CFP: GENDER, BODIES & TECHNOLOGY 4th BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Proposals are invited for our 4th biannual interdisciplinary conference, “Gender, Bodies & Technology: (In)Visible Futures,” at the Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, VA, April 21-23, 2016

Keynote addresses from Crunk Feminist Collective and Michelle Murphy

Proposal Deadline: November 15, 2015

Gender, Bodies, & Technology (GBT) is an initiative within Women’s and Gender Studies at Virginia Tech that aims to creatively and intellectually explore the multiple, proliferating, and gendered dimensions of technologized bodies and embodied technologies. Through our initiative and biannual conference, we seek to demonstrate, theorize, and perform the discursive and material nodes around which gender, bodies, and technologies both cohere and fracture. We invite scholars, activists, and artists from the humanities, social and natural sciences, visual and performing arts, life sciences, disability studies, STEM fields, and queer and feminist science studies for papers, panels, workshops, new media, art, and performance pieces that explore the intersections of gender, bodies & technology in contexts ranging from virtual reality labs and engineering classrooms to grassroots movements and queer and feminist hacking spaces. How, we ask, might topics such as computer hacking, mass incarceration, or neuroscience produce new lines of inquiry when filtered through a GBT perspective?

Important conversations have gained significant traction since our 2014 conference, including those around racialized police brutality, online and legislative misogyny, the systematic detention of immigrant families, militarization, and the ongoing violence experienced by transgender people. With our 2016 theme, “(In)Visible Futures,” we seek to enrich these conversations by exploring how forms of technology render both visible and invisible particular kinds of gendered bodies, on what terms, and to what effect. How, for example, do conversations about Rachel Dolezal and Caitlyn Jenner shift (if at all) when they turn on the surgical, cosmetic, digital, and media technologies by which each woman became (more) visible to us? And how do those technologies intersect with other forms of racial and gendered oppression through which many other Black and transgender bodies are erased or rendered inconsequential? What might a technological lens reveal about how gendered, racialized, aging, and classed identities intersect and interact in social spaces and political debate about whose lives (and bodies) matter and whose do not? What does it mean when surveillance cameras serve as panacea to racial police violence, gun violence is framed as mental illness, and contraceptive access is enabled by drones and pharmaceutical companies? What do disabled, queer, and other non-dominant bodies teach us about the implementation biases of “big data” and other audit technologies, particularly as these groups strive to increase their social and material visibility?

Images of Dolezal and Jenner, along with figures like Bree Newsome, Wendy Davis, Laverne Cox, and Chelsea Manning, crowd our social media sites and invite our critical analyses. New technologies enable us to monitor, record, and instantly upload dizzying amounts of violence committed against women and men whose
visibility—in the form of their racial or gender identity, disability, class precarity, advancing age, or sexual orientation—disrupts and threatens extant social arrangements. “(In)Visible Futures” engages this present with what Kathi Weeks has called a “tendential,” rather than genealogical, trajectory, where critiques are elaborated from the perspective of the future rather than the past. With keynote addresses from Crunk Feminist Collective and Michelle Murphy, we aim for #GBT2016 to be a space of critical reflection regarding how various forms of (in)visibility render certain possibilities more and less “thinkable,” and we hope to incite and propel futures in which we can actively invest and imagine ourselves.

We invite papers, workshops, performance pieces, and panel proposals that address the Gender—Bodies—Technology interface. Proposals should be submitted by November 15 2015 to genbodtech@vt.edu. Though proposals should NOT be strictly limited to the conference theme, topics might include:

- Online misogyny and harassment; the (in)visibility of non-white, non-male bodies in the tech industry and STEM fields
- Abortion and contraceptive technologies in the post-Hobby Lobby era; menstrual rights activism and the politics of non/menstruating bodies
- Black Twitter, the #BlackLivesMatter campaign, and their relationship to feminism and LGBTQ politics
- Digital and material citizenship as it pertains to sexual and gendered minorities
- The role of gender in environmental activism and climate change research
- Title IX and campus sexual assault initiatives
- Linguistic technologies; personal gender pronouns and a genderqueer future
- Guns and racialized violence; black male bodies and carceral technologies
- Aging as an intersectional dimension of identity; the future of aging and anti-aging technologies
- Immigration and biosecurity issues; the molecularization of migrant bodies
- Prosthetic and augmentative technologies and their distribution across class, race, and gender
- Gender and pharmaceuticals: hormone blockers and the future of transgender bodies; female sexual “dysfunction” and libidinal equity
- Popular culture and the (in)visibility of non-dominant bodies
- The role of virtual bodies and selves in transcending marginality
- Big data and the compartmentalization of bodies, people, and “data”
- “Tradition” vs. technology – indigenous deployments of social media; feminist and queer appropriations of technology
- Queer and feminist science fiction; Afro-futurism in literature and music cultures
- Fashion technologies; disability and trans-informed clothing and aesthetics
- Bodies in action/motion; social and body rhythms; bodily and political movements and transformations

As always, we explicitly invite performances of any length, but we especially invite those that can be part of traditional panels, hoping to put these forms of intellectual and creative production in conversation. We are committed to complementing traditional paper presentations from the social sciences, STEM, and humanities fields with scholarship and performance from the creative arts. We encourage innovative uses of technology and creative session formats and request early contact by email if space and/or technology requirements might present logistical challenges.

Proposal deadline is November 15, 2015. Please send proposals to: genbodtech@gmail.com

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For more information or questions please contact:

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