



Feminist Futures

WGS 350 (001) Fall 2020

Hybrid Course - Discussion Section Meetings Thu 11:45 - 1:00

215 Park Shops

About your Instructor



My name is Dr. Patsy Sibley, and I am a Teaching Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies here at NC State where I teach courses in both the Science, Technology, & Society and the Women's & Gender Studies programs. My interests sit at the intersection of gender, technology, and feminist theories.

Email : pasibley@ncsu.edu

Digital Drop-in Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 - 1:00

Also available by appointment

Course Description

This experimental course seeks to both explore and disrupt dominant narratives of “the future” by exploring the possibilities of alternative futures as imagined by and with feminist communities and feminist thinkers. By examining critical technology studies, theories of feminist technoscience, and speculative and science fiction across media, we will work to interrogate the ways in which technologies have been used to create, sustain, or challenge systems of power and oppression and to imagine new possibilities.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- ❑ Engage with a variety of critical cultural theories, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, ecofeminism, intersectional feminism, critical race theory, and queer theory
- ❑ Engage contemporary cultural critique by learning to seek out scholarly and popular media sources of information, to judge that information, and to learn best practices for combatting misinformation.
- ❑ Practice writing skills in various contexts: book reviews, short-form articles, scholarly critique, personal reflection, research paper.
- ❑ Turn unsupported opinion into evidenced argumentation.
- ❑ Improve critical thinking through respectful, active discussion of a variety of cultural texts.

Pedagogical Strategies & Expectations

The learning approach of this class will be focused on active learning rather than passivity. While there will be some lecturing by the instructor, this will be a participatory class with an emphasis on small group, class discussion, and projects to engage you with the course content. The course will consist of interactive lectures, readings for discussion, group discussion facilitation, creation of new and unique cultural criticism, and interaction with a variety of media to provide further material for discussion. As an instructor, I see my main role as being a guide and facilitator in the learning process, responsible for fostering a classroom climate in which learning, integration, and creation are possible.

Required Materials

This class will require numerous readings from a variety of materials, many of which will be provided to you electronically through our Moodle page or the library. However, you will be required to have access to the below complete texts which can be purchased through the bookstore or Amazon:

Title	Author	ISBN	Price
Dawn	Octavia Butler	9780446603775	\$15.00
Woman on the Edge of Time	Marge Piercy	978-0449210826	\$12.99
Bitch Planet Vol. 1	Kelly Sue DeConnick	9781632153661	\$9.99

Course Requirements

This course will require you to read, watch, and listen critically; to participate in thoughtful discussions; to ask interesting questions; and to explore technology creatively through the process of feminist making. This section provides you with a brief overview of course assignments. Full course assignments and assessment of assignments are listed in detail on the Moodle page.

- I. Active Participation
- II. In-Class Activities
- III. Reflection Papers & Discussion Questions
- IV. Critical Media Analysis Project
- V. Final Project

Critical reflective writing and group conversations are where the bulk of the growth happens in this course. A seminar format only works when the class is actively engaged and has read the materials. To enable as much participation as possible, you will engage in a variety of group discussions and be encouraged to give each other feedback on projects.

I. Participation (20%)

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. Please bring your readings with you, whether in print form or on your laptop. Participation comprises a large part of your grade because, in my mind, we do our most valuable work together in class. Additionally, we may replace class meetings with online activities from time to time; the same expectation of active participation applies.

II. In-class Activities (30%)

We're going to do a lot of cool stuff in this class. To take part in that cool stuff, you need to come to class. The majority of the learning in this class will happen in the room, where we will work through tough ideas together. These activities will primarily be graded based on effort, so show up prepared, do your best, and you'll be fine. If you can't make it to class for health reasons, just let me know and we'll figure out other ways for you to complete these activities. Should we move to an online only format at some point in the semester, activities that we complete digitally will still be categorized as in-class activities for the purposes of grade calculation.

III. Reflection Papers and Discussion Questions (20%)

Across the semester, you will write 10 reflection papers. We have 15 weeks in the semester, so this means that most weeks you should be completing at least one reflection paper. More details on how these should be formatted can be found in the assignment sheet available on Moodle.

IV. Critical Media Analysis Project (10%)

This assignment will require you to use the theories and ideas that we have been discussing in class and apply them to a piece of non-print media in order to explore how issues of gender, science, and technology are presented in our wider culture via film, television, or music. Specifically, you will be asked to critically analyze one of the possible pieces of media listed on the assignment sheet and write a short paper about your analysis, due by **October 1st** at midnight. Further information about this midterm project can be found on the Moodle site.

V. Final Project (20%)

Final projects will be negotiated in conference with the professor shortly after the midterm and pitched to the collective for peer review on November 25th. Depending on interests, intellectual, and professional needs, the final project could be a well-researched piece of non-written cultural criticism (video, website, music, podcast); an interview with one of the authors; a creative project (a short story); or a more traditional final paper. Whatever the genre, format, or content, the final project must reflect independent research conducted by the student, above and beyond content included in the course. The professor will post a list of possible topics on the website, but you are -- as always -- encouraged to strike out on your own! The final project is due by noon on **November 19th**. More specific guidelines for this project can be found on the Moodle site.

Course Evaluation

<i>Exceptionally achieves assignment objectives</i>	<i>Consistently achieves assignment objectives</i>	<i>Inconsistently achieves assignment objectives</i>	<i>Rarely or never achieves assignment objectives</i>	
A+ = 98-100 A = 94-97 A- = 90-93	B+ = 87-89 B = 84-86 B- = 80-83	C+ = 77-79 C = 74-76 C- = 70-73	D+ = 67-69 D = 64-66 D- = 60-63	< 60% receives a failing grade

Policies & Procedures

My policies in regard to late assignments, attendance and class participation, academic integrity, and discrimination, are as follows:

Late assignments. Late assignments will be accepted at the instructor's discretion and may be penalized by one letter grade for each day late. Late assignments will only be accepted under extreme circumstances such as illness or family or other emergencies. You are expected to manage your time and ensure all assignments are submitted on or before the due date.

Attendance and class participation. It's a weird time for attendance requirements. Do your best to come to class. If you can't come or don't feel comfortable physically joining us for whatever reason, touch base with me or a classmates and we'll try to dial you in digitally. We'll figure it out.

Academic integrity. The learning activities in this course are designed to promote discussion among students as peer educators. Though you are free to use any legitimate academic materials at your disposal, you may not plagiarize available sources (such as existing book or movie reviews) or simply replicate answers of others enrolled in the course. I understand and expect all students to follow the university's honor pledge: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment." For the university's policy, see: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>

Students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 919-515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation (REG02.20.01)

Policy on teaching and learning practices. This course is designed to foster dialog about how a wide variety of exclusionary practices (including those based on gender, race, class, sexual preference, ethnic or religious background, and physical disabilities) promote social inequalities. Full participation in this course requires your willingness to (1) read the material, (2) share your reactions and experiences as well as (3) show respect for others' perspectives and experiences. It is my job to create a classroom environment in which you feel safe and fully included. Please alert me if you have concerns about the course content, classroom culture, or to inform me of inappropriate behavior by another student as the semester progresses.

N.C. State Policies, Regulations, and Rules (PRR): Students are responsible for reviewing the NC State University PRR's located at <http://oucc.ncsu.edu/course-rights-and-responsibilities> which pertains to their course rights and responsibilities.

Schedule

Dates:	Topic:	Deadline:
Aug 10th - 13th	Introduction, Orientation, & Intro to Feminist Inquiry	Feminist Utopia write-up due before next class
Aug 17th - 20th	Intro to Futurist Theories	
Aug 24th - 27th	Woman on the Edge of Time - Part 1	
Aug 31 - Sep 3	Woman on the Edge of Time - Part 2	
Sep 7th - Sep 10th	Feminism(s) and Genderless Futures	
Sep 14th - Sep 17th	Reproductive Tech/ Reproductive Future	
Sep 21st - Sep 24th	Dawn by Octavia Butler - Section I & II	
Sep 28th - Oct 1st	Dawn by Octavia Butler - Section III & IV	Critical Media Analysis Project due
Oct 5th - Oct 8th	Intersectional Feminism and Liberatory Futures - Bitch Planet	
Oct 12th - Oct 15th	Queer Futures: Queer Theory & SF	
Oct 19th - Oct 22nd	Binary Code/NonBinary Bodies: Human Enhancement, Cyborgs & PostHumanist Futures	
Oct 26th - Oct 29th	Tinkering with Humans - Designer DNA, Artificial Life,	

	& Genetic Futures	
Nov 2nd - Nov 5th	Cyberfeminism & Techno-utopianism	
Nov 9th - Nov 12th	Final Project Development	LDOC is November 12th
		Final projects due Nov 19th at noon

Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with the Disability Services Office at Suite 2221, Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 919-515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the [Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation \(REG02.20.01\)](#)

The Disability Services Office will contact me directly regarding any student that requests accommodations; however, **students requesting accommodations should email me directly at the start of the semester so that we may discuss making reasonable accommodations.**

Per FERPA, I will not discuss any disabilities with any other persons in or out of our class.

Student Conduct

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined by [NC State's Office of Student Conduct](#) as "either (a) **representing the work of others as his or her own; or (b) submitting written materials without proper attribution or acknowledgment of the source.**" When you present the words or ideas of another (either published or unpublished) in your writing, you must

fully acknowledge your sources. Plagiarism is considered a violation of academic integrity whenever it occurs in written work, including drafts and homework, as well as for formal and final papers, and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

If you are ever unsure if what you are writing constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. Despite how clear-cut the above definition appears, plagiarism can be tricky, so you should never feel afraid or embarrassed to ask.

The NC State Policies, Regulations, and Rules on Student Discipline set the standards for academic integrity at this university and in this course. In this course and all your other courses, you are expected to adhere to these standards and a lack of understanding is not considered excusable. **Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be handled through NCSU's judicial system and may result in failure for the project or for the course.** See the [Office of Student Conduct](#) for more information on academic integrity.

Privacy

Per FERPA, I will only discuss your work and progress with you, not with anyone else (including your parents). By the same token, you should not in any way or form discuss or share the grades/work of other students. Revealing or sharing another student's coursework to which he or she may have access as a member of the class is considered a form of academic dishonesty prohibited by the Code of Student Conduct. This applies even if a fellow student willingly shares such information with you, either through our class blog, peer review, etc. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, which may take further action.

Courtesy & Respect

You must be respectful and courteous to everyone in our class (including me!), both in verbal and nonverbal forms, across all course materials. Any violations of policy will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.



Syllabus Amendments

Please note that as the semester progresses this syllabus, as well as our class schedule, may be subject to change. The instructor is responsible for communicating these changes to the class.