

WGS 2010 Science, Nature, and Gender

Spring 2012, Wednesdays 2 pm – 4 pm (seminar), plus 1 hour section to be arranged (practicum)

Science Center 252

Professor Sarah S. Richardson

Course description:

This seminar examines historical, philosophical, and social dimensions of science through the lens of gender. Students will pursue independent projects as well as explore methods in interdisciplinary and feminist pedagogy through the development of a General Education course on these themes for undergraduates. We will focus on the ways science has helped to construct and enforce cultural gender norms, as well as the ways gender valences scientific language, inflects science's status as an authoritative social institution, and stratifies scientific communities. Course readings will offer a survey of central texts, theories, and methods in scholarship on gender and science.

Required texts available at Harvard Coop: (required and recommended companion readings available on course website)

Barad, Karen Michelle. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000.

Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Primate Visions : Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Holmes, Rachel. *African Queen: The Real Life of the Hottentot Venus*. 1st U.S. ed. New York: Random House, 2007.

Jordan-Young, Rebecca M. *Brainstorm: The Flaws in the Science of Sex Differences*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Keller, Evelyn Fox. *Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death: Essays on Language, Gender, and Science*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Longino, Helen E. *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. New York: Harper & Row, 1989.

Roughgarden, Joan. *The Genial Gene: Deconstructing Darwinian Selfishness*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Schiebinger, Londa L. *Has Feminism Changed Science?* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Course schedule:

Date	Seminar, 2-4 pm	Practicum, 1 hr TBA
Jan. 25	Course Overview and Opening Discussion	---
Feb. 1	Merchant, Carolyn. <i>The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution</i> . New York: Harper & Row, 1989.	---
Feb. 8	Holmes, Rachel. <i>African Queen: The Real Life of the Hottentot Venus</i> . 1st U.S. ed. New York: Random House, 2007.	---
Feb. 15	Haraway, Donna Jeanne. <i>Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science</i> . New York: Routledge, 1989.	Workshop: Basics of course and syllabus design <i>Terry Aladjem, Bok Center</i>
Feb. 22	Keller, Evelyn Fox. <i>Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death: Essays on Language, Gender, and Science</i> . New York: Routledge, 1992.	Workshop: Designing writing assignments <i>James Herron, Director of the Harvard Writing Project</i>
Feb. 29	Longino, Helen E. <i>Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry</i> . Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.	Workshop: Designing multimedia assignments <i>Marlon Kuzmick, Bok Center</i>
Mar. 7	Fausto-Sterling, Anne. <i>Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality</i> . 1st ed. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000.	Workshop: Basics of lecture design and presentation <i>Elise Morrison, Associate Director for Speaking Instruction, Bok Center</i>
Mar. 16	---	Draft syllabus due by email to professor by 5 pm
Mar. 21	Jordan-Young, Rebecca M. <i>Brainstorm: The Flaws in the Science of Sex Differences</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.	Workshop: Teaching with technology <i>Katie Vale, Director of Academic Technology Group</i>
Mar. 28	Roughgarden, Joan. <i>The Genial Gene: Deconstructing Darwinian Selfishness</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.	---
Mar. 30 (Friday)	---	Half-day workshop @ Barker Center: "The Feminist Classroom"

		required
April 4	Barad, Karen Michelle. <i>Meeting the Universe Halfway : Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning</i> . Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.	Workshop: Promoting active learning in class <i>Bok Center Staff</i>
April 11	Schiebinger, Londa L. <i>Has Feminism Changed Science?</i> Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999.	Workshop: Teaching with objects <i>Christina Hodge, Peabody Museum</i>
April 18	Presentation and workshopping of lectures and PowerPoints with Bok Center staff	(continued as necessary)
April 25	Presentation and workshopping of lectures and PowerPoints with Bok Center staff	(continued as necessary)
May 8	Final Syllabus, Lecture, PowerPoint, and List of Repository Contributions Due by 5 pm in course site dropbox	

Course requirements:

Each week we will read an important and challenging book-length text in gender studies of science. The expectation is that students will arrive highly prepared and will engage in vigorous class discussion. The assignments for this seminar are unique. Rather than writing a research paper, you will design and write a lecture and PowerPoint presentation for a general education undergraduate course on science and gender. In addition, you will design your own course syllabus on a topic related to our course themes. To support these assignments, this seminar will include workshops and discussions on course design, lecture writing, effective use of PowerPoint technology, and feminist and interdisciplinary pedagogy.

Assignments and Grading:

Class participation (20%)

- Course attendance
- Vigorous, respectful, and attentive participation in class discussion

Class presentation (15%)

- A 10-15 minute oral presentation offering (1) a brief summary of the contributions of the week's reading, (2) charitable and constructive critical commentary, and (3) topics or questions for class discussion.
- Provide a one-page handout with an outline of your remarks and discussion questions, and references to any key passages that you will discuss.

Twenty contributions to course “shared materials” repository (15%)

- The class will build a repository of excellent materials for teaching undergraduate courses on gender and science. These materials will be downloaded to a CD for each student to take at the conclusion of the course.
- Upload at least 20 items (sample syllabi, possible course readings, primary sources, images, web links, or other materials), with full citation information where relevant, to the “shared materials” folder on the course website.
- The expectation is that this will be a dynamic and growing repository that can serve as a resource for the class. Thus, please upload materials as you find them over the course of the semester.
- These *may* overlap with materials that you use in your syllabus and/or lecture.
- For evaluation purposes, submit a Word document with a list of your contributions to the repository along with the submission of your final assignments on May 8. The list should be numbered and each item should be annotated with a one-sentence description.

Course proposal and syllabus (25%)

- A course title, description, lecture titles, readings, and 2 sample assignments for a 24-lecture undergraduate course on a topic of your choosing related to gender and science (topic to be approved by professor).
- A 2-3 pp. proposal, double-spaced, locating the disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary location of the course, defending its scope and depth, and providing the logic of the readings, topics, and assignments chosen, as well as the overall flow of the course.
- Syllabus draft will be workshopped at the *required* March 30 pedagogy workshop at the Barker Center.

Lecture and PowerPoint (25%)

- A written lecture for a general education undergraduate audience; 20-25 pages, double-spaced, plus references.
- A selection of lecture topics will be provided by the professor – you may also propose a topic.
- Lecture must include one in-class demonstration or active learning exercise.
- An accompanying PowerPoint; 20-30 slides of text and images, minimum of 15 images, fully cited.
- Your lecture should be fascinating, informative, creative, well organized, and appropriately geared to a smart, interdisciplinary undergraduate audience.
- A practice version of your lecture and PowerPoint will be presented and workshopped in class, with the help of Bok Center staff, in the closing class sessions.