Seminar on Gender and Science  
GSS 393

Prof. Angela N. H. Creager  
Office hours 10 a.m.–12 noon, Mondays
125 Dickinson Hall, ext. 1680

Fall 2012
Tuesdays 1:30–4:20 p.m.
101 Marx Hall

Course Description
This course explores two aspects of the gender and science literature: the historical participation of women (and men) in scientific work, and feminist critiques of scientific knowledge and practice. In looking at these two areas, the course will focus on the sex/gender distinction and both its promise and problems for understanding developments in science. We examine historically the systematic exclusion of women from science, while stressing that science has not been unique in its failure to welcome women as participants. Our readings in the feminist assessments of scientific knowledge address epistemological and methodological questions about the conceptual frameworks of science. Given that feminist critiques have been circulating for over a quarter century, we also ask how they have impacted science so far—and how feminism has challenged or changed technology and medicine as well. This course is intended both to familiarize students with the scholarly issues around gender and science and to allow students to reflect on their own (gendered) experiences and expectations in encountering science as students, laboratory workers, patients, and consumers.

Course Requirements
Students are expected to read the assigned selections fully in preparation for seminar, and to open the discussion twice during the semester. We will use these responses, posted on Blackboard, as the starting point for discussion. In addition to these responses and your regular, vociferous participation in the discussions, two papers are required. The first paper is a biographical sketch (5–7 pages, due 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 19, 2012) of the life and work of a woman scientist, natural philosopher, physician, or engineer. Students are urged to consult available primary and secondary source material, including any published papers or books by the scholar. In addition, the archives or national libraries where relevant manuscripts are available should be cited (if applicable). Where biographies have already been written on the subject, the student should comment on the adequacy of the biographical depictions available in the literature.

In the final paper (15–25 pages, due 3 p.m. Dean's Date, Jan. 15, 2013; extensions only through Dean's Office), students are expected to engage the scholarship on gender and science analytically. The specific topic may be one that we are covering in the syllabus or a topic of the student’s interest. For example, the paper might be a thoughtful literature review, an examination of past or current issues around gender or sexuality in science, or an analysis, informed by feminist or queer theory, of a current problem in scientific or medical research.

The following required books are on sale at Labyrinth, as well as on reserve in Firestone. All other assigned readings are available on E-reserves through Blackboard. (Note: in some cases the reading in E-reserves may be listed under the editor rather than the author.)

Readings and Class Schedule

Please note that assigned readings should be completed before the week’s precept meeting.

**Week 1. (9/18)** Introducing Seminar Themes: Why Gender and Science?
We will view and discuss Bill Moyers’ interview with Evelyn Fox Keller from “A World of Ideas.”

**Week 2. (9/25)** The Sex/Gender Distinction and Its Legacy for Science Studies

**A. Women and the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine**

**Week 3. (10/2)** The History of Science as a Manly Vocation
**Week 4. (10/9) Overcoming the Odds: 19th and 20th Century Women Scientists**

*Note: We will meet with Sandra Rosenstock, bibliographer for women and gender, in Firestone Library foyer for a session from 1:30-2:30 pm on this day.*


*In addition, each of you will read and report on an additional selection on a woman scientist or physician; a sign-up sheet will be circulated a week ahead.*

**Week 5. (10/16) Contemporary Science: Does Gender Still Matter? What about Race?**


**Week 6.** (10/23) **Women’s History and the History of Technology: Interactions and Contradictions**


**Fall recess (10/30)**

**Week 7.** (11/6) **The World of Medicine I.: Physicians and Patients Embodied**


**No class Wednesday, Nov. 13**

**Monday, Nov. 19: first paper due**

**Week 9.** (11/20) **The World of Medicine II.: The Consumption Junction**


**B. Feminism and the Sciences**

**Week 10.** (11/27) *Making Sex*: Differences and Their Discontents

**Week 11.** (12/4) *Scrutinizing Science: Critiques of/in Biology*
**Week 12.** (12/11) Primatologists as “Pink-Ribbon” Scientists?

*Note:* Final paper proposal due this week (1 paragraph).


**Reading Week.** (1/8, same day, time, and location) *Gametes and Embryos*


