opportunities for feminist intervention. *Feminist Media Studies*, 20(5), 748-751.
- d) Sinders, C. (2020). Rethinking Artificial Intelligence through feminism. CCCBLAB. Retrieved from <http://lab.cccb.org/en/rethinking-artificial-intelligence-through-feminism/> (also explore the project page and toolkit document in progress <https://carolinesinders.com/feminist-data-set/>)

*****Gender Design Analysis due in Moodle on Friday, October 9 by 9:00pm*****

WEEK 6: October 13 – Feminism, postfeminism, and digital communication technologies

We will examine feminist movements over time and their impact on media, culture, and women's practices of self-representation. Looking at how feminist and other gendered perceptions have permeated realms of public life, we will discuss popular views of women's practices in relation to new and digital communication technologies.

Required reading:

- a) Dobson, A. (2015). Chapter 2: Postfeminism, girls and young women, and digital media. *Postfeminist digital cultures: Femininity, social media, and self-representation*, pp. 23-51. New York. NY: Palgrave Macmillan. [available as an ebook through Concordia library]
- b) Banet-Weiser, S. (2015, January 21). Popular misogyny: A zeitgeist. *Culture Digitally*. Retrieved from <http://culturedigitally.org/2015/01/popular-misogyny-a-zeitgeist/>

Additional reading:

- a) Banet-Weiser, S., Gill, R., Rottenberg, C. (2019). Postfeminism, popular feminism and neoliberal feminism? Sarah Banet-Wiser, Rosalind Gill and Catherine Rottenberg in conversation. *Feminist Theory*, 1-22.
- b) Gill, R. (2007). Postfeminist media culture: Elements of a sensibility. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10(2), 147-166.
- c) Maddox, J. (2019). "Be a badass with a good ass": Race, freakery, and postfeminism in the #StrongIsTheNewSkinny beauty myth. *Feminist Media Studies* [published online before print], 1-23.
- d) Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). Post-feminism and popular feminism. *Feminist Media Histories*, 4(2), 152-156. Retrieved from <http://fmh.ucpress.edu/content/4/2/152>
- e) McRobbie, A. (2004). Post-feminism and popular culture. *Feminist Media Studies*, 4(3), 255-264.
- f) Freeman, H. (2016). From shopping to naked selfies: How 'empowerment' lost its meaning. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/19/from-shopping-to-naked-selfies-how-empowerment-lost-its-meaning-feminism>

WEEK 7: October 20 – Digital self-representation and gender identities

We will discuss the ways that individuals construct and perform gender through communication technologies. This will include examining how digital technologies can empower people to identify and self-represent gender in desired ways as well as considering how some digital practices reproduce gender-based power relations.

Required reading:

Raun, T. (2014). Video blogging as a vehicle of transformation: Exploring the intersection between trans identity and information technology. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18(3), 365-378.

Additional reading:

- a) Sobande, F. (2017). Watching me watching you: Black women in Britain on YouTube. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 20(6), 655-671.
- b) Vivienne, S. (2017). "I will not hate myself because you cannot accept me": Problematizing empowerment and gender-diverse selfies. *Popular Communication*, 15(2), 125-140.
- c) Dobson, A. (2015). Chapter 3. Heterosexy images on social network sites. *Postfeminist digital cultures: Femininity, social media, and self-representation*, pp. 55-76. New York. NY: Palgrave Macmillan. [available as an ebook through Concordia library]
- d) Tiidenberg, K. & Gómez Cruz, E. (2015). Selfies, image and the re-making of the body. *Body & Society*, 21(4), 77-102. Video abstract: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xfh5CBCVGx4>

WEEK 8: October 27 – Risk, gender politics, and (self-)surveillance

We will explore how gender and technologies become associated with notions of risk, which dictate a particular way to behave or use such technologies. This will lead to a broader discussion of how communications technologies can be used for surveillance and self-surveillance in relation to gendered practices.

Required reading:

- a) Dobson, A. (2015). Chapter 4: Girls, sexting, and gender politics. *Postfeminist digital cultures: Femininity, social media, and self-representation*, pp. 77-99. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. [available as an ebook through Concordia library] “Tagged” film mentioned in chapter available here: <https://youtu.be/TtEGAcLBTTA>
- b) WATCH: Hasinoff, A. A. (2016). How to practice safe sexting. *TEDxMileHigh*. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_adele_hasinoff_how_to_practice_safe_sexting#t-37438

Additional readings:

- a) Ricciardelli, R., & Adorjan, M. (2019). ‘If a girl’s photo gets sent around, that’s a way bigger deal than if a guy’s photo gets sent around’: Gender, sexting, and the teenage years. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 28(5), 563-577.
- b) Langlois, G. & Slane, A. (2017). Economies of reputation: The case of revenge porn. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 14(2), 120-138.
- c) Elias, A.S., & Gill, R. (2017). Beauty surveillance: The digital self-monitoring cultures of neoliberalism. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* [published online before print], 1-19.

WEEK 9: November 3 – Gender-based violence and digitally mediated hate

This week will provide a view of the way digital communication technologies are being used to perpetuate gender-based discrimination, violence, hate, and harassment. We will examine the problem with attention to how technological design and practices contribute to this activity. We will also consider individuals’ limited options for recourse in relation to platform policies and the law. Warning: This week’s lecture and readings deal with disturbing sexist and misogynist content - please take necessary self-care measures (i.e. taking breaks from reading; discussing feelings that arise with others; avoiding content if it is personally triggering).

Required reading:

- a) Massanari, A. (2017). #Gamergate and The Fapping: How Reddit’s algorithm, governance, and cultures support toxic technocultures. *New Media & Society*, 19(3), 329-346.
- b) Dreyfuss, E. (2018). Twitter is indeed toxic for women, Amnesty report says. *Wired*. Retrieved from https://www.wired.com/story/amnesty-report-twitter-abuse-women/?mbid=social_twitter_onsiteshare See also, the interactive website: <https://decoders.amnesty.org/projects/troll-patrol/findings>

Additional reading:

- a) Jane, E.A. (2016). Chapter 2 – Why it is so. *Misogyny online: A short (and brutish) history*, pp. 43-52. London: Sage.

- b) Hess, A. & Flores, C. (2018). Simply more than swiping left: A critical analysis of toxic masculine performances on *Tinder Nightmares*. *New Media & Society*, 20(3), 1085-1102. doi. 10.1177/1461444816681540
- c) Citron, D.K. (2014). Introduction. *Hate crimes in cyberspace*, pp. 1-32. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [Available as ebook through Concordia library] Author summary [1:59]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQOX83FS1-w>

WEEK 10: November 10 – Communication technologies for feminist resistance and activism

This week examines the possibilities and challenges presented by communication technologies for addressing gender-based inequality, violence, and discrimination. Dunbar-Hester raises the question, “Do we change the dominant culture or start our own space?” while additional readings examine different responses that take up either or both approaches.

Required reading:

Dunbar-Hester, C. (2017). Feminists, geeks, and geek feminists: Understanding gender and power in technological activism. In V. Pickard & G. Yang (Eds.), *Media activism in the digital age*, pp. 187-204. London and New York: Routledge.

Additional reading:

- a) Jeong, E. & Lee, J. (2018). We take the red pill, we confront the DickTrix: Online feminist activism and the augmentation of gendered realities in South Korea. *Feminist Media Studies*, 18(4), 705-717.
- b) Vitis, L. & Gilmour, F. (2016). Dick pics on blast: A woman’s resistance to online sexual harassment using humour, art and Instagram. *Crime Media Culture*, 13(3), 335-355.
- c) Jackson, S.J. (2016). (Re)imagining intersectional democracy from Black feminism to hashtag activism. *Women’s Studies in Communication*, 39(4), 375-379.
- d) Rentschler, C.A. (2017). Bystander intervention, feminist hashtag activism, and the anti-carceral politics of care. *Feminist Media Studies*, 17(4), 565-584.
- e) Garza, A. (2014). A herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter movement by Alicia Garza. *The Feminist Wire*. <http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/>
- f) Badham, V. (2019). Teen girls on TikTok are dancing to abusive voicemails. The new meme is as old as women’s rage itself. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/oct/25/teen-girls-on-tiktok-are-dancing-to-abuse-the-new-meme-is-as-old-as-womens-rage-itself?CMP=share_btn_tw

*****Open book quiz available on Moodle from 8:00am on November 11 – November 16 at 9:00pm*****

WEEK 11: November 17 – Information activism

[Dr. Cait McKinney](#), Assistant Professor at Simon Fraser University, will join us during our weekly Zoom session for a discussion about their new book, *Information Activism*, focused on chapter four but also relating to their research more broadly.

Dr. McKinney focuses on “information activists” in the book, referring to “women who responded to their frustrated desire for information about lesbian history and lesbian life by generating that information themselves” (p. 2). They continue, “Information activism describes a range of materials and processes constituting the collective, often unspectacular labor that sustains social movements.” This form of activism wields information as a powerful tool for community-building and political intervention, though it is not without complications. With Dr. McKinney, we will explore how information activism relates to practices discussed in the previous week, from hashtag activism to the creation of feminist tech spaces, expanding our understanding of how communication technologies can feature in efforts toward change.

Required reading:

- a) McKinney, C. (2020). Chapter 4 – Feminist digitization practices at the Lesbian Herstory Archives. *Information Activism: A Queer History of Lesbian Media Technologies*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- b) WATCH: The Archivettes (Megan Rossman, 2018) running time: 1:01:20. Available through Concordia Library – click the link and use your netname and password to login: <https://medial.library.concordia.ca/Play/3020>

WEEK 12: November 24 – Gendered labour through communication technologies

New communication technologies create new opportunities for labour and revenue generation. However, these opportunities and the practices surrounding them have gendered dynamics, as do the possible pay-offs. While discussing this topic more broadly, we will focus on the role of gender in work carried out through social media.

Required reading:

- a) Duffy, B.E. (2016). The romance of work: Gender and aspirational labour in the digital culture industries. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19(4), 441-457.

Additional reading:

- a) Abidin, C. & Gwynne, J. (2017). Entrepreneurial selves, feminine corporeality and lifestyle blogging in Singapore. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 45(4-5), 385-408.
- b) Raun, T. (2018). Capitalizing intimacy: New subcultural forms of micro-celebrity strategies and affective labour on YouTube. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 24(1), 99-113.
- c) Levinson, A.H. (2015, July 16). The pink ghetto of social media. *Medium*. <https://medium.com/matter/the-pink-ghetto-of-social-media-39bf7f2fdbe1>

WEEK 13: December 1 – Gender and videogames & course wrap-up

From console games to social gaming apps, the technology, practices, and perceptions associated with gaming incorporate gender in multiple ways. We will examine how gender becomes embedded in games and gaming culture as well as how a lack of diverse gender representation in games may be addressed.

Required reading:

Shaw, A. (2017). Diversity without defense: Reframing arguments for diversity in games. *Kinephanos: Journal of media studies and popular culture*, July, 54-76.

Additional reading:

- a) Keller, J., & Harvey, A. (2018). Kendall & Kylie: Girl affects, celebrity, and digital gaming in millennial culture. In J.W. Morris and S.M. Murray (Eds.), *Appified: Culture in the age of apps*, pp. 308-316. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- b) Moody, K. (2018). "You're a hunter, bro": Representations of masculinity in *Until Dawn*. In N. Taylor and G. Voorhees (Eds.), *Masculinities in play*, pp. 71-91. Routledge.
- c) Gray, K.L. (2012). Intersecting oppressions and online communities. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(3), 411-428.
- d) Eklund, L. (2016). Who are the casual gamers? Gender tropes and tokenism in game culture. In M. Wilson & T. Leaver (Eds.), *Social, casual and mobile games: The changing gaming landscape*, pp. 15-29. New York: Bloomsbury.
- e) Gray, K.L., & Leonard, D.J. (2018). Introduction – Not a post-racism and post-misogyny promised land: Video games as instruments of (in)justice. In K.L. Gray and D.J. Leonard (Eds.), *Woke gaming: Digital challenges to oppression and social injustice*, pp. 3-26. Washington: University of Washington Press.

Monday, December 7 – Last day of classes

*****Gender Practices Journal and Critical Reflection due in Moodle on Tuesday, December 8 by 8:00am*****