

WRIT 166: Science, Technology, and the Making of Identities & Differences

First-Year Writing Course
Wellesley College
Spring 2019, Mon/Thurs 2:55-4:10pm
Clapp Library 346

Dr. Ethel Mickey
Department of Sociology
Pendleton East 334
Office Hours: Monday's 4:30-5:30pm; Thursday's 1-2pm; and by appointment

“Science, it would seem, is not sexless; she is a man, a father, and infected too.” –Virginia Woolf

Course Description

This course explores the historical and contemporary intersections of science, technology, and forms of identity, including those marked by sex, gender, race, and ability. It is rooted in feminist science studies, which aims to (re)construct science in ways that include diverse actors and perspectives in order to reconfigure how knowledge is produced and exchanged. We will explore how science and technology shape sex/gender, race, and ability; how sex/gender, race, and ability shape science and technology; how technologies often reinforce – but sometimes challenge – intersecting systems of social relations; and how these dynamics can change over time. We will explore questions such as: What is science? Who gets to participate in science? What is the relationship between science, technology, culture, and power? How have feminists engaged with science and technology? How has technological change affected women's lives, ideas of gender, and other forms of identity? How does technology offer possibilities for new social relations, and how do we evaluate these possibilities?

Course Objectives

As this is above all a writing course, by the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Approach writing as an iterative process of critical reading, writing, and revision
- Write with a sense of audience and purpose
- Develop research topics, design research questions, formulate thesis statements, organize an argument with supporting evidence, and cite sources properly.

And additionally:

- Critically evaluate claims about the biology of gender, sex, sexuality, race, and disability
- Identify and analyze feminist and postcolonial critiques of scientific objectivity
- Understand how gender has been central to scientific endeavors and technological developments

Course Materials

- All required readings will be posted online in PDF format on Sakai.
- There are two suggested books for this course if you would like additional writing resources. They are not required.

1. *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace* by Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup, 12th edition. University of Chicago Press.
2. *Writing in Sociology* by Mark Edwards. Sage.

Writing Assignments

You should expect to write each week in this course, whether short responses to discussion questions, a draft or “first best effort,” or a polished revision. You also should expect to frequently share your work with classmates and to provide helpful feedback on their work. Additionally, conferences with me outside of class will be required to discuss revisions of larger writing assignments. Brief descriptions of the writing assignments are below, and you will be provided with more detailed information and grading rubrics as the semester progresses.

- **Introductory Essay (1-2 pages)**
- **Responses to Discussion Questions.** For certain readings, I will post 2-3 discussion questions on the Sakai Discussion Board. Post one-paragraph responses to each question on Sakai *before the beginning of class*, and come to class prepared to discuss in class.
- **Paper 1: Critical Analysis of a Science Article (1-2 pages).** Choose an original science article, referenced in the popular press, and critique the article using readings from the course. You should clearly explain the scientists’ claims and identify what assumptions are embedded in the scientists’ work.
- **Paper 2: Op-Ed Essay (3-4 pages).** Choose an issue or topic related to the study of sex/gender, race, science, and technology that you would like to investigate in more depth. Compose an op-ed essay that presents your position on the chosen issue, **supported with relevant evidence**, and communicates your position to a general audience.
- **Paper 3: App Analysis Paper (3-4 pages).** Choose one mobile app, tool, or text messaging service to analyze, reimagine, and reflect upon. You will describe a piece of software’s key features, imagine a new additional feature, write scenarios projecting potential uses of the software, and pose critical questions about society, culture, and/or politics that your scenario intends to raise.
- **Paper 4: Final Research Paper and Reflection (8-10 pages).** Your paper should investigate a specific research topic related to the themes of the course. It must draw on course materials but also extend beyond the course readings. The paper should be in essay format, with an identifiable central argument. Your paper should include a title and bibliography. This final paper will also ask you to reflect on the course and your writing process.
- **Final Research Presentation.** Each student will deliver an oral presentation and Powerpoint briefly describing their research paper during the final week of classes.

Course Policies and Ground Rules

Course credit and completion of work: In order to receive credit for this course, a student must complete all major assignments satisfactorily and by established deadlines. The major assignments are: a full draft (a “first best effort” or FBE) of **all four papers**, a substantive revision of those four papers, and one oral presentation. Criteria for what merits “satisfactory” work will be discussed in class. Students must attend individual paper conferences with me outside of class time to discuss revisions. These conferences will be scheduled in between the FBE and final draft stages.

Preparation and participation: This is a discussion-based course. You should plan to complete assigned readings before the class session on which they are listed. You will be most successful in the course if you participate in active reading. As you read, identify the main argument(s) the author is making, key concepts and their definitions, and examples. Avoid highlighting and instead take reading notes that summarize the material in your own words. Making outlines of the chapters and articles is often helpful. Prepare questions you want to raise in advance of class discussions. I encourage you all to bring a notebook to class for note-taking, and we will often do in-class writing assignments

Attendance: This course follows the attendance policy set by the Writing Program:

All sections of first-year writing require each student's regular participation not only as a writer but also as reader, editor, and critic of her classmates' work. Regular attendance is therefore expected and required. Any student who is absent more than four times will be asked to withdraw from the course. This generous policy should allow for all absences that may be necessary due to illness, religious observations, or family obligations, and therefore it doesn't distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you anticipate missing several classes due to any of these reasons, please notify your instructor as soon as possible.

**Please note that this policy does not mean that you can miss up to 4 classes without consequence. Regular attendance and participation is mandatory, including during discussions, peer review sessions, and writing conferences. If you miss class, you will miss out on necessary information and this will affect your success in the course.

Late work: Late work will incur penalties. Any draft (FBE or final) not turned in within one week of the deadline will be given a 0. Extensions will be granted only in extreme circumstances and with adequate advanced notice. Evidence of such concern is required (e.g. doctor's note).

Extensions: In general, extensions will be granted only for serious, unexpected life events that are outside of your control, like medical or family emergencies, but not interviews, recruiting, or other school work, tests, or extracurriculars. Please plan ahead and communicate with me if you think you will have difficulty meeting a deadline.

Courtesy and respect: I expect all of us to treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times. The classroom should be a comfortable learning environment for all of us. This necessitates that we each take responsibility for keeping the classroom free of discrimination, harassment, and intimidation. Debate and disagreements can (and should) occur during the collective learning process, as we will tackle some controversial issues. However, please be advised that all students are expected to respect each other's differing points of views. Students who are disruptive or disrespectful may be asked to leave the class meeting. In addition, arriving late, leaving early, and walking in and out of class are distracting to those around you - please try keeping them to a minimum.

Laptops and electronics: No laptops or electronics are allowed in this course. Please turn your cell phones off or on silent prior to the beginning of class. No audio or video recordings of class are permitted without the instructor's permission.

E-mail etiquette: E-mail is one of the primary ways you will communicate with me outside of class when you have questions or need to set up a meeting time. I do my best to answer emails promptly, however, I am not available via email 24/7. If you email me after 6:00pm on weekdays, I will answer you by the next morning. If you email me on the weekends, I will answer by Monday morning. If it is an urgent matter, put "Urgent" in the subject heading.

Accommodations and Disability Access: All of us learn in different ways and with varying degrees of success. It is my job to help each and every one of you learn. Disabilities will always be accommodated. If you know of any factors that may hinder your ability to complete this course successfully, or if you will need accommodations for a documented disability or other appropriate reason, please let me know as soon as possible. Any student with disability accommodation needs should also contact disabilityservices@wellesley.edu during the first two weeks of class. Disability Services, Clapp Library 316, Phone: (781) 283-2434.

The Honor Code, Academic Integrity, and Plagiarism: All students are expected to abide by the Wellesley Honor Code, and any form of plagiarism, lying, cheating, or other academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and could result in a failing grade for the assignment or course or further disciplinary sanctions. We will discuss what kinds of actions constitute academic dishonesty in class, including plagiarism. To learn more about plagiarism, I also encourage you to read the Writing Program’s statement and the library’s Guide to Citing Sources.

Writing Tutors and the English Language Resource Center: I encourage you to work with the Writing Tutors – well-trained peers who are available to help at any stage of the writing process throughout the semester. The professional and student tutors in the ELRC are available to offer specialized help to English language learners. You can schedule appointments directly via the online scheduler: <https://wellesley.mywconline.com>.

Weekly Schedule

Updates to the weekly reading schedule will be announced in advance and posted on Sakai.

TOPIC	DATE	Reading Due	Writing Due
Week 1: Introduction to the Course	M 1/28		
	Th 1/31	Richardson, Sarah. 2012. “Sexing the X.”	Discussion questions (Sakai).
UNIT I: Gendering Scientific Knowledge			
Week 2: The Sexing/Gendering of Scientific Knowledge <i>Writing focus: Transition to college writing; close reading strategies</i>	M 2/4	Lamott, “Shitty first drafts”	Introductory Essay
	Th 2/7	* VIRTUAL CLASS while Prof. Mickey attends SWS conference! Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2008. “Dueling Dualisms.”	Check Sakai for instructions and assignment.
Week 3: Feminist and Postcolonial Critiques of Science <i>Writing focus: Reliable sources</i>	M 2/11	Lorde, Audre. 1983. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House.” Appleton, Helen, Maria E. Fernandez, Catherine L.M. Hill, and Consuelo Quiroz. 2011. “Gender and Indigenous Knowledge.”	Research Handout for Paper 1 *Schedule meetings with me to discuss Paper 1
	Th 2/14	Lamott, “Someone to read your drafts.” Harvard’s Guide to Using Sources webpage, especially all sections of “Evaluating Sources.” https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/evaluating-web-sources	FBE: Paper 1. Bring one hard copy to class for peer review.

Week 4: Unpacking “Neutral” <i>Writing focus: Paragraphs</i>	* TUES 2/19*	Harding, Sandra. 2001. “After Absolute Neutrality: Expanding ‘Science.’” Haraway, Donna. 1988. “Situated Knowledges.”	Work on Paper 1 revisions, meet with me.
	Th 2/21	Williams, Joseph and Joseph Bizup. “Motivation.”	Paper 1

UNIT II: Constructions of Differences

Week 5: Sex and Gender <i>Writing focus: Developing an argument</i>	M 2/25	Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 1993. “The Five Sexes.”	Discussion questions (Sakai).
	Th 2/28	Williams, Joseph and Joseph Bizup. “Emphasis.”	Bring a convincing op-ed to class. Write 1-page discussion of its strengths/weaknesses *Schedule meetings w/ me to discuss Paper 2.
Week 6: Sexuality <i>Writing focus: Revisions</i>	M 3/4	Servick, Kelly. 2014. “New Support for ‘Gay Gene.’”	FBE: Paper 2, bring one copy to class for peer review
	Th 3/7	Walters, Suzanna. 2014. “The Medical Gayz.”	Work on Paper 2 revisions, meet with me
Week 7: Race & Disability <i>Writing focus: Using evidence</i>	M 3/11	Schiebinger, Londa. 2017. “The hidden stories of medical experimentation on Caribbean slave plantations.”	Paper 2
	Th 3/14	Blum, Linda. 2016. “‘A Strange Coincidence’: Race-ing Disordered Children.”	Discussion questions (Sakai)

UNIT III: Gendering Technologies

Week 8: Technologies of Production <i>Writing focus: Linking the personal to the social</i>	M 3/18	Marx, Karl. “The Machine versus the Worker.” Cockburn, Cynthia. 1985. <i>Machinery of Dominance</i> (Excerpt TBD) Mills, C. Wright. 1959. “The Sociological Imagination.”	1-page reflection on your personal relationship(s) with technology
---	--------	---	--

SPRING BREAK No classes Th 3/21 or week of 3/25.			
Week 9: Medical & Reproductive Technologies <i>Writing focus: Social science writing</i>	M 4/1	Morgan, Kathryn Pauly. 1991. "Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonialization of Women's Bodies."	None.
	Th 4/4	Class meets at 4:30pm at Collins Cinema for Alondra Nelson's talk. Nelson, Alondra. 2016. <i>The Social Life of DNA</i> (Excerpt TBD)	Research Handout for Paper 3. *Schedule to meet with me about Paper 3.
Week 10: Military Technologies <i>Writing focus: Research questions</i>	M 4/8	Edwards, Mark. 2011 "Turning Ideas Into Researchable Questions."	FBE: Paper 3
	Th 4/11	Carol Cohn. 1987. "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals."	Work on Paper 3 revisions, meet with me.

UNIT IV: Activism and the Politics of Difference			
Week 11: Computers, the Internet, and Digital Activism <i>Writing focus: Working with secondary sources</i>	M 4/15	NO CLASS: SUBMIT PAPER 3 via Sakai by 4:00pm.	Paper 3
	Th 4/18	Haraway, Donna. 1990. <i>Simians, Cyborgs, and Women</i> (Excerpts TBD) Edwards, Mark. 2011. "Overview of Writing a Research Paper" and "Borrowing Well from the Literature."	Research Handout 1 for Paper 4
Week 12: Digital Activism, cont'd <i>Writing focus: Breaking down large projects</i>	M 4/22	Start your own background reading for your research topic for Paper 4. Library Research Session.	Research Handout 2 for Paper 4
	Th 4/25	Background reading, cont'd.	Outline for Paper 4
Week 13: Social Movements and Identity Politics <i>Writing focus:</i>	M 4/29	Lamott, "Perfectionism"	FBE: Paper 4, bring one copy for peer review *Schedule meetings with me to discuss Paper 4
	4/29	continued	

<i>Good conclusions</i>	Th 5/2	NO CLASS: Conferences about research paper	Work on Paper 4 revisions, meet with me
Week 14: Is Feminist Science Possible?	M 5/6	Student Presentations	
	Th 5/9	Student Presentations	
*Paper 4 revision due by 4:00pm on Tuesday 5/21.			