**History of Science 251. Feminist Science Studies**

Tuesdays, 6:00-8:45 pm

Science Center 252

Professor Sarah S. Richardson  
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Office hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:30 am, Boylston G-34, by appointment

**Course description:**

This interdisciplinary graduate seminar provides an introduction to central texts, theories, and research methods in scholarship on gender and science. Students will gain a foundation in the historical development of feminist science studies and encounter fundamental and emerging debates in the field. Writing assignments can be tailored to support graduate students in any discipline.

**Topics of special focus:**

* Sex/gender, body, and biology
* Feminist epistemology and philosophy of science
* Feminist methods for scientific research
* Race/gender/sexuality and the reproductive body

**Required books (available at the Harvard Coop & on reserve at Lamont Library; additional required and recommended readings will be available via the course website):**

1. Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
2. Clare, Eli. *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.
3. D'Ignazio, Catherine and Lauren F. Klein. *Data Feminism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020. [Note: Pub date March 2020]
4. Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality.* New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000.
5. Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
6. Haraway, Donna. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science.* New York: Routledge, 1989.
7. Haraway, Donna. *The Haraway Reader.* New York: Routledge, 2004.
8. Jordan-Young, Rebecca M. *Brain Storm: The Flaws in the Science of Sex Differences.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010.
9. Lewis, Sophie. *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism against Family.* New York: Verso, 2019.
10. Longino, Helen E. *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.
11. Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism.* New York: New York University Press, 2018.
12. Roberts, Dorothy E. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1997. [any edition]
13. Schiebinger, Londa. *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

**Course schedule:**

*Class will meet 6-8 pm except on workshopping days. Additional required and recommended readings will be posted on the course website.*

Jan 28: Opening discussion, introduction to feminist science studies, and class overview

*Class presentation sign-up on course website: Jan. 31, 12 noon*

I. Foundations

Feb 4: Women, gender & the origins of Western science (Schiebinger *Mind Has No Sex* or *Nature’s Body* )

Feb 11: Sex/gender/sexuality and embodiment (Fausto-Sterling)

Feb 18: Gender, race, and the reproductive body in biomedicine (Roberts)

Feb 25: Gender, race, and human-animal relations (Haraway *Primate Visions*)

Mar 3: Gender bias in science: Neuroscience (Jordan-Young)

*Paper proposal due March 6, 5 pm*

II. Theories and Methods

Mar 10: Feminist STS: Gender & technoscience (Haraway *Reader*)

8-8:45 pm Workshopping paper proposals

Mar 24: Feminist philosophy of science (Longino)

Mar 31: Epistemic justice (Fricker)

Apr 7: Agential realism & Feminist new materialisms (Barad)

III. New work

Apr 14: *Brilliant Imperfection: Grappling with Cure* (2017)

8-8:45 pm Workshopping research papers

Apr 21: *Full Surrogacy Now: Feminism against Family* (2019)

8-8:45 pm Workshopping research papers

 Apr 28: *Algorithms of Oppression How Search Engines Reinforce Racism* (2018)& *Data Feminism* (2020)

8-8:45 pm Workshopping research papers

*Final paper due May 8, 5 pm*

**Course requirements:**

Course requirements are guided by these objectives for student learning and professional development:

* Mastery of central texts in feminist science studies
* Familiarity with the contributions of leading scholars in feminist science studies
* Contextual understanding of the history and development of the field
* Conversational fluency in core theoretical debates within feminist science studies
* Guided experience developing and situating a research question, relevant to the student’s discipline or interdiscipline, in the field of feminist science studies
* Facility in critical interdisciplinary dialogue
* Pathways for continued professional and intellectual engagement with the field of feminist science studies after the completion of the seminar

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| 10% | **Attendance and participation** |
| 15% | **In-class oral presentation***(10 minutes & 1-page handout.)* |
| 25% | **Weekly 1-page reading response papers***(You may skip 2.)* |
| 50% | **Research paper or alternative with professor’s approval***(20-25 pages, including a 4-page proposal due March 6; circulation of a draft in late April; final due May 8.)* |

**Guidelines for course requirements:**

**1. Class discussion (15%)**

Each week we will read an important and challenging book-length text in feminist science studies, in addition to required and recommended articles posted to the course website. Students should arrive highly prepared, with the texts in hand, ready to engage in vigorous class discussion. I will discuss strategies for efficiently and effectively preparing for class. I will also provide reading questions to focus your approach to the texts. I encourage you to meet with me at least once during the semester to discuss your in-class performance.

* Course attendance
* Completion of required readings
* Vigorous, respectful, and attentive participation in class discussion

**2. Weekly reading responses (25%)**

Due: 12 midnight each Monday

Our class discussion board will permit the continuation of discussion outside of class and provide an opportunity for you to formulate questions and responses to the readings prior to class. These informal\*, exploratory\*\* written reading responses will help you identify topics, themes, questions, and material for your final project.

*\*Informal:* Write clearly enough so that others can understand your thoughts, but formal academic writing style is not required. If you prefer, feel free to use a conversational style. You should include page citations for any quotations, but footnoting is not required. You will not be marked down for minor typos or grammar issues.

*\*\*Exploratory:* This is not a summary. Try out new ideas, pose big questions, explore a tension, venture being wrong.

Requirements:

* + Post by midnight the night before each class
  + Minimum of one type-written page or 500 words (longer is perfectly OK)
  + Posting must evidence critical, original engagement with the texts
  + You may skip 2 posts with no consequences for your grade
  + On the day of your presentation, posting your presentation handout to the discussion forum constitutes your contribution for the week
  + You are encouraged to be active in the discussion forum. Although not required, this will reflect positively on your class participation evaluation. For example, you might post additional articles, upcoming events, and news items relevant to the discussion. You might also respond to others' posts. These additional postings need not conform to length/content requirements of the required posts.

**3. Class presentation (10%)**

* A 10-minute oral presentation offering (1) a brief summary of the contributions of the week’s reading, (2) helpful background and context for understanding the work, and (3) topics for class discussion.
* Provide a one-page handout outlining the key arguments of the week’s readings, as you see them.

Each meeting will begin with a student presentation. The goal of these presentations is to enrich the class discussion with your perspectives and expertise, sharpen your oral presentation skills, and improve your comprehension of the material by teaching it to others.

Sign-ups will open on Jan. 31 at noon, via the course site.  *Advance meeting with professor recommended.*

Presentation elements:

* + Interest the audience in the topic and share what you found interesting, surprising, new, or provocative
  + Briefly outline the key concepts from the day's readings
  + Define any key terms
  + Briefly outline controversies and debates
  + Relate to themes and concepts from the course as a whole
  + Frame questions that promote discussion
  + Maximum of 10 minutes

Evaluation of your presentation will be based on the following elements:

* + *Preparation*: Were you prepared? Is it obvious that you read closely and tried to get help if you needed it?
  + *Clarity*: Was your presentation clear? Did you attempt to simplify complex concepts? Was your presentation organized and well thought-out?
  + *Content*: Did you address all of the items above? You don't necessarily have to include all of them, but you should try to follow the basic outline.
  + *Discussion*: Did your presentation facilitate the discussion? How did you answer questions from the professor and the class?
  + *Oral communication and presentation style*: Did you speak loud enough? Slow enough? Clear enough? Did you have good eye contact with your audience? Were you responsive to the audience? Was your presentation engaging and interesting?

**4. Research paper (50%)**

20-25 page research paper. Requires 4-page proposal with bibliography and advance meeting with professor.

The objective of the final paper is to develop either a *first draft* of a potentially publishable research paper or dissertation chapter or a *research proposal* situating and motivating an original research question through deep engagement with the literature of feminist science studies. As this is an interdisciplinary seminar, it is up to the student, in consultation with the professor, to define the disciplinary and methodological focus of the paper.

**Proposal:** Write a 4-page (double spaced) proposal laying out your research question, the motivation for your question, the sources and methods you will use, the feasibility of the project in the time allotted, and a brief outline. Provide a separate annotated bibliography, properly formatted in the style of your discipline, with at least 8 valid academic sources (note: these may be from our course materials). Under each citation, write a 1-2 sentence summary of the thesis of the source and its relevance to your project.

The professor will respond to your paper or project proposal, and we will workshop it in small groups in class. You may be asked to revise certain aspects of your plan based on this feedback. Your final project should be a polished realization of your proposal. You may use text from the proposal, your discussion board postings, and your class presentation in your final paper.

**Draft workshopping:** To support your writing process, paper drafts will be workshopped in class during our final three sessions. You will be assigned a date for pre-circulating a paper draft during the last two weeks of April, and asked to read and offer critical comment on a paper by a fellow student during each of the draft workshops. The final version is due to the professor by email on May 8.

Writing guidelines:

* + Clear statement of thesis and research question
  + Appropriate situation of research question in the relevant extant literature
  + Advances an original argument or proposes an original research question
  + Uses specific examples, quotations, and details to support the argument
  + The paper has a clear structure and the argument flows logically
  + Clean grammar and spelling

Formatting guidelines:

* + 20-25 pages of main text
  + MS Word format (no PDFs)
  + References and footnotes are not included in the page count and should be appended after the main text
  + Include images and figures if they are discussed in the text (does not count towards required length)
  + Provide complete citations in a consistent, recognized academic citation style of your choice
  + Double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman font
  + 1 inch margins
  + Name and page number on the upper right header of each page

**Course guidelines**

Class announcements:

Announcements will be posted on the course website. Urgent announcements will be sent to your Harvard email account. You are responsible for checking the course website and your Harvard email regularly.

Class attendance:

On-time attendance, preparation, and full participation are expected. More than two absences or late arrivals is grounds for dismissal from the course.

Required reading:

There is a large amount of required reading/week in this class. Please plan accordingly. Recommended readings are not mandatory, but will enhance your understanding of the course material.

Late policy:

Deadlines are firm. Late assignments will incur a half-grade penalty for each day late. The professor reserves the right to not provide written feedback on late work. Extensions are granted only with advance notice and usually only in cases of illness.

Office hours:

You are warmly welcome to visit me in office hours during the semester. Please observe my scheduled office hours, and make an appointment in advance.

Email:

In-person queries are preferred. Keep email to a minimum, and keep it brief and professional. Please visit me in office hours if you have detailed questions about the assignments or readings. Do not rely on email for last minute questions.

Technology policy:

Laptops and tablets are permitted in class as long as sound and social media are off. Phones should be off and stowed away.

Food and drink in class:

This class falls during evening meal time. Please make plans to eat before class. Do not bring dinner to class, as this is disruptive to discussion. Snacks will be provided on longer workshop evenings.

Statement on disabilities:

If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester regarding reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course.

Statement on academic honesty:

Academic dishonesty (cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, facilitating dishonesty) is prohibited and will lead to dismissal from the course and referral to disciplinary procedures.

Statement on collaboration:

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For individual assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts, etc), you must also acknowledge this assistance.