Sample Syllabus designed by Kate Tierney
Gender & Technology

Course Description

Technology – how did we live without it? We often view technology as having a positive and useful effect on our daily lives. However, there is more to technology than meets the eye. While technological advances have extended life expectancy and created the ability to access knowledge with the touch of a button, technology has other effects on the social world. In this class, we will explore how technology is developed (and for whom) and the impacts it has on society. This course uses a sociological and feminist perspective to explore how technology has impacted and been impacted by gender. We will also explore how these impacts vary by other identities such as race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. By the end of the semester, you should expect to have developed an understanding of the importance of technology from a sociological and feminist perspective (rather than in individual or psychological perspective). In addition, throughout the semester, we will develop reading, writing, and analytical skills, including the application of sociological concepts to the real-world.

Course Goals & Learning Objectives

Sociological Thinking & Content

1. You will be able to describe the sociological perspective and feminism and how each applies to the study of technology
2. You will be able to describe how technologies including the internet, video games, household appliances, medical technology, and reproductive technology interact with gender to reinforce or ameliorate inequality

Critical Thinking & Application

3. You will be able to evaluate how new technologies might be impacted by and impact gender equity
4. You will be able to evaluate and use evidence to critically assess your own assumptions about the form, importance, and role of technology in the social world

Writing Skills

5. You will be able to produce clear and well-organized short essays.
6. You will be able to summarize journal article readings

Course Prerequisites: *None. This course is an introductory course for all undergraduates.*

Course Texts: *There are no required texts for this course. All the readings are available online and are listed below.*

Course Requirements & Evaluation

Weekly Work (Total: 35%)
- *About Me Assignment & Self-Evaluations* (5%)
- *Reading Notes* (10%) – Due by 9:05 AM every day of class via Blackboard. The purpose of these notes is to check completion of reading and to support your ability to recall what you have read for class. In addition, these notes will assist me in identifying any confusing or unclear parts of the readings. You may use these notes on exams and quizzes. A template can be found on Blackboard.
- *Review Quizzes (15%)* – Due every Sunday by midnight. The purpose of these weekly quizzes is to help you assess your knowledge and understanding of readings and lecture materials for the week. In addition, these quizzes will help me to identify any areas of confusion about materials in a timely fashion. These will be posted on Blackboard. I will drop your lowest score.

- *Group Activities* (10%) – These are activities we complete in class. Your grade will be based on completion and participation in group and class activities assigned during class.

Two Exams (10% each, total 20%): This course will have two smaller exams rather than one in the middle of the term. The purpose of having two exams is to provide you with more opportunities to test your knowledge and understanding of the material and for me to provide you feedback on your progress in the course.

Four Short Writing Assignments (30%): The purpose of these short papers is to help you reflect and synthesize your understanding of key topics throughout the course. Rubrics for grading and the full assignment details are on Blackboard. I will provide detailed line edits on your paper to enhance your learning and writing skills if you request them.
1. Writing Assignment 1 (5%): Initial Perceptions (Due within the first week of classes)
   a. In this writing assignment, I will provide you with several short answer questions about the nature of the relationship between gender and technology. The purpose of this assignment is to gauge your current knowledge on this topic. I encourage you to write your responses without any outside sources or course materials. We will return to this paper at the end of the class (Writing Assignment 4)
2. Writing Assignment 2 (10%): Technology in Your Life (Due in Week 5)
   a. In this writing assignment, you will be required to make a list of any technology you use over the course of a few days and assess how it reinforces, conflicts, or breaks down gendered expectations you experience. You should connect your experiences to class-readings.
3. Writing Assignment 3 (10%): Letter to the Editor Style Essay (Due in Week 14)
   a. In this writing assignment, you will be required to pick a technology (new or old) that we have not discussed in class and write a letter-to-the-editor style essay describing how this technology (or the culture around it) has influenced or been influenced by gender and why the general population should care about this topic. You must use theoretical frameworks to support your claims.
4. Writing Assignment 4 (5%) : Final Reflection (Due in Week 16)
   a. In this writing assignment, you will revisit and critique the answers you provided in your first paper. In addition, you will be asked to reflect on the course content and lessons you've learned throughout the semester.

Final Exam (15%) : The final exam for this course will be cumulative and held at the date and time assigned by the University.

Class Policies & Procedures

Instructional Procedure

       In this course, lectures will be kept to a minimum! Research has shown that classic script based lectures are not always a great way to encourage learning. While, at times, short lectures will be used to make specific points or to highlight important information, they will not be the primary vehicle for learning in this class. Instead, we will spend much of our time in class discussing material in groups and engaging in class activities related to the course material. As a result, I will expect that you will come to class prepared, including completing reading assignments and any other assigned materials.

Attendance

       We will spend a considerable amount of time in class discussing material in groups and building upon the readings with activities and mini-lectures. As a result, daily attendance and completing work before class is vital for your success. If you are unable to regularly attend the full class session for any

reason, please seek an alternative course section. Please do not schedule any appointments, trips, meetings, or other activities during our class time. If you have an emergency or other University excused absence, please let me know as soon as you are able.

Office Hours & Contact Info

        I will hold office hours twice a week in my office. I recognize these times may not work for everyone, so you can always email me to arrange another time to meet. I invite you to meet with me regarding class materials and assignments, but you also are welcome to ask more general questions about your major(s), your college experience, or your future plans. Meeting with faculty is a great way to develop rapport and mentorships that can help you build up your professional network, so I encourage you to come talk with me (or other faculty)!

        You can reach me by email. Email works well for simple questions I can answer quickly, and you are also welcome to talk with me immediately before and after class. For longer conversations or more involved questions, I ask that you schedule a time to meet with me. I will let you know if a question received via email requires a meeting.

        One further note about email: I may not receive or have time to respond to emails sent outside of usual business hours (9AM -5 PM, M-F). So, keep this in mind when sending/expecting emails from me. I will do my best to respond to emails received during business hours within 24-hours.

Technology

        Please bring your laptop or similar device with you to each class as I will periodically use PollEverywhere or other online tools during class. Although you will have your laptops for each class, they may only be used for class activities. I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand because note taking on a laptop encourages verbatim transcription, while taking notes by hand is slower, which makes you listen, think, and prioritize the most important themes. If laptops or other devices are misused in class, I may limit their use.

Communications about Class

        I will use Blackboard to communicate with the class about the course. I may make changes or adjustments to readings or assignment due dates throughout the term. You are responsible for checking Blackboard for any changes or modifications.

Class Conduct & Ground Rules
1. Start and end class on time.
2. We will engage respectfully with one another even if, and especially when, we disagree.
3. Raise your hand to participate, this will help me (Kate) make sure no one is dominating the conversation.
4. Try not to generalize about groups (even groups with which you identify) and do not ask another person to speak as a representative of a group.
5. Keep an open mind—enter the classroom dialogue with the expectation of learning something new. Look forward to learning about–and being challenged by–ideas, questions, and points of view that are different than your own.
6. Talk with me about any patterns in discussion that may be impeding full engagement by you or others." If this is not possible, you are encouraged to contact the department chair or another mentor.
7. Inform Kate ahead of time if you need to arrive late or leave early.
8. *Other Class Conduct Rules May be Added as Needed and Agreed Upon by the Class*

Adapted from: Washington University St. Louis. 2009. "Establishing Classroom Ground Rules." *The Teaching Center*. Retrieved February 8, 2018

List of Topics, Sub-Topics, and Sample Readings/Videos

Weekly Topic	Sub-Topics	Sample Readings/Videos
Week 1: Introductions & Getting on the Same Page	• Thinking Sociologically • Defining Gender • Why study these topics together?	• CrashCourse. 2017. What Is Sociology?: Crash Course Sociology #1. (video) • CrashCourse. 2017. Theories of Gender: Crash Course Sociology #33 (video) • Stone Williams, Paula. 2017. "I've Lived as a Man & a Woman -- Here's What I Learned." – TedTalk (video) • "The Genderbread Person V4." Genderbread.org
Week 2: The Internet	• Online Forums • Social Media • Online Dating	• Khazan, Olga. 2015. "The Dark Psychology of the Sexist Internet Commenter." The Atlantic. (https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/01/the-dark-psychology-of-the-sexist-internet-commenter/384497/). • Drakett, Jessica, Bridgette Rickett, Katy Day, and Kate Milnes. 2018. "Old Jokes, New Media – Online Sexism and Constructions of Gender in Internet Memes." Feminism & Psychology 28(1):109–27. • Pew Research Center. 2017. "Social Media Use by Gender." (https://www.pewinternet.org/chart/social-media-use-by-gender/). • Byager, Laura. 2018. "Gender Stereotypes Are Still Alive and Well in the Online Dating World, Study Says." Mashable. (https://mashable.com/article/men-women-gender-roles-online-dating/).
Week 3: Video Games & Gamer Culture	• Masculinity and use of video games • Online Gaming	• Blackburn, Greg and Erica Scharrer. 2019. "Video Game Playing and Beliefs about Masculinity Among Male and Female Emerging Adults." Sex Roles 80(5):310–24. • Campbell, Colin. 2018. "Gaming's Toxic Men, Explained." Polygon. (https://www.polygon.com/2018/7/25/17593516/video-game-culture-toxic-men-explained). • Gabbiadini, Alessandro, Paolo Riva, Luca Andrighetto, Chiara Volpato, and Brad J. Bushman. 2016. "Acting like a Tough Guy: Violent-Sexist Video Games, Identification with Game Characters, Masculine Beliefs, & Empathy for Female Violence Victims." PLoS ONE 11(4). • Jean, Melissa. 2019. "The Complexities of Being a Female Gamer." Medium. Retrieved September 20, 2019 (https://medium.com/swlh/the-complexities-of-being-a-female-gamer-3bc8a1d762f4). • O'Leary, Amy. 2012. "Sexual Harassment in Online Gaming Stirs Anger." The New York Times, August 1.
Week 4: Skill Development for the Course & Household Technologies	• Skill Building Intensive for Writing and Reading Articles • Housework in the past, present and future • Siri & Other Virtual Assistants	*Skill Building:* • "Reading Aloud." *The Writing Center*. • "Reading Journal Articles." *UNC Learning Center* • Resnick, Brian. 2017. "Study: Half of the Studies You Read about in the News Are Wrong." Vox. *Content readings:* • Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "The 'Industrial Revolution' in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20th Century," Technology and Culture, 17 (Jan. 1976): 1-23. • "BBC - Future - Is This the End of Household Chores?" • Specia, Megan. 2019. "Siri and Alexa Reinforce Gender Bias, U.N. Finds." The New York Times, May 22.
Weeks 5-6: Medical Technologies	• Gender & Help Seeking Behaviors • Gender & the Patient	• Landro, Laura. 2019. "Why Men Won't Go to the Doctor, and How to Change That." Wall Street Journal, April 30. • Kiesel, Laura. 2017. "Women and Pain: Disparities in Experience and

and Scientific Discoveries	Experience • Pharmaceuticals & Perceptions of Pain • Genetics & the Human Genome Project • Neurosexism & Neuroscience • Cosmetic Surgery	Treatment." Harvard Health Blog. (https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/women-and-pain-disparities-in-experience-and-treatment-2017100912562). • American Medical Association. 2017. "Women Bear Greater Burden of Opioid Epidemic." (https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/opioids/women-bear-greater-burden-opioid-epidemic). • Sanbonmatsu, Karissa. 2018. The Biology of Gender, from DNA to the Brain. (TedTalk video) • Fine, Cordelia. 2011. Delusions of Gender: How Our Minds, Society, and Neurosexism Create Difference. W. W. Norton & Company. *Specific chapters only • Morgan, Kathryn Pauly 1991 "Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonialization of Women's Bodies." *Hypatia* 6: 26-53 •
Weeks 7-8: Reproductive Technologies	• Hormonal Contraception • Contraception for Men • Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives • Assisted Reproductive Technologies • Ultra-sounds & genetic screenings • Abortion • Sex Selective Abortion • Telemedicine and Abortion	• Martin, Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male Female Roles," Signs 16.3(1991), 485-501. • Amory, John. 2017. How a Male Contraceptive Pill Could Work. • Fresh Air. 2014. "The Great Bluff That Led To A 'Magical' Pill And A Sexual Revolution : Shots - Health News : NPR." Retrieved September 20, 2019 (https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/10/07/354103536/the-great-bluff-that-lead-to-a-magical-pill-and-a-sexual-revolution). • Kristen M.J. Thompson. 2013. "A Brief History of Birth Control in the U.S." Our Bodies Ourselves. Retrieved September 20, 2019 (https://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/book-excerpts/health-article/a-brief-history-of-birth-control/). • Ethics Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine. 2015. "Disparities in Access to Effective Treatment for Infertility in the United States: An Ethics Committee Opinion." Fertility and Sterility 104(5):1104–10. • Lippman, A. 1991. "Prenatal Genetic Testing and Screening: Constructing Needs and Reinforcing Inequities." American Journal of Law & Medicine 17(1–2):15–50. • Sital Kalantry. 2017. "Challenging the Narrative on Sex-Selective Abortion Bans – Ms. Magazine." (https://msmagazine.com/2017/08/25/challenging-narrative-sex-selective-abortion-bans/). • Pollitt, Katha. 2019. "How Abortion Changed the Arc of Women's Lives." May 24. • Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, and University of Chicago Law School - International Human Rights Clinic. 2014. "Replacing Myths With Facts: Sex-Selective Abortion Laws In The United States." International Human Rights Clinic. • Beck, Madelyn. n.d. "Technology Changing Access And Outcomes In Abortion Debate." (https://www.tspr.org/post/technology-changing-access-and-outcomes-abortion-debate).
Week 9: Gender and STEM Fields	• Gender Socialization & Bias • Stereotype Threat • Studies of Women's success in STEM • Efforts to address	• Wallop, Harry. 2014. "Do Pink Toys Stop Women from Becoming Scientists?" July 29. • LaFrance, Adrienne. 2016. "How to Play Like a Girl." The Atlantic. (https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2016/05/legos/484115/). • Hill, Catherine, 2019 "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics." AAUW: Empowering Women Since

	inequality in STEM	• 1881. (https://www.aauw.org/research/why-so-few/). • Baker, Erica Joy. How Do We Bridge the "Anxiety Gap" at Work? (Video, TedTalk)
Week 10: Gender & Tech Start Ups	• Funding in for Start-Ups and bias in funding entrepreneurs	• Miller, Claire Cain. 2010. "Why So Few Women in Silicon Valley?" The New York Times, April 17. • Brooks, Alison Wood, Laura Huang, Sarah Wood Kearney, and Fiona E. Murray. 2014. "Investors Prefer Entrepreneurial Ventures Pitched by Attractive Men." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 111(12):4427–31.
Weeks 11-12: Theoretical Perspectives & Their Application	• Cyborg Feminism • Feminist Theories • Feminist Biology	• Wajcman, Judy. "Feminist Theories of Technology." Cambridge Journal of Economics, 2009: 1-10 • Haraway, Donna, "Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century," in Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature, New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 147-181 • Speed, Barbara. 2014. "How Feminist Biology Is Challenging Science's Gender Biases." The Guardian, May 18.
Weeks 13-14: Intersectional Identities & Technology	• Defining intersectionality • Race, gender, and class in technological identities • Eugenics & Forced Sterilization	• Crosley-Corcoran, Gina. 2014. "Explaining White Privilege To A Broke White Person." Huffington Post. • Khan Academy Medicine. 2015. *Intersectionality	Social Inequality	MCAT	Khan Academy*. (video) • *Optional (content warning:Violence):* Kimberlé Crenshaw. 2016. The Urgency of Intersectionality. (video) • Eglash, Ron, "Race, Sex, and Nerds: From Black Geeks to Asian American Hipsters," Social Text 20.2(2002): 49-64. • Lisa Ko. 2016. "Unwanted Sterilization and Eugenics Programs in the United States." Independent Lens. Retrieved September 20, 2019 (http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/unwanted-sterilization-and-eugenics-programs-in-the-united-states/). • Roberts, Dorothy E. 2009. "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?" Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 34(4):783–804.
Weeks 15-16: The Future of Technology & Gender	• Future of the Human Body • Using Technology to Combat Sexism	• McRae, Lucy. How Can Technology Transform the Human Body? (video) • Singh-Kurtz, Sangeeta. n.d. "Researchers Built a Smart Dress to Show How Often Women Are Groped at Clubs." Quartzy. (https://qz.com/quartzy/1477709/oglivys-smart-dress-shows-how-often-women-are-groped-at-clubs/). • Mairya Brussevich, Era Dabla-Norris, and Salma Khalid. 2019. "Is Technology Widening the Gender Gap? Automation and the Future of Female Employment." IMF. (https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2019/05/06/Is-Technology-Widening-the-Gender-Gap-Automation-and-the-Future-of-Female-Employment-46684).