

**New York University Tandon School of Engineering**  
Department of Culture, Technology and Society, Science and Technology Studies  
Course Outline and Syllabus STS-UY 3904

Special Topics in STS: Queer Values

## Queer Futures

**Spring 2019**

**Professor Jordan Kraemer**

T-Th 2:00pm-3:50pm; Rogers Hall, Room 601

To contact professor: jk5773@nyu.edu  
Dibner, 1st Floor, Room LC 130  
Phone: 646-997-3565  
Office hours: Tuesdays, 1-2pm, or by appointment

### Course Pre-requisites

Completion of first year writing requirements and One Level 2 STS Cluster HuSS Elective and instructor's permission.

### Course Description

New technologies, from social media and smart homes to gene editing and AI, shape our lives in new and often unpredictable ways. Although technology may seem to develop apart from society, social and cultural studies of science and technology (science and technology studies or STS), demonstrate that technology is shaped by history, social conditions, and cultural context such as dominant norms and values. Since the first factories of the 18th century, modern technologies have been designed with particular users and bodies in mind. Feminist theories of science and technology find that understandings of gender and sex affect—and often determine—technology design and use. Queer theory pushes further these questions to ask how sexuality, identity, personhood, emotions, and materiality help us understand technology and its implications for society and the future.

This course introduces students to the intersection of feminist STS and queer studies, to examine how cultural norms around bodies, identity, selfhood, gender, and sexuality shape the production of knowledge and expertise. We will engage with foundational theories and concepts, including heteronormativity, the social construction of technology, the production of space and place, and the relationship between power, knowledge, and subjectivity. We will explore these themes through case studies and topics such as cyborgs, monsters, and other nonhumans, queer time and space, digital media, public health, trans studies, embodiment, queer futurity, and more. The course is based around reading, writing, and discussion.

### Course Goals

In this course, you will learn:

1. to **understand** concepts in queer theory and feminist technology studies.
2. to **analyze** cultural and social understandings of sexuality and gender and how they shape science and technology, through empirical examples.
3. to **identify and explain** implications of queer perspectives for understanding the production of technology scientific knowledge in different cultural contexts

4. to **envision or propose** alternative ways of understanding and imagining science and technology in relation to bodies, selves, identities, kinship, and social formations.

## Course Structure

Weekly meetings will consist of short lectures, discussion, and group work, along with weekly readings. Please come prepared each day to discuss the assigned readings.

## Readings

All readings will be made available through the course website or Dibner reserves.

### Optional and recommended texts are:

- J. Halberstam. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: NYU Press.
- The Cybercultures Reader*, Bell, David, and Barbara M Kennedy, eds. London, New York: Routledge. 2000.
- N. Katherine Hayles. 1999. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. University of Chicago UP.
- The Transgender Studies Reader*. Susan Stryker, Stephen Whittle, Eds. New York: Routledge.
- Queer Times, Queer Becomings*. Eds. Tuhkanen, Mikko and McCallum, E. L. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Mary L. Gray. 2009. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. New York: NYU Press.

### Additional resources

Queer STS: Part 1 <http://hasts.mit.edu/2013/12/04/queer-sts-part-1/>  
 Queer STS: Part 2 <http://hasts.mit.edu/2013/12/04/queer-sts-part-2/>  
 The Queer Futures Collective <https://www.queerfutures.com/>  
 Queer Geek Theory <http://www.queergeektheory.org/classes/>  
 Digital Pedagogy: Queer <https://digitalpedagogy.mla.hcommons.org/keywords/queer/>

## Course requirements

Participation: 10%  
 Reading response (3): 30%  
 Class presentation: 10%  
 Project proposal & bibliography: 10%  
 Final paper, draft: 15%  
 Final paper, revised: 25%

### Participation (10%)

This is a reading and writing intensive course. We will discuss the weekly readings in depth, so come prepared with notes and questions about the readings each week. Participation includes contributing to class discussions, listening actively to others, and being present and on time for each class meeting.

### Reading Responses, 3 (10% each, 30% total)

You will submit three guided reading responses to three separate readings throughout the term, **due by midnight Friday, Feb. 15, Mar. 15, and Apr. 19.**

### Class presentation (10%)

You will present one of your reading responses to the class, to guide class discussion, including a case study or example from current events.

**Project proposal & bibliography (10%)**

You will propose your final paper topic partway through the term, including a one page bibliography. **Due by midnight, Friday, April 5.**

**Final paper, draft (15%)**

In your final paper, you will combine theories and concepts from class readings and discussion to analyze a case study, current event, or original mini-research study related to science and technology (such as historical sources, works of art, literature, or visual media, or ethnographic research). You must use course concepts and readings to understand your topic and show how queer and feminist perspectives offer new insights into a scientific or technological practice. Alternatively, you may propose a new technological or scientific development that would integrate queer and feminist perspectives and readings from class, and assess its social and cultural implications. You will submit a complete draft, with bibliography, at the end of the semester. **Due by midnight, Monday April 29.**

**Final paper, revised (25%)**

You will incorporate peer feedback and my comments, address any recommended further readings, and revise your draft final paper as needed. **Due by midnight, Friday May 17.**

**Policies**

**Attendance & Absences** Attendance is required as part of participation and will be reflected in your participation grade. You are permitted one unexcused absence, no questions asked, per term (including add/drop days at the beginning of the course). For each subsequent unexcused absence, your participation grade will decrease by one-half of a letter grade.

IF YOU HAVE FOUR OR MORE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE.

Excused absences include observance of religious holidays, participation in athletic events, and job or graduate school interviews for seniors (2 maximum per student for interview-related absences). For ANY/ALL of these types of absences to be considered excused, you must inform me of your absence no later than the class prior to your absence. Emailing me the day before or telling me after the class you missed will result in your absence being unexcused.

**Late work & extensions** I do not typically grant extensions except for extenuating circumstances. You must secure approval at least one week in advance of the deadline, barring unforeseen exigencies. Papers handed in after the deadline without prior approval will in most cases be penalized one-third of a full letter grade per day.

**Email & communication** I will try to respond to all emails promptly, but please allow up to 24 hours (or 48 hours over the weekend) for me to get back to you.

**Technology in the classroom** Devices are permitted in the classroom when used to participate in class (such as note-taking or class research). Please minimize their use to prevent distracting yourself or others.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. What is plagiarism? Plagiarism occurs when you use another's words, ideas, assertions, data or figures and do not acknowledge that you have done so. In simple

terms, plagiarism is a form of theft. If you use the words, ideas or phrasing of another person or from published material, you must:

- Use quotation marks around the words and cite the source.
- Alternatively, you may paraphrase or summarize acceptably and cite the source.

If you use charts, graphs, data sets or numerical information obtained from another person or from published material, you must also cite the source. Whether you quote directly or paraphrase the information, you must acknowledge your sources by citing them. In this way, you have the right to use another's words by giving that person credit for the work he or she has done. You must provide accurate source attribution in your response reflections for this class.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, & Assignments

### Part I: Theoretical Foundations

#### Week 1 Material Power

Jan. 29

- Video: “Humans Need Not Apply,” CGP Grey, Aug. 13, 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Pq-S557XQU>
- Video: “The Problem With Heteronormativity,” Queer 2.0, NBC Out with Jacob Tobia, Sept. 30 2016 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJ3K\\_oS6ZmU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJ3K_oS6ZmU)

Jan. 31

- Cynthia Cockburn 1981 “The Material of Male Power.” *Feminist Review* 9: 41-58.
- Karl Marx, Capital Vol. 1, Sections 1, “The Development of Machinery,” and 5, “The Strife Between Workman and Machine.”

*Further reading:*

Cynthia Cockburn 1983 “Caught in the Wheels.” *Marxism Today*.

#### Week 2 The Power of the Closet

Feb. 5

- Michel Foucault 1978 *History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, “The Perverse Implantation.”
- Essay: Jacob Tobia, “LGBTQIA: A Beginner’s Guide to the Great Alphabet Soup Of Queer Identity,” Mic.com, Mar. 2, 2013 <https://mic.com/articles/28093/lgbtqia-a-beginner-s-guide-to-the-great-alphabet-soup-of-queer-identity#>

Feb. 7

- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick 1990 *Epistemology of the Closet*, University of California Press. Introduction.
- Essay: Nyx McLean, “The trouble with making LGBTIAQ people live on heterosexuals’ terms.” *The Conversation*, June 24, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/the-trouble-with-making-lgbtiaq-people-live-on-heterosexuals-terms-98392>

#### Week 3 Feminism and Technology: Constructivism

Feb. 12

- Emily Martin. 1991. “The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles.” *Signs*.
- Judy Wajcman. 2009. “Feminist Theories of Technology.” *Camb. J. Econ.* 34(1): 143-152.

Feb. 14

- Wendy Faulkner. 2001. “The Technology Question in Feminism: A View from Feminist Technology Studies,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 24(1): 79–95.
- Essay: Meagan Hunter. “I’m Out of a Job Because My Boss Didn’t Think I Look Like a Woman.” ACLU, Jan. 16, 2019. <https://www.aclu.org/blog/womens-rights/womens-rights-workplace/im-out-job-because-my-boss-didnt-think-i-look-woman>

*Further reading:*

Landström, Catharina. 2007. “Queering Feminist Technology Studies.” *Feminist Theory* 8(1):7–26.

#### Feb. 15 First Reading Response Due by Midnight

*Further reading:*

- Judy Wajcman 2004 *TechnoFeminism*. Polity. Read Introduction (pp. 1-9); Chapter 1 (pp. 10-31).  
 Lucy Suchman 2008 Chapter 6: Feminist STS and the Sciences of the Artificial. In *The Handbook of Science and Technology Studies*. Edward J Hackett, ed. MIT Press.  
 Deborah Johnson, 2009 Sorting Out the Question of Feminist Technology. In *Feminist Technology*. Linda Layne, Sharra Vostral, and Kate Boyer, eds. Pp. 1–17. University of Illinois Press.

**Week 4 Identity & Subjectivity**

Feb. 19

- Judith Butler. 2006. “Doing Justice to Someone.” In *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Susan Stryker, Stephen Whittle, Eds. New York: Routledge. Pp. 183-193.
- Essay: Judith Butler. *New Statesman*. “The backlash against ‘gender ideology’ must stop.” Jan. 21, 2019. <https://www.newstatesman.com/2019/01/judith-butler-backlash-against-gender-ideology-must-stop>

Feb. 21

- Tom Boellstorff. “BUT DO NOT IDENTIFY AS GAY: A Proleptic Genealogy of the MSM Category.” *Cultural Anthropology* 26(2): 287–312.
- Film (in class): *Paris is burning*. Livingston, Jennie. Lionsgate, 2012 [1992].

*Further reading:*

- Jennifer Terry. “The Seductive Power of Science in the Making of Deviant Subjectivity.” Halberstam, Judith and Ira Livingston, Eds. 1995. *Posthuman Bodies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Pp. 135-161.

**Week 5 Cyborgs**

Feb. 26

- Donna Haraway 1991 “A Cyborg Manifesto.” In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.
- Essay: Tomoko Tamari interviews Jennifer Robertson on Robo-Sexism in Japan, *Theory, Culture & Society*, Sept. 22, 2010. <https://www.theoryculturesociety.org/tomoko-tamari-interviews-jennifer-robertson-on-robo-sexism-in-japan/>

Feb. 28

- Allucquere Rosanne (Sandy) Stone 2007 (1991). “Will the Real Body Please Stand Up?: Boundary stories about virtual cultures.” In *The Cybercultures Reader*, Bell, David, and Barbara M Kennedy, eds. London, New York: Routledge: 433-455.

*Further reading:*

- Sandy Stone 1995 *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*. Cambridge: MIT Press.  
 Karen Barad 1996 “Meeting the Universe Halfway: Realism and Social Constructivism Without Contradiction.” *Feminism*.

**Part II: Queering Technology****Week 6 Queer Time, Queer Futurity**

Mar. 5

- J. Jack Halberstam. 2005. “Queer Temporality and Postmodern Geographies.” In *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: NYU Press, 2005.
- Essay: Sarah Jaffe. “Queer Time: The Alternative to ‘Adulting.’” *JSTOR Daily*, January 10, 2018. <https://daily.jstor.org/queer-time-the-alternative-to-adulting/>

Mar. 7

- José Esteban Muñoz. 2009. "Introduction: Feeling Utopia." In *Cruising Utopias: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: NYU Press.

### **Week 7 Monsters & Animals**

Mar. 12

- J. Halberstam 1995 "Parasites and Perverts," In *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 1-27.
- Essay: Jill Lepore, The Strange and Twisted Life of "Frankenstein." *The New Yorker*, Life and Letters, February 12 & 19, 2018 <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/02/12/the-strange-and-twisted-life-of-frankenstein>

Mar. 14

- Jennifer Terry. 2000. "'Unnatural Acts' in Nature: The Scientific Fascination with Queer Animals." *GLQ* 6 (2): 151-193.

*Further reading:*

Donna Haraway 1991 "The promises of monsters: A regenerative politics for inappropriate/d others," in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. A. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural Studies*. New York, Routledge, 295-337.

Noreen Giffney and Myra Hird 2008 *Queering the Non/Human*. Ashgate.

Barad, Karen. 2011. "Nature's Queer Performativity." *Qui Parle* 19(2): 121-58.

### **Mar. 15 Second Reading Response Due by Midnight**

### **Mar. 18-24 SPRING RECESS**

### **Week 8 Embodiment**

Mar. 26

- N. Katherine Hayles 1999 Prologue & Introduction. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. University of Chicago UP.
- Essay: Anna Mollow, "Fatphobia Is a Queer and Feminist Issue." *Bitch Media*. May 10, 2013. <https://www.bitchmedia.org/article/sized-up-fat-feminist-queer-disability>.

Mar. 28

- Julian Dibbell 1998 "A Rape in Cyberspace (Or TINYSOCIETY, and How to Make One)."
- Film (in class): *Ghost in the Shell*. Mamoru Oshii. Lincolnshire, IL: Manga Entertainment, 1997.

*Further reading:*

Susan Stryker 2000 "Transsexuality: The Postmodern Body and/as Technology." In *The Cybercultures Reader*, Bell, David, and Barbara M Kennedy, eds. London, New York: Routledge (Chapter 37).

### **Week 9 Queer Online**

Apr. 2

- Janne Bromseth and Jenny Sunden. 2011. "Queering internet studies: Intersections of gender and sexuality." In *The Handbook of Internet Studies*. Ed. Mia Consalvo and Charles Ess.

Apr. 4

- Mary L. Gray. 2009. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. New York: NYU Press. Selections.
- Podcast: <https://longestshortesttime.com/episode-144-the-accidental-gay-parents-5-update>

**Apr. 5 Project Proposal Due by Midnight***Further reading:*

Szulc, L 2015 “Banal Nationalism and Queers Online: Enforcing and Resisting Cultural Meanings of .Tr.” *New Media and Society* 17(9): 1530–1546.

**Part III: Queer Possibilities****Week 10 Binaries & Interfaces**

Apr. 9

- Rena Bivens. 2017. “The Gender Binary Will Not Be Deprogrammed: Ten Years of Coding Gender on Facebook.” *New Media & Society* 19(6): 880–98.
- Essay: Vara Vauhini, “Who’s Real Enough for Facebook?” *The New Yorker*, Oct. 2, 2014 <https://www.newyorker.com/business/currency/whos-real-enough-facebook>

Apr. 11

- Ann Light. 2011 “HCI as Heterodoxy: Technologies of Identity and the Queering of Interaction with Computers.” *Interacting with Computers* 23(5): 430–38.

*Further reading:*

MacAulay, Maggie, and Marcos Daniel Moldes. 2016. “Queen Don’t Compute: Reading and Casting Shade on Facebook’s Real Names Policy.” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 33(1): 6–22.

Brubaker, J. R., M. Ananny, and K. Crawford. 2014 “Departing Glances: A Sociotechnical Account of ‘Leaving’ Grindr.” *New Media & Society*.

**Week 11 Virtual Intimacy**

Apr. 16

- Ann Cvetkovich 2007 Public Feelings. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106(3): 459–468.
- Essay: Stefanie Duguay, “Why Tumblr’s ban on adult content is bad for LGBTQ youth,” *The Conversation*. Dec. 6, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/why-tumblrs-ban-on-adult-content-is-bad-for-lgbtq-youth-108215>

Apr. 18

- Shaka McGlotten 2013 “The Virtual Life of Sex in Public.” *Virtual Intimacies: Media, Affect, and Queer Sociality*. SUNY Press.

**Apr. 19 Third Reading Response Due by Midnight***Further reading:*

Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner. 1998. Sex in Public. *Critical Inquiry* 24(2): 547–566.

**Week 12 Pleasure & Health**

Apr. 23

- Kane Race. 2011. “Party Animals: The Significance of Drug Practices in the Materialization of Urban Gay Identity.” In *The Drug Effect: Health, Crime and Society*. Eds. Suzanne Fraser and David Moore. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 35-57.
- Essay: Julia Bell, “Really Techno.” *The White Review*, June 18, 2018. <http://www.thewhitereview.org/feature/really-techno/>

Apr. 25

- Martin Holt 2013 “Enacting and Imagining Gay Men: The Looping Effects of Behavioural HIV Surveillance in Australia.” *Critical Public Health* 23(4): 404–17.



**April 29, Final Paper First Draft due by Midnight***Further reading:*

Preciado, Paul B. *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era*. New York, NY: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013.

Kane Race. *Pleasure Consuming Medicine: The Queer Politics of Drugs*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009. (Excerpts).

**Week 13 Trans\* Bodies & Genders**

Apr. 30

- Katrina Roen “Transgender Theory and Embodiment: The Risk of Racial Marginalization.” In *The Transgender Studies Reader*. Susan Stryker, Stephen Whittle, Eds. New York: Routledge, pp. 1-9.
- (skim) Evan B. Towle and Lynn Marie Morgan. 2002. “Romancing the Transgender Native: Rethinking the Use of the ‘Third Gender’ Concept.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8(4): 469–97.

May 2

- Eric Plemons. 2014. “Description of Sex Difference as Prescription for Sex Change: On the Origins of Facial Feminization Surgery.” *Social Studies of Science* 44(5): 657–79.
- Essay: Eric Plemons, “The Future of Trans-Medicine under Trump .” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, Jan. 23, 2017. <http://medanthroquarterly.org/2017/01/23/the-future-of-trans-medicine-under-trump/>
- Essay: Eric Plemons, “HHS Transgender Proposal a Shabby Costume,” *Anthropology News*, Nov. 1, 2018. <http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2018/11/01/hhs-transgender-proposal-a-shabby-costume/>

*Further Reading:*

Eric Plemons and Chris Straayer. 2018. “Introduction: Reframing the Surgical.” *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5(2): 164–73.

**Week 14 Making Queer Futures**

May 7

- Dana Luciano and Mel Y. Chen. “Has the Queer Ever Been Human?” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, no. 2–3 (June 1, 2015): 183–207.
- Birgit Hofstätter. 2016. “Making kin, or: The art of kindness and why there is nothing romantic about it.” *Queer-Feminist Science & Technology Studies Forum* Volume 1.

May 9

- Sara Ahmed. 2011. “Happy Futures, Perhaps.” In *Queer Times, Queer Becomings*. Eds. Tuhkanen, Mikko and McCallum, E. L. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Essay: Lewis Davis and Astghik Mavisakalyan, “Using ‘she’ and ‘he’ reinforces gender roles and discrimination of women.” *The Conversation*, Mar. 7, 2018. <https://theconversation.com/using-she-and-he-reinforces-gender-roles-and-discrimination-of-women-92998>

*Further reading:*

Barad, Karen. 2015. “TransMaterialities: Trans\*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21(2–3): 387–422.

**May 17, Final Paper Final Draft due by Midnight**

## NYU Tandon Policies & Information

### Moses Center Statement of Disability

If you are student with a disability who is requesting accommodations, please contact New York University's Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) at [212-998-4980](tel:212-998-4980) or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu). You must be registered with CSD to receive accommodations. Information about the Moses Center can be found at [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd). The Moses Center is located at 726 Broadway on the 2nd floor.

### Health And Wellness

To access the University's extensive health and mental health resources, contact the NYU Wellness Exchange. You can call its private hotline (212-443-9999), available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to reach out to a professional who can help to address day-to-day challenges as well as other health-related concerns.

### Bias Response Line

For any concerns about bias at NYU, contact the NYU Bias Response line at 212-998-2277 or at [bias.response@nyu.edu](mailto:bias.response@nyu.edu). Or complete the online form at: <https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/equal-opportunity/bias-response/report-a-bias-incident.html>

### NYU School of Engineering Policies and Procedures on Academic Misconduct *(from the School of Engineering Student Code of Conduct)*

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- A. Introduction: The School of Engineering encourages academic excellence in an environment that promotes honesty, integrity, and fairness, and students at the School of Engineering are expected to exhibit those qualities in their academic work. It is through the process of submitting their own work and receiving honest feedback on that work that students may progress academically. Any act of academic dishonesty is seen as an attack upon the School and will not be tolerated. Furthermore, those who breach the School's rules on academic integrity will be sanctioned under this Policy. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the School's Policy on Academic Misconduct.
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- B. Definition: Academic dishonesty may include misrepresentation, deception, dishonesty, or any act of falsification committed by a student to influence a grade or other academic evaluation. Academic dishonesty also includes intentionally damaging the academic work of others or assisting other students in acts of dishonesty. Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:
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  - 1. Cheating: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized notes, books, electronic media, or electronic communications in an exam; talking with fellow students or looking at another person's work during an exam; submitting work prepared in advance for an in-class examination; having

- someone take an exam for you or taking an exam for someone else; violating other rules governing the administration of examinations.
2. Fabrication: including but not limited to, falsifying experimental data and/or citations.
  3. Plagiarism: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute direct quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed facts or information.
  4. Unauthorized collaboration: working together on work that was meant to be done individually.
  5. Duplicating work: presenting for grading the same work for more than one project or in more than one class, unless express and prior permission has been received from the course instructor(s) or research adviser involved.
  6. Forgery: altering any academic document, including, but not limited to, academic records, admissions materials, or medical excuses.