

Technologies of Identification

FILM 240

Mon 10:00-1:00pm
Dwinelle 226
No Lab

Prof. Jacob Gaboury
Office Hours: Wed 12-2pm
Office Location: 6223 Dwinelle

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course investigates how computational media have come to shape the form and function of identity in contemporary society, working from the premise that digital technologies have conscripted users into systems of compulsory identification with or as a set of discrete categories for the purpose of value extraction largely divorced from or in direct contradiction with a radical politics of difference. Given this transformation, it seems crucial that those disciplines which have, for decades, worked and struggled both with and against identity as the basis for a radical politics find new ways to address and critique this re-articulation of identity in the service of new forms of power. To this end we will explore contemporary work in queer, feminist, disability, and critical race theory as it engages - or fails to engage - the transformative effect of digital media today. Alongside these readings we will explore several contemporary technologies of identification. Ultimately we will ask what function identity serves in our contemporary society, and how we might begin to reimagine the ways we critique and engage technical systems.

Required Texts

NOTE: All texts are available for download via bCourses, and it is essential that you bring a copy of the readings to each class and refer to them in our discussion. The following books will be read in full and should be purchased as physical copies:

Benjamin, Ruha. *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

Hester, Helen. *Xenofeminism*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

09/23

NO CLASS

Medienwissenschaft Working Group
Los Angeles, CA

09/30

New Jim Code

Benjamin, Ruha. *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code*. John Wiley & Sons, 2019.

Supplemental:

Benjamin, Ruha, ed. *Captivating Technology: Race, Carceral Technoscience, and Liberatory Imagination in Everyday Life*. Duke University Press, 2019.

10/07

Black Data

Noble, Safiya Umoja. "Google search: Hyper-visibility as a means of rendering black women and girls invisible." *InVisible Culture* 19 (2013).

McGlotten, Shaka. "Black data." *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies* (2016): 262-86.

Jackson, Lauren Michele. "We need to talk about digital blackface in reaction GIFs." *Teen Vogue* 2 (2017).

Artist, American. "Black Goopy Universe" *Unbag*. January 11, 2018.

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Race and/as Technology; or, How to Do Things to Race," *Camera Obscura* (2009), pp. 7 – 35.

Supplemental:

Galloway, Alexander. "Black box, black bloc." *Communization and its discontents: Contestation, critique, and contemporary struggles* (2011): 238-249.

Sexton, Jared. "The social life of social death: On Afro-pessimism and Black optimism." In *Time, Temporality and Violence in International Relations*, pp. 85-99. Routledge, 2016.

10/14

Data Colonialism

- Sadowski, Jathan. "When data is capital: Datafication, accumulation, and extraction." *Big Data & Society* 6, no. 1 (2019): 2053951718820549.
- Couldry, Nick, and Ulises A. Mejias. "Data colonialism: Rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject." *Television & New Media* 20, no. 4 (2019): 336-349.
- Milan, Stefania, and Emiliano Treré. "Big Data from the south (s): Beyond data universalism." *Television & New Media* 20, no. 4 (2019): 319-335.
- Madianou, Mirca. "Technocolonialism: digital innovation and data practices in the humanitarian response to refugee crises." *Social Media + Society* 5, no. 3 (2019): 2056305119863146.

Supplemental:

- Shaxson, Nicholas. "Oil, corruption and the resource curse." *International Affairs* 83, no. 6 (2007): 1123-1140.
- Ricaurte, Paola. "Data Epistemologies, The Coloniality of Power, and Resistance." *Television & New Media* 20, no. 4 (2019): 350-365.

10/21

Genomic Indigeneity

- TallBear, Kim. "Genomic articulations of indigeneity." *Social Studies of Science* 43, no. 4 (2013): 509-533.
- Duster, Troy. "Selective arrests, an ever-expanding DNA forensic database, and the specter of an early-twenty-first-century equivalent of phrenology." *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience* (2008).
- Vanouse, Paul. "Discovering nature, apparently: Analogy, DNA imaging, and the Latent Figure Protocol." *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience* (2008).
- Doucet-Battle, James. "Bioethical Matriarchy: Race, Gender, and the Gift in Genomic Research." *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 2, no. 2 (2016).

Supplemental:

- TallBear, Kim. *Native American DNA: Tribal belonging and the false promise of genetic science*. U of Minnesota Press, 2013.

10/28

NO CLASS

Society for the History of Technology
Milan, Italy

11/04

Crip Technoscience

Hamraie, Aimi, and Kelly Fritsch. "Crip technoscience manifesto." *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 5, no. 1 (2019).

Hamraie, Aimi. "Mapping Access: Digital Humanities, Disability Justice, and Sociospatial Practice." *American Quarterly* 70, no. 3 (2018): 455-482.

Mills, Mara. "On disability and cybernetics: Helen Keller, Norbert Wiener, and the hearing glove." *differences* 22, no. 2-3 (2011): 74-111.

Sobchack, Vivian. "A leg to stand on: Prosthetics, metaphor, and materiality." *The prosthetic impulse: From a posthuman present to a biocultural future* (2006): 17-41.

Supplemental:

Hamraie, Aimi. *Building access: Universal design and the politics of disability*. U of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Kim, Eunjung. "Continuing Presence of Discarded Bodies: Occupational Harm, Necro-Activism, and Living Justice." *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 5, no. 1 (2019).

11/11

NO CLASS

Veteran's Day

11/18

Xenofeminism

Hester, Helen. *Xenofeminism*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

Supplemental:

Cuboniks, Laboria. "Xenofeminism: A politics for alienation." *laboriacuboniks.net*. (2015).

11/25

Queergaming

Clark, Naomi. "What is queerness in games, anyway?" *Queer game studies* (2017): 3-14.

Chang, Edmond. "Queergaming." *Queer game studies* (2017): 15-23.

Anthropy, Anna "The Problem with Videogames" in *Rise of the videogame zinesters*. Seven Stories Press, 2012.

Ruberg, Bonnie. "No fun: Queer Affect and the Disruptive Potential of Video Games that Disappoint, Sadden, and Hurt." in *Video games have always been queer*. NYU Press, 2019.

Stone, Kara. "Time and Reparative Game Design: Queerness, Disability, and Affect." *Game Studies* 18, no. 3 (2018).

Yang, Robert. "Gay Sex Games Parts 0, 1, 2" *Radiator Design Blog*. December 16, 19, 27, 2015.

Supplemental:

Phillips, Amanda. "Welcome to my fantasy zone: Bayonetta and queer femme disturbance." *Queer game studies* (2017): 109-123.

12/02

Contra-Internet

Browne, Simone, and Zach Blas. "Beyond the Internet and All Control Diagrams." *The New Inquiry* (2017).

Steyerl, Hito. "Too much world: Is the Internet dead?." *e-flux journal* 49 (2013): 1-10.

Hu, Tung-Hui. "Wait, then Give Up: Lethargy and the Reticence of Digital Art." *journal of visual culture* 16, no. 3 (2017): 337-354.

Keyes, Os, Josephine Hoy, and Margaret Drouhard. "Human-Computer Insurrection: Notes on an Anarchist HCI." In *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, p. 339. ACM, 2019.

Supplemental:

Blas, Zach. "Contra-Internet." *e-flux journal* 74 (2016).

12/16

FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

ASSESSMENT

Engagement: 10%

Presentations: 20%

Weekly Reflections: 20%

Final Presentation: 10%

Final Project: 40%

ENGAGEMENT

I expect you to attend and actively engage in class. You will notice that you are being graded not simply on your attendance, but on your engagement with the class. Engagement can mean any number of things, from asking questions in class to engaging course material both in and out of class. I recognize that different students have different learning styles, and may find it challenging to speak up every day in discussion. The important thing is that you find ways to make your engagement legible to me as best you can. If you think you are struggling with this, please meet with me during office hours to discuss.

PRESENTATIONS

Twice over the course of the semester, you will be responsible for leading discussion on the class readings for that day. Each class period I will begin with a 20-30 minute lecture/presentation on the broader framework of the reading we have done, its disciplinary home and historical context. Your responsibility will be to stick closely to the text, draw out its arguments and conflicts, and lead the class through key concepts that we might derive from the work. You are required to produce a handout that functions as a supplement to your presentation and the texts. You are likewise encouraged to supply media objects to help us think through and apply the readings to our own work.

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

(adapted from Lily Irani)

Each week, I ask you to spend time reflecting and synthesizing the readings for the week. I offer two modes for doing this:

1. **Precis:** a summary, reflection, and critical inquiry into the readings. The précis is a place where you can explicitly draw connections and contrasts between issues that animate your scholarship and the week's readings.

You should focus on generous engagement, linking the readings to our discussions or to projects you are interested in. Obey the spirit, not the rule, so other reflective forms like field notes are fine.

2. Proposition: low-stakes sketches of one or two forms of materialized intervention -- including but not limited to design interventions, tactical media, or media production -- motivated by the insights, problematics, or critiques of the readings. Devote a paragraph (or more if you need) explaining the link between course materials and the sketches.

You will need to post this material to the class bCourses by 11:59pm Sunday evening before class. You do not need to write a reflection for the weeks you present.

FINAL PROJECT

Your final project is due on December 16 and can take one of three forms:

1. Design Intervention. Identify a problem, discuss relevant literature, and prototype an alternative.
2. Art Object. Produce an original work that engages one of the major theoretical themes of the course, supplemented by a statement that draws out specific claims and describes the creative process/practice.
3. Formal Essay. Make an original contribution to one of the topics/technologies discussed in our readings. This document may serve as the basis for a future publication, dissertation chapter, or prospectus.

Design interventions and artist statements will be shorter than case studies, but will be supplemented by a functional prototype or aesthetic object. Case studies will take the shape of a formal paper of 15-20 pages. We will meet during finals week to give formal 10-minute presentations of our work and to celebrate the end of the semester. You are required to meet with me in my office hours to discuss your project prior to the end of the semester.

POLICY ON INCOMPLETES

I may offer extensions on writing assignments only if you provide me with at least three days' notice and sufficient evidence that you are working on an idea that requires more time. This does not guarantee an extension, but rather is the base requirement for a request. Do not ask for an extension the day before an assignment is due, or if you have not started writing yet. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 a grade for each day they are late (B+ to a B, B to a B-, etc.).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Any suspected instance of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic integrity page at the Center for Student Conduct's website at: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity>.

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

If you have a documented physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Berkeley Disabled Students Program, 260 César E. Chávez Student Center, #4250, (510) 643-0518. They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential.