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Digital Feminist Theory, 7,5 credits: Spring 2024

PhD course in Gender Studies organized by Södertörn University as part of the graduate school “Gender, Humanities and Digital Cultures” (in collaboration with Uppsala University and Stockholm University).

“Digital Feminist Theory” uses an intersectional feminist approach to gender and digital media and offers a set of theoretical tools, concepts and framing devices for the study of digital connectivity and networked cultures. It moves from foundational texts, such as Donna Haraways (1985) “A cyborg manifesto,” to current ways of theorizing e.g. feminist activism in social media, digital black feminism, digital intimacy and sexuality as well as algorithmic justice and automation. The course provides both in-depth knowledge of central discussions at the intersection of feminist theory and the digital, as well as a set of theoretical lenses to help the PhD students contextualize and develop their own projects.

Schedule

March 12, 10.00-15.00 in PA 239: “Cyborg feminism and technofeminism”

March 19, 10.00-15.00 in PA 239: “Data feminism, digital black and indigenous feminism”

March 26, 10.00-12.00 in PA238 and 13.00-15.00 in PA 239: “Digital intimacy”

Deadline for the final version of course papers: May 26, 2024

Course coordinator and teacher: Jenny Sundén, Professor of Gender Studies, Södertörn University

Teaching format: On site at Södertörn University

Course assessment: The course requires active seminar participation, including short verbal presentations, and a written course paper.

Language: The course will be taught in English. The written paper can be in either English or Swedish (or another Scandinavian language).

Entry requirements: The course is for PhD students. Priority is given to 1) PhD students in the graduate school “Gender, humanities and digital cultures,” and 2) other PhD students in gender studies. Familiarity with feminist theory is expected.

Registration: By February 1, 2024, to: kktadmin@sh.se. For further information about the course, please contact the course coordinator Jenny Sundén, jenny.sunden@sh.se.

Syllabus and preparation

Before each seminar, everyone picks a core idea from or formulates a question to each text, something which you would like to use as a foundation for the seminar discussion. What does the text make you see or think? What would you like to develop further, together? Which new questions do the texts give rise to? The seminars will be focused primarily on unpacking the ideas and questions brought in by the course participants.

In addition to the required readings, the PhD students are expected to pick yet another text – such as an article or a book chapter – for each course session which relates to the theme as well as to their own work. As these are not shared by the entire group, they provide grounds for individual, short presentations (no more than 5 minutes) and function as a collective way of expanding the list of readings. Two weeks ahead of the course start, more details will be provided about the form and schedule for the presentations.

March 12: “Cyborg feminism and technofeminism”

Halberstam, J. (1991) “Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine.” *Feminist Studies* 17(3): 439–460. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178281>.

Haraway, Donna (1991) “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, p 149-181.

Hayles, N. Katherine (1999) “Prologue,” in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. xi-xiv. See <https://press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/321460.html>.

Wajcman, Judy (2004) *TechnoFeminism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

March 19: “Data feminism, digital black and indigenous feminism”

Chun, Wendy (2021) “The Space between Us: Network Gaps, Racism, and the Possibilities of Living in/Difference.” *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 7(2): 1–25.

D'Ignazio, Catherine and Lauren F. Klein (2020) *Data Feminism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

Tekkobe, Cindy (2019) “Listen: Survivance and Decolonialism as Method in Researching Digital Activism,” in Jeremy Hunsinger, Matthew M. Allen and Lisbeth Klastrup (eds.) *Second international handbook of internet research*. Dordrecht: Springer, 979–993.

Steele, Catherine Knight (2021) “When the Black lives that matter are not our own: Digital Black feminism and a dialectic of self and community,” *Feminist Media Studies* 21(5): 860–863, DOI: 10.1080/14680777.2021.1949370.

March 26: "Digital intimacy"

For this seminar, you don't necessarily need to find additional literature. However, you do need to choose between Shaka McGlotten, Melissa Gregg or find another full-length monograph on digital intimacy (or something equivalent) relevant to your own work.

Berlant, Lauren (1998) "Intimacy: A Special issue," *Critical Inquiry* 24(2): 281-288.

Dobson, Amy Shields, Nicholas Carah and Brady Robards (2018) "Digital Intimate Publics and Social Media: Towards Theorising Public Lives on Private Platforms," in Dobson, Robards and Carah (eds.) *Digital Intimate Publics and Social Media*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
file:///Users/shjysn02/Downloads/978-3-319-97607-5_1.pdf.

Gregg, Melissa (2011) *Work's intimacy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

or

McGlotten, Shaka (2013) *Virtual Intimacies: Media, Affect, and Queer Sociality*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sundén, Jenny. 2018. "Queer disconnections: Affect, break, and delay in digital connectivity." *Transformations* 31. http://www.transformationsjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Trans31_04_sunden.pdf.