Women’s Studies 2111 – FA 2009
Special Topics: Technofeminism

Dr. Jenny Roth
Office: RB-2014
Phone: 766-7116
Email: jroth@lakeheadu.ca
Office hours: Wed. 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

Lectures: T/TH 2:30- 4:00 AT-2004

Welcome to Women’s Studies 2111 Special Topics: Technofeminism. This course will examine gender and technology, past and present. We will consider cyborgs, posthumanism, cyber-performance, avatars, and more. Students will explore the theoretical grounding of, and debates within, cyberfeminism, rethink their bodies in relation to machines, consider the gendered implications of Cybernia [the online world] itself, and how it intersects with RL [real life].

Texts
The following textbook is required and is available at the Bookstore.

Coursepack, Women’s Studies 2111, Special Topics – Cyberfeminism

Note: a number of the readings are available online and some are on library reserve. All readings are required.

Assignments & Grading

Participation 15%
Reading Responses 20%
Paper 35%
Final Exam 30%

Participation (15%)

Please Note: All participants have the right to hold, defend, and promote their views. However, this right exists alongside regulations that protect an individual’s right to education without discrimination or harassment on the basis of gender, race, colour, religion, class, sexual orientation, ability, age, place of origin, etc. Students are required to respect these social and cultural differences. Intents to insult an individual or group of individuals on the basis of their gender, race, etc. and words or symbols that convey hatred or contempt constitute harassment and will not be tolerated. Respect for differences in political awareness and educational development is essential.
Participation rubric (Allegheny College)

**A grade:** You regularly *initiate* discussion. This means coming to class thoroughly familiar with the assigned reading and prepared to raise questions, to open discussion, to identify topics of interest in the reading, and to actively engage other students in the discussion. (Obviously this does not mean monopolizing a discussion, or shutting others out, or talking for its own sake rather than to make a point about the topic under discussion).

**B grade:** You participate regularly and productively. This means coming to class prepared and willing to engage. You differ from A-grade discussants in that the latter are self-starters, who do not rely on the instructor’s questions to set the agenda for discussion.

**C grade:** You participate on a regular basis, though less frequently than a B-grade student. C-grade discussants’ participation may indicate that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials.

**D grade:** You contribute only infrequently to the discussion. D-grade discussants’ indicate that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials.

**F grade:** You do not participate in class discussion. Participation is impossible if the putative participant does not attend class. Frequent absences mandate F grades. Participation that consistently iterates positions which contravene the *Ontario Human Rights Code* will also garner an F grade.

**Reading Responses 20% (2 x 10%)**

250 – 500 words each, Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins.

Due:
Response #1 will be on one reading during the 1st half of the term (Wks. 1-5).
Response #2 will be on one reading during the 2nd half of the term (Wks 6-11).

You will choose the readings to which you want to respond. Your responses will be thoughtful engagements with your chosen reading, so choose a reading that inspires you to think, question your world, or laugh out loud! They can be informal, and informal does not mean sloppy or unprofessional. Your responses will describe the new lines of thought or inquiry that the reading opened up to you (what did it make you think about?), they will raise any possible critiques of the author’s analysis (e.g.: does the author essentialize “woman”? when the author uses the word “sexuality” do they really mean heterosexuality? are any groups ignored or symbolically annihilated by the research presented? etc.), and they will show me that you have not only done the reading, but that you have engaged with it actively and analytically.
Paper 35%
1500 – 1800 words, Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins.
Due: November 18th, 2010, in class (late otherwise, electronic copies will not be accepted [ironically])

Choose from the following questions and write an academic paper. I will expect to see formal writing conventions, although you can write in the First Person, and at least two (2) articles external of course readings used to support your assertions, arguments, and examples. Please come to speak to me about plans for your paper before you begin writing.

- What are the social implications of gendered technology?
- Is posthumanism liberating or oppressive? Or both? Why?
- Is women’s online activism effective?

Plagiarism / Academic Dishonesty

Keep a printout or photocopy of all your work. You are also required to keep the research notes and drafts of your work that produced the assignments. Failure to do so may result in loss of credit for the assignment.

"Plagiarism" shall be deemed to include:

1. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.

2. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.

3. Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

(a) The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.

(b) A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

A copy of the "Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures" including sections on plagiarism and other forms of misconduct may be obtained from the Office of the Registrar
Special Needs – If you have special needs regarding the format or the due dates for the assignments, you must inform me. The appropriate form can be obtained from the Learning Assistance Centre.

Weekly Topics & Readings

Wk. 1 (Sept. 14/16): Introduction – Technofeminism, Cyberfeminism & Posthumanism
Readings:

Wk. 2 (Sept. 21/23): From Typewriters & Microwaves to New Digital Media – A History of Technofeminism, and Beyond
Readings:
- Judy Wajcman, “TechnoCapitalism Meets TechnoFeminism: Women and Technology in a Wireless World.” Labour and Industry 16.3 (2006): 7-20. Available at: http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/retrieve.do?resultListType=RESULT_LIST&contentSet=IAC-Documents&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2CUS%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28JN%2CNone%2C19%29%22Labour+%26+Industry%22%3AAnd%3ALQE%3D%28DA%2CNone%2C8%2920060401%24&inPS=true&sort=DateDescend&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&searchId=R1&retrievedFormat=PDF&currentPosition=2&userGroupName=ocul_lakehead&docLevel=&docId=A153761987&noOfPages=14

Wk. 3 (Sept. 28/3): Cyborg Transformations
Readings:

Wk. 4 (Oct. 5/7): Woman as Interface
Readings:

Wk. 5 (Oct. 12/14): gURLs & Grrrls
Response #1 is due this Thursday in class (late otherwise)
Readings:
Wk. 6 (Oct. 19/24): Avatars, Gender & Power
Readings:

Wk. 7 (Oct. 26/28): Gaming
Readings:

Wk. 8 (Nov. 2/4): Cyberqueer
Readings:
- Sandy Stone, War of Desire and Technology of the Closet (excerpt on library reserve)

Wk. 9 (Nov. 9/11): Cyberfeminism and Parodic Performance
Readings:

Wk. 10 (Nov. 16/18): Blogging Gender
Paper Due Thursday in Class (late otherwise)
Readings:
Wk. 11 (Nov. 23/25): Cyber-race

Readings:

Wk. 12 (Nov. 30/Dec. 2): Concluding Discussions & Exam Review

**Response #2 is due this Thursday in class (late otherwise)**

Readings:

[YOU WILL HAVE TO: ACCESS FULL TEXT / scroll down / VOLUME 19, NUMBER 2, 2007 / scroll down / ‘WHAT’S SO ‘CYBER’ ABOUT IT?’ / PDF VERSION]