

The Feminist Research Institute

presents

“The Uterus is Outside the Body”: Gender in Synthetic Biology

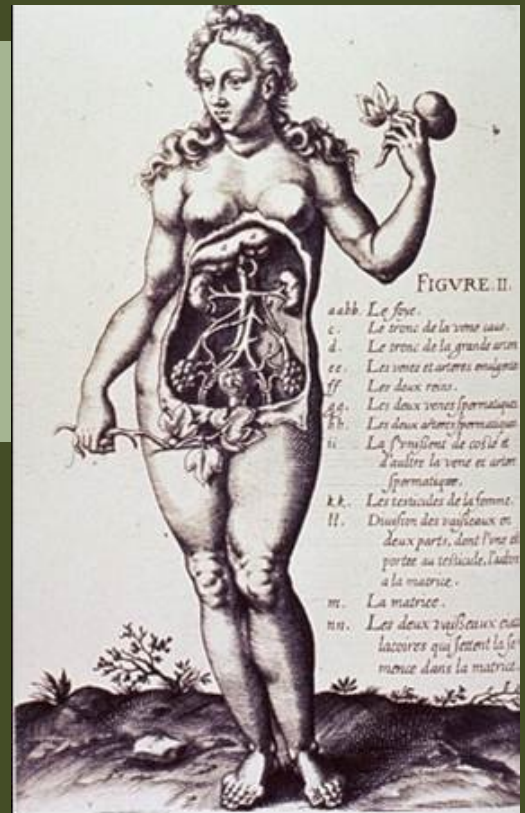
Dr. Luis Campos

Assistant Professor,

Department of History

Tuesday, November 19, 2013

12:30—1:30 PM



The newly emerging field of synthetic biology presents a unique confluence of engineering, biology, computer science, the biotech industry, venture capital, and government regulation. It also involves men and women. Drawing on a decade of work in the field, Prof. Campos will consider the gendered dimensions of the field's oft-repeated claims to control life itself in its quest to better the world. He will explore recent debates in the field concerning the representation of women, “alpha males,” and the question of who can speak; the emergence of a radical new kind of synthetic eugenics promoted as responsible parenthood; provocative recent comments concerning the envisioned future gestation of Neanderthals; and the most remarkable and multivalent claim of one Swiss researcher that “the uterus is outside the body”—a claim that in its various public repetitions has met variously with laughter, derision, and disbelief. Synthetic biology, as a field explicitly devoted to the remaking of life itself, thus seems ripe for gender analysis and an important new site for feminist scholarship.



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