

**NYU****Tandon School of Engineering**

Culture, Technology and Society | Science, Technology & Society

STS-UY 3904 QUEER VALUES IN STS: QUEERING TECHNOSCIENCE

Spring 2021 • Mondays & Wednesdays 12:00pm-2:00pm**Course Blog:** <https://wp.nyu.edu/queersts2021/>**Zoom room:** Zoom: 943 1096 4613; <https://nyu.zoom.us/j/94310964613>**Discord/Slack:** TBD

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 (e.g., 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.

Dr. Jordan Kraemer

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Student hours: Mondays, 2-3pm (on Zoom or by phone)

Goals

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.

Structure

The remote version of this course is organized as a tutorial in which students meet weekly with the professor in small groups. There will be a sign-up available at the beginning of class if needed.

Weekly meetings will consist of small group discussion once per week and independent group work. This is a reading intensive course so there will be required weekly readings, along with pre-recorded video lectures and supplemental materials such as articles and podcasts. Please come prepared each meeting to discuss the assigned readings, with reading notes and questions for discussion. Students are expected to contribute discussion questions (posted in advance on the course blog) to guide the conversation each week.

Readings

All readings are available through the course blog (<https://wp.nyu.edu/queersts2021/>) or on Dibner digital reserves.

Optional & recommended texts

J. Halberstam. 2005. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: NYU Press.

Bell, David, and Barbara M Kennedy, eds. *The Cybercultures Reader*. London, New York: Routledge. 2000.

N. Katherine Hayles. 1999. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. University of Chicago UP.

Tuhkanen, Mikko and McCallum, E. L., eds. *Queer Times, Queer Becomings*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Requirements & assignments

The requirements & assignments for this course are worth 1000 points total (100%). At the end of the semester, I tally up the items to calculate your final grade.

1. Participation (20%)

Come prepared each week to discuss the readings and to create a weekly group report. Bring copies of the readings and questions/notes for discussion.

- **Participation means:** *contributing* to class discussions, *listening actively* to others, *coming prepared* with notes/questions to discuss the readings, and *being present and on time* for each class meeting.
- **Each week, the class will prepare a group report** on the readings for the week, summarizing key ideas, questions, and discussion.
- **Participation can also include** responding to others' comments on the course blog.
- **Participation will be graded** through midterm and final self-evaluation forms.
- **Attendance** is required. See **Policies**, below, on lateness and absences.

2. Weekly reading questions, quizzes & reflections (10%)

- **Each week** (for weeks 3-13) **BEFORE class**, you must post reading questions on the course blog (on the page for that week, as a comment). These are credit/no credit.
- **Each Sunday, by midnight**, you will post a brief reflection on the week's concepts and discussion on the shared Google doc (TBA). These are credit/no credit.
- **Lecture quizzes:** On weeks with lectures there will be mini-quizzes to review your knowledge of the material, to be completed by Sunday. These are not graded.

3. Group discussion (10%)

- **You will facilitate group work** 2x per semester and **prepare the group report** of what you discussed. The report should be at least 2 pages and summarize key themes, questions, and discussion.
- **Review the discussion questions** posted before class by the members of your group and take note of shared themes and points.
- **Prepare** to direct the discussion and lead the group report (due by the following Sunday)

4. Reading response essays (2): 30% (Feb. 28 and Mar. 28 on NYU Classes)

For the reading response essays, you will compare and contrast or analyze and apply two required readings from the preceding four weeks (2pp, ~500 words).

5. Final project, 8-10pp OR a 10-15 min slide presentation: 30% (due Sunday May 9)

For the final paper, you will:

- **choose a technology** (defined broadly: a device, a platform, a method) (to share in class, Week 8, Mar. 22)
 - **research it** (including literature review as well as news articles, direct observation, or other methods appropriate to your topic)
- **submit** a 1 page project description & annotated bibliography to share with the class (Week 10, April 5)
- **submit** an introduction & outline for peer review (Week 13, April 26)

- **draft** a written report that describes & analyzes your topic based on class readings and research
 - **analyze** your topic by drawing on course concepts and readings, in terms of implicit norms related to gender and sexuality
 - **propose** redesigning or rethinking your chosen technology according to course concepts (aka “queer” it)
- **submit** a final paper combining your description, analysis, and redesign or reimagining (May 9 on NYU Classes)

Policies

Attendance & Absences Attendance is required and will be reflected in your participation grade.

- You are permitted **one unexcused absence**, no questions asked, per term (not including add/drop days at the beginning of the course).
- **Three or more unexcused absences** may result in the loss of a letter grade.
- **Four or more unexcused absences** may result in a failing grade.
- **Excused absences include:**
 - Religious holidays, participation in athletic events, and job or graduate school interviews for seniors (2 maximum per student for interview-related absences).
 - For these absences to be excused, you must inform me of your absence no later than **the class prior to your absence**.
- For extenuating circumstances (illness, family emergencies, etc.), contact **Deanna Rayment** (deanna.rayment@nyu.edu, 646-997-3046, Room LC240 in 5 Metrotech), in Student Life so that I can excuse your absence or lateness.

Late work & extensions In light of current pandemic circumstances, I will grant extensions requested in advance. Please secure approval **at least one week** before the deadline, barring unforeseen exigencies. Papers handed in after the deadline without prior approval may be penalized one-third of a full letter grade per day.

- You may have **ONE** one-day extension, no questions asked (but please notify me), during the semester.

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. You can also message me on [Slack/Discord].

Technology policy We will meet weekly over Zoom; please turn on your video or provide a picture if not. Video is not required to participate (but it is appreciated!). Come as you are!

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: Foundations of Queer Theory —

Week 1 Material Power, Feb 1-3

- *Read:* Karl Marx, Capital Vol. 1, Sections 1, “The Development of Machinery,” and 5, “The Strife Between Workman and Machine.”
- *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

Suggested reading

- Cynthia Cockburn 1981 “The Material of Male Power.” *Feminist Review* 9: 41-58.
- Cynthia Cockburn 1983 “Caught in the Wheels.” *Marxism Today*.

Week 2 The History of (Homo)sexuality, Feb. 8-10

- *Read:* Katz, Jonathan. 1995. Chapter 1, *The Invention of Heterosexuality*. New York, N.Y.: Plume.
- *Read:* 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#>

Week 3 Knowledge and Sexuality, Feb. 17

--- Feb. 15 President’s Day, NO MEETING ---

- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick 1990 *Epistemology of the Closet*, University of California Press. Introduction (selections TBD).
- Hall, Kim Q. 2017. “Queer Epistemology and Epistemic Injustice.” In *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, 1–9. Milton, UK: Routledge.

Week 4 Queer Feminist Technology Studies, Feb. 22-24

- Catharina Landström. 2007. "Queering Feminist Technology Studies." *Feminist Theory* 8(1):7–26.
- Rena Bivens. 2017. "The Gender Binary Will Not Be Deprogrammed: Ten Years of Coding Gender on Facebook." *New Media & Society* 19(6): 880–98.

Suggested reading

- Judy Wajcman. 2009. "Feminist Theories of Technology." *Camb. J. Econ.* 34(1): 143-152.
- Wendy Faulkner. 2001. "The Technology Question in Feminism: A View from Feminist Technology Studies," *Women's Studies International Forum* 24(1): 79–95.
- Judy Wajcman 2004 *TechnoFeminism*. Polity. Introduction (pp. 1-9); Chapter 1 (pp. 10-31).

--- First Reading Response Due on NYU Classes by Midnight, Sunday Feb. 28---

Week 5 Performing Gender, Mar. 1-3

- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, 2006. Chapter 1, "Subjects of Sex/ Gender/Desire" (selections TBD). <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=710077>.
- *Film: Paris is burning*. Livingston, Jennie. Lionsgate, 2012 [1992].

— Part II: Queering Technology —

Week 6 Identity & Subjectivity, Mar. 8-10

- Gray, Mary L. 2009. "Negotiating Identities/Queering Desires: Coming Out Online and the Remediation of the Coming-Out Story." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 14 (4): 1162–89.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, 2006. Chapter 3, Section IV, "Bodily inscriptions, performative subversions." <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.nyu.edu/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=710077>.

Suggested reading

- Tom Boellstorff. "But Do Not Identify as Gay: A Proleptic Genealogy of the MSM Category." *Cultural Anthropology* 26(2): 287–312.
- 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.
- Mary L. Gray. 2009. *Out in the Country: Youth, Media, and Queer Visibility in Rural America*. New York: NYU Press. Selections.

Week 7 Cyborgs, Monday, Mar. 15-17

- Donna Haraway 1991 "A Cyborg Manifesto." In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: the Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge. (Selections TBD)
- *Podcast: Lady Science Episode 19: "Siri, play me that episode about digital assistants. Please."* <https://www.ladyscience.com/podcast/digital-assistants-female-voices-labor>
- *Essay: Timothy Gitzen, "The Surveillance Cyborg," The CASTAC Blog, April 9, 2019.* <http://blog.castac.org/2019/04/the-surveillance-cyborg/>

Suggested reading

- Hilary Bergen 2016, "I'd Blush if I Could": Digital Assistants, Disembodied Cyborgs and the Problem of Gender." *A Journal of Literary Studies*.
- 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.
- Sandy Stone 1995 *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

--- SPRING BREAK: March 19 ---**Week 8 Virtual Bodies Mar. 22-24**

--- Choose final project topic to share in class ---

- N. Katherine Hayles 1999 Prologue & Introduction. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. University of Chicago UP.
- Julian Dibbell 1998 "A Rape in Cyberspace (Or TINY SOCIETY, and How to Make One)."
- *Blog post*: Patricia Lange, "Portending the Posthuman on YouTube," CASTAC Blog, Oct. 29, 2019. <http://blog.castac.org/2019/10/portending-the-posthuman-on-youtube/>

— Part III: Queer Possibilities —**--- Second Reading Response Due on NYU Classes by Midnight, Sunday Mar. 29---****Week 9 Queer Time, Mar. 29-31**

- José Esteban Muñoz. 2009. "Introduction: Feeling Utopia." In *Cruising Utopias: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: NYU Press.
- *Essay*: Sarah Jaffe. "Queer Time: The Alternative to 'Adulting.'" *JSTOR Daily*, January 10, 2018. <https://daily.jstor.org/queer-time-the-alternative-to-adulting/>

Week 10 Queer Space, April 5-7

--- Final Project description & annotated bibliography due in class ---

- 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.
- Daniel G Cockayne and Lizzie Richardson. 2018. "Queering Code/Space: the Co-Production of Socio- Sexual Codes and Digital Technologies." *Gender, Place & Culture*, January, 1-17.

Week 11 Queering the Nonhuman, April 12-14

- Dana Luciano and Mel Y. Chen 2015 "Has the Queer Ever Been Human?" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21(2-3): 183-207.
- Susan Stryker, 1994. "My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage," *GLQ* 1:237-254. (skim)

- Peter Bebergal, “Samuel Delany and the Past and Future of Science Fiction,” *The New Yorker*, July 29, 2015. <https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/samuel-delany-and-the-past-and-future-of-science-fiction>

Suggested 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.
- J. Halberstam 1995 “Parasites and Perverts,” In *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*. Durham: Duke University Press. Pp. 1-27.
- Jennifer Terry. 2000. “‘Unnatural Acts’ in Nature: The Scientific Fascination with Queer Animals.” *GLQ* 6 (2): 151-193.
- Barad, Karen. 2011. “Nature’s Queer Performativity.” *Qui Parle* 19(2): 121–58.
- *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>

Week 12 Queer Online, April 21

--- SPRING BREAK: April 19 ---

- 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.
- Andre Cavalcante. 2019. Tumblng Into Queer Utopias and Vortexes: Experiences of LGBTQ Social Media Users on Tumblr, *Journal of Homosexuality*, 66:12, 1715-1735.
- *Essay*: Paul Byron and Brady Robards. 2017. There’s something queer about Tumblr, *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/theres-something-queer-about-tumblr-73520>

Suggested reading

- Szulc, L 2015 “Banal Nationalism and Queers Online: Enforcing and Resisting Cultural Meanings of .Tr.” *New Media and Society* 17(9): 1530–1546.
- *Essay*: Baird Campbell, “Anti-Queer Violence, Bearing Witness, and Thinking with Algorithms on Social Media,” *CASTAC Blog*, June 27, 2019. <http://blog.castac.org/2019/06/anti-queer-violence-bearing-witness-and-thinking-with-algorithms-on-social-media/>
- *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>

Week 13 Queer HCI, April 26-28

- Ann Light. 2011 “HCI as Heterodoxy: Technologies of Identity and the Queering of Interaction with Computers.” *Interacting with Computers* 23(5): 430–38.
- Os Keyes. 2018. “The Misgendering Machines.” *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 2 (CSCW): 1–22.
- *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>

Suggested reading

- Maggie MacAulay 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.
- J. R. Brubaker, M. Ananny, and K. Crawford. 2014 "Departing Glances: A Sociotechnical Account of 'Leaving' Grindr." *New Media & Society*.

Week 14 Trans Technologies, May 3-5

--- Submit final paper introduction & outline for peer review ---

- Susan Stryker 2000 "Transsexuality: The Postmodern Body and/as Technology." In *The Cybertypes Reader*, Bell, David, and Barbara M Kennedy, eds. London, New York: Routledge (Chapter 37).
- Barad, Karen. 2015. "TransMaterialities: Trans*/Matter/Realities and Queer Political Imaginings." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21(2–3): 387–422.

Suggested reading

- Susan Stryker 2013, (De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies. In *The Transgender Studies Reader*, Susan Stryker, Stephen Whittle, Eds. Routledge.
- 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.
- 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.

Week 15 Queer Futurity

Monday, May 10

--- In class: Share final projects ---

Suggested reading

- Alexis Lothian. 2018. *Old Futures: Speculative Fiction and Queer Possibility*. NYU Press.
- Sara Ahmed. 2011. "Happy Futures, Perhaps." In *Queer Times, Queer Becomings*. Eds. Tuhkanen, Mikko and McCallum, E. L. Albany: SUNY Press.
- 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.

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. You must be registered with CSD to receive accommodations. Information about the Moses Center can be found at 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.

Inclusion at NYU

The NYU Tandon School values an inclusive and equitable environment for all our students. I hope to foster a sense of community in this class and consider it a place where individuals of all backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, national origins, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious and political affiliations, and abilities will be treated with respect. It is my intent that all students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. If this standard is not being upheld, please feel free to speak with me.

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. 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)*

- 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.
- 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:

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.