Seminar on Gender and Science
WOM 393

Prof. Angela N. H. Creager
Office hours 2:00–3:00 pm M, 1:30-2:30 pm Tu
125 Dickinson Hall, ext. 1680

Fall 2009
W 1:30–4:20 p.m.
101 Marx Hall

Course Description
Why has science traditionally been a man’s domain? What are the consequences of that? Have the growing numbers of women practitioners in many fields changed the culture of science? This course will start with the sex/gender distinction and both its promise and problems for understanding developments in science. We examine the historic systematic exclusion of women from science, while stressing that science has not been unique in its failure to welcome women as participants. Given that feminist critiques have been circulating for twenty-five years, we also ask how they have impacted science so far—and how feminism has challenged or changed technology and medicine as well. Our readings will include both classic works of feminist scholarship on science, medicine, and technology and current work, including perspectives on sexuality and science. 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 post a page-long response to the readings on Blackboard at least five times during the semester. These responses will be due Tuesdays at 5 p.m. (in advance of the next day’s afternoon seminar). 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. 16, 2009) of the life and work of a woman scientist or natural philosopher. 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. 12, 2010; 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 gender issues in science, or an analysis, informed by feminist theory or perspectives, 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.

Readings and Class Schedule

Please note that assigned readings should be completed before the week’s precept meeting. **The name under which each reading is listed in E-reserves is bolded.**

**Week 1.** (9/23) Introducing Seminar Themes: Why Gender and Science?
Video: Bill Moyers’ interview with Evelyn Fox Keller from “A World of Ideas”

**Week 2.** (9/30) The Sex/Gender Distinction and Its Legacy for Science Studies
Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Dueling Dualisms," *Sexing the Body*, chapter 1.

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

**Week 3.** (10/7) The History of Science as a Manly Vocation
Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex?*, Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 7.

**Week 4. (10/14) Overcoming the Odds: 19th and 20th Century Women Scientists and Physicians**

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

Margaret Rossiter, *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5, and Conclusion.


*In addition, each of you will read and report on one of these biographical sketches (the books are on reserve, not E-reserves):*


Penina Migdal Glazer and Miriam Slater, “The Promise of New Opportunities in Science,” *Unequal Colleagues: The Entrance of Women into the*


Ellen S. More, “Professionalism versus Sexuality in the Career of Dr. Mary Steichen Calderone, 1904–1998,” in Women Physicians and the Cultures of Medicine, pp. 113–137.

Week 5. (10/21) Contemporary Science: Does Gender Still Matter? What about Race?

Professor Elizabeth Gavis, of the Department of Molecular Biology, will visit the class to discuss the current experiences of women in science, especially at Princeton.


Shirley Tilghman, “Science vs. the Female Scientist” and “Science vs. Women – A Radical Solution,” New York Times editorials, January 25 and 26, 1993. (Note: these are two entries on E-reserves.)


Week 6. (10/28) Women's History and the History of Technology: Interactions and Contradictions

Fall recess (11/4)


Monday, Nov. 16: first paper due

Week 8. (11/18) The World of Medicine II.: The Consumption Junction

No class Wednesday, Nov. 25 due to Thanksgiving; reschedule during reading week.

**B. Feminism and the Sciences**

**Week 9.** (12/2) “Making Sex”: Differences and Their Discontents


Anne Fausto-Sterling. *Sexing the Body* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), chapters 2, 3, 4, and 9, plus a chapter of your choice among the others (5–8).

**Week 10.** (12/9) Scrutinizing Science: Critiques of/in Biology
*Note:* Final paper proposal due this week (1 paragraph).


**Week 11. (12/16)** Primatology and Developmental Biology: “Pink-Ribbon” Sciences?

On this day we will also view and discuss a video entitled “The National Geographies of Primates” by Donna Haraway on her cultural interpretation of primatology in twentieth-century global history.


**Week 12. (1/6)** Alternative Visions: Toward Feminist Science?

