

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

**Course Code / Title** : HS2020 Gender, Race and Technology

**Pre-requisites** : HS1001 Person and Society

**No. of AUs.** : 3

**Contact Hours** : 39

### **Course Aims**

What does race and gender have to do with technology?

This module examines how ideas of gender, race and sexuality have shaped the development of particular technologies, and how these technologies, in turn, have reproduced the categories of race, gender and sexuality. In this module, we will have two starting assumptions: (1) neither gender nor race can be distilled down to only biology or only culture, and (2) technology is not neutral—far from it. One only need to look at the public opposition to facial recognition technologies or the widespread critiques that algorithms are biased to understand that technologies are inscribed with the power relations of their builders and users.

In this module we will examine how gender, race and technologies intersect in history, culture and contemporary politics. Using case studies that vary geographically, students will learn about the gender and racial politics of technology in media and film, biomedicine, international development, the environment, work and home, and artificial intelligence. We will focus on the following questions:

1. Instead of viewing women and minorities as passive consumers of technology who have not produced anything, how have they actively produced different technologies, often with different goals in mind?
2. How have technological advancements shaped how we think of gender and race, such as biomedicine and genetics, housework, surveillance, artificial intelligence, social media and international development?
3. How have technologies perpetuated injustices related to gender, race, and sexuality?

### **Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)**

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Critique utopian narratives of technological progress.
2. Explain how women, minorities and minority women have both been impacted by and produced technologies in the home and workplace
3. Apply the concept of 'cyborg' to see how the differences between man and machine are more fluid in our daily lives.

4. Apply the notions of the 'co-production' to evaluate how different technologies are shaped by, and in turn shape, notions of gender and race
5. Critique technological design and implementation by focusing on their implications for people of different colours, gender, sexuality and ability.

## Course Content

Week 1	Introduction to the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender</li><li>• Race</li><li>• Technology</li><li>• Why we should talk about them together</li></ul>
Week 2	Theorizing the development of knowledge and technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Narratives of Progress</li><li>• Feminist theories of technology</li><li>• Biopolitics</li></ul>
Week 3	Writing women into the history of technological development <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Household technologies and beyond</li><li>• Designing technologies by and for women</li></ul>
Week 4	Introducing intersectionality: Race, gender and technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The importance of intersectional analysis of tech</li><li>• Algorithms of inequality</li><li>• In lecture, examples of women computer scientists in Malaysia; racialized development of film technologies</li></ul>
Week 5	Neoliberal technologies of self <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Neoliberalism and self-responsibilization</li><li>• dating apps</li><li>• the Internet</li></ul>
Week 6	Feminist technologies? Neoliberal technologies of 'empowerment' and 'personal choice.' <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Menstrual hygiene and sanitary products</li><li>• Breast pumps</li></ul>
Week 7	Women and technology in the workplace

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makerspaces</li> <li>• The feminization of work</li> </ul>
Week 8	Gender, race and biomedical technologies
Week 9	Technologies of desire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A light introduction to biopolitics and biopower</li> <li>• What do we desire of AI, and how does race and gender figure into those desires?</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>
Week 10	Surveillance as a feminist and anti-racist issue <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racist and gendered surveillance technologies</li> <li>• Digital pandemic surveillance technologies</li> </ul>
Week 11	Feminist Approaches to Technology for International Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critiquing 'female empowerment' and neoliberal capitalism</li> <li>• Critiquing biopiracy</li> </ul>
Week 12	Technology, activism and critical intimacies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The technopolitics of being 'woke'</li> <li>• 'Cruel optimism' in modern times</li> </ul>
Week 13	Presentations

### Course Assessment

CA1	Three 500 word reflective memos	: 35%
CA2	Class participation	: 10%
CA3	Short critical essay	: 30%
CA4	Design a feminist technology	: 25%
<b>Total</b>	-----	<b>100%</b>