

**Feminism & Technology:  
Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy  
Spring 2016, Macaulay Honors College, CUNY**

**Professor:** Lisa Brundage, [lisa.brundage@mhc.cuny.edu](mailto:lisa.brundage@mhc.cuny.edu)

Office hours by appointment (you will almost always be able to find me in room MHC 307 before class)

**ITF:** Maggie Galvan, [margaret.galvan@macaulay.cuny.edu](mailto:margaret.galvan@macaulay.cuny.edu)

Online office hours, Mondays 12:30-2:30 and by appointment

**Class Site:** <http://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/brundage16/>

### **Course Description**

Margaret Atwood's post-apocalyptic Maddaddam Trilogy (comprised of *Oryx and Crake*, *Year of the Flood*, and *Maddaddam*) examines a near-future in which the impact of corporate profiteering, climate change, continual surveillance, and genetic manipulation result in a hostile environment for humans. Atwood demonstrates that technological advancement can create positive and negative opportunities that are augmented by existing social inequity, including sexual, monetary, and natural resource exploitation. Beyond examining gender and feminism within the novels, the class will explore basic approaches to feminist theory, including work on domesticity, the workplace, technology, and ecofeminism, and learn how to apply these interpretive lenses to works of literature. This hybrid class will meet face-to-face and online, and use multimedia/digital humanities techniques for class projects.

### **Course Content Advisory**

Be advised that the literature we will work with contains violence, including but not limited to sexual violence, rape, and abuse. Plot points in the primary literature include human trafficking, exploitation, and sex work. If you have concerns about engaging with the material, please make an appointment to see me.

## Academic Integrity

All students are expected to abide by Macaulay Honors College's Honors Integrity Pledge. The text of the pledge can be reviewed at <http://macaulay.cuny.edu/community/handbook/policies/honors-integrity/>

## Students with Disabilities

Please make an appointment to see me if you have a disability that requires accommodation for participation in this course. I will make every effort to accommodate your needs.

## Course Objectives

Students in this course will:

- Engage in close reading of Margaret Atwood's MaddAddam Trilogy
- Understand the history, context, and vocabulary of feminist theorizations of sex, gender, and technology
- Apply those analytical frameworks to class readings
- Engage in reflective discussion of class material *and* our online environment
- Develop critical reading skills and work with classmates to develop collaborative projects

---

## Required Texts

Books (page references refer to the Anchor Books paperback editions)

Margaret Atwood

- *Oryx and Crake*
- *Year of the Flood*
- *MaddAddam*
- *Dire Cartographies*

Articles excerpts, and other media noted in course schedule/posted on course website

## Course Responsibilities

### *In Person*

You are expected to attend classes and prepare yourself by reading/watching/listening to assigned texts and materials. You will also sign up to be a class discussion leader several times. If you need to be absent from class, please email Lisa.

### *Online Discussion & Blogging*

As a hybrid class, our main online interaction will take place via our class discussion space on Slack and on a virtual whiteboard space called RealTimeBoard. Over the first few weeks of class, we will experiment to see if one is more useful than the other, and make a collective decision to use one or both. Slack works like a large (but organized) group chat system. It allows for file sharing and private messaging. RealtimeBoard allows for threaded discussions, visual representation of ideas, and easy sharing of multimedia content. Discussion in both spaces can be conversational and quick-paced. Consistent participation is vital to our learning process and class community.

In addition to online discussion, you will have the chance to develop more discrete blog posts. You will sign up to make two blog posts during the semester. Your blog post should contain thoughtful response to a specific theme, section of text, or course idea, and be approximately 300-500 words. The writing should be more formal, focused, and organized than what you post in our conversational spaces, but do not need to be traditional essays; you should try to invite conversation. When you are signed up to blog, your post should be up by Sunday. Then, on the following Tuesday, you will join in co-leading class discussion, using your blog post as a starting point.

Privacy: **You** are in control of what you post online! Our class blog is public, but you can make your posts private, or use a handle that is not associated with your actual name. If you prefer not to post on the blog, contact Lisa to make alternative arrangements.

### *Final Project*

The final project will be a collaborative effort to provide a multimedia response to the MaddAddam Trilogy. Each student will devise a showcase piece as part of the project. Details and specific assignments will be discussed in class, and we will have several class sessions devoted to devising and working on our projects.

## Grades

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Class participation: 30%

Blog posts and online discussion: 30%

Final project: 40%

## Course Schedule (readings/work are DUE on the date listed)

- Page references for trilogy refer to the Anchor Books paperback editions
- Secondary Readings will be added in accordance with class interests. Check the course web site for additional readings!
- Spoiler Alert: If you have already read the books, or are reading ahead—WHICH IS GREAT!—please try not to spoil plot points as we read. There are some exciting reveals and twists, so please let your colleagues have the joy of discovering them as they read.

<b>Feb 2</b>	Introduction to course A History of Western Feminism in 101 Seconds <a href="https://youtu.be/pnETKMum9K4">https://youtu.be/pnETKMum9K4</a>  Sign up for blogging and discussion leader sessions  Together, listen to Imaginary Worlds Episode 13, "A Perfect World" <a href="https://soundcloud.com/emolinsky/a-perfect-world">https://soundcloud.com/emolinsky/a-perfect-world</a>
<b>Feb 9</b>	NO CLASS (courses follow Friday Schedule)

Feb 16	<p><i>Oryx and Crake</i> Chapters 1-9 (through page 238)</p> <p>Atwood, <i>Dire Cartographies</i>.</p> <p>This is an ebook available in a few formats. If you do not have an e-reader, you can read it on another type of device with the Kindle app, or you can read it on a computer through the Kindle web interface.</p> <p>Greta Gaard, "Ecofeminism Revisited"</p> <p>Sue V. Rosser, "Using the Lenses of Feminist Theories to Focus on Women and Technology"</p>
Feb 23	<p>Complete <i>Oryx and Crake</i></p> <p>Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, "Quest to Grow Human Organs inside Pigs in Japan" <a href="http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25550419">http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-25550419</a></p> <p>Brandon Griggs, "How Test-tube meat could be the future of food" <a href="http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/30/tech/innovation/cultured-meat/">http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/30/tech/innovation/cultured-meat/</a></p> <p>Peruse <a href="http://caroljadams.com/">http://caroljadams.com/</a> (web site of Carol J Adams, author of <i>The Sexual Politics of Meat</i>)</p> <p>Radiolab; CRISPR (podcast, June 6, 2015) <a href="http://www.radiolab.org/story/antibodies-part-1-crispr/">http://www.radiolab.org/story/antibodies-part-1-crispr/</a></p>
Feb 29	<p><b>MONDAY: EXTRA CREDIT Panel discussion about Zika virus at Macaulay, 6:00-7:30 pm (Kelly O'Donnell, Lizzie Reis &amp; LB)</b></p>
March 1	<p>YOTF Through "Saint Euell of Wild Foods" (page 156)</p> <p>Barbara Katz Rothman, "Genetic Technology and Women"</p> <p>Siobhan Sommerville, "Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body"</p> <p>Dorothy Roberts, "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?"</p>

<b>March 8</b>	YOTF Through "Pollination Day" (page 308)  Reading on survivalism, intentional communities, and tech campuses/compounds TBD
<b>March 15</b>	YOTF Through end of novel  Readings on domestic and affective labor TBD
<b>March 22</b>	Oryx and Crake and YOTF: synthesis discussion, planning for final project  Allison Dunlap, "Eco-Dystopia: Reproduction and Destruction in Margaret Atwood's <i>Oryx and Crake</i> "  Noël Sturgeon, "Ecofeminist Appropriations and Transnational Environmentalisms"
<b>March 29</b>	MaddAddam through "Scars" (page 104)/other TBD
<b>April 5</b>	MaddAddam through "Black Headlamp" (200)/other TBD
<b>April 12</b>	MaddAddam through "Piglet" (288)/other TBD
<b>April 19</b>	MaddAddam through end of novel/other TBD
<b>April 26</b>	NO CLASS (Spring Break)
<b>May 3</b>	Final Project Workshop
<b>May 10</b>	Final Project Workshop
<b>May 17</b>	Final Project Workshop
<b>May 24</b>	Presentations & Gardner's Feast