Wrens operate a Colossus Mark II, Courtesy of the National Archives UK (via computerhistory.org)
I want to give your email full attention when I am reading it, so I only check messages periodically during the week. Please allow up to 24 hours for my response if you send a message between Monday 8AM and Thursday 5PM. If you send a message Thursday evening through Monday morning, I will not respond until Monday.

If you have an RCPD Visa, please let me know on the first day of class.

Course ground rule: No devices of any kind (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) during class.

**Course Goals**

Prior to World War II, a “computer” was a person who performed mathematical calculations, and most computers were women. The person now heralded as an early computer programmer was Ada, Countess of Lovelace, who published her unprecedented work of logic and abstraction in 1843. When the first electronic digital computers were built in the United States and England during World War II, women programmed them.

This course investigates the American, British, and European histories of gender and computing during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The primary and twofold learning outcome of this course is to understand how ideas of gender shaped practices of computing during this time, and to understand how ideas of computing shaped notions of gender. Here, gender as an analytical category encompasses masculinity, femininity, and the spaces in between, recognizing a continuum rather than a binary. Similarly, computing encompasses practices of calculation, computation, and mathematics. Through the course of readings, in-class activities, and assignments over the course of the semester, we will pursue all five of the Michigan State university-wide learning objectives for undergraduates of: analytical thinking, cultural understanding, effective citizenship, effective communication, and integrated reasoning. Those objectives will be demonstrated through the other major learning outcome of this course: the successful completion of an original historical research paper with accompanying presentation, portions of which will be evaluated by your peers.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
I value academic integrity and honesty. We will discuss the particulars of what this means for particular assignments over the course of the semester; however, I expect each of you to adhere to the Spartan Code of Honor (written by your peers, for MSU students):
“As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.”

SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE / OVERVIEW
Active class participation 15%
Discussion questions 10%
Student-led in-class learning activity 20%
Midterm essay 25%
Culminating research paper 30% (20% paper, 10% presentation)

SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE / ATTENDANCE
In order to succeed in this course, your attendance, and active participation and engagement, are required at every class. One full point will be deducted from your course-long participation grade for each unexcused absence. If you know in advance that you will miss a class (for example, in the case of religious observance), please contact me as early as possible to make arrangements. If you miss a class for a reason that may be excused but cannot be anticipated, such as illness or grief, please contact me as soon as possible after the class has been missed to make arrangements.

SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE / READINGS
The readings for this course are all posted on the course’s D2L website. You will note that many of the readings are chapters excerpted from longer books (which you may purchase if you prefer). However, because the readings are all available on D2L, I expect that you will print out each week’s readings in advance, and bring those readings to class. Moreover, I expect that you will actively and critically read the works assigned. This means taking notes, writing on your printed copies, and interacting with the assigned reading. We will talk more about this over the course of the semester. Please do the readings and assignments listed on the syllabus for the day they are listed—in other words, do the readings listed before coming to class that day.

SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE / PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
In order to succeed in this course, your attendance, and active participation and engagement, are required at every class. To facilitate your active participation, every week, you are required to submit two discussion questions based on the week’s readings to Professor Joy by email by Wednesday at 7PM. During the semester, we will consider the characteristics of good discussion questions. As a group, we will also determine our own class guidelines for productive and considerate classroom discussion. This includes: no devices (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.) of any kind during our class meetings.

SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE / ASSIGNMENTS
I do not accept late work. Any late work earns a 0.0. I will give you detailed and specific grading rubrics for the discussion lead assignment, midterm essay, and culminating research paper with presentation.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
I am also planning a class visit to the MSU Museum – date TBA. Any changes will be announced in class and/or by email.

I. INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIES OF COMPUTING AND GENDER
Thursday September 1
Welcome, Introductions, and Overview.

Tuesday September 6

Thursday September 8

Tuesday September 13

Thursday September 15
Valerie Schafer and Benjamin Thierry, eds., Connecting Women: Women, Gender and ICT in Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2015), v-xii, 1-23 [30pp].

II. MEASURING HEAVENS AND EARTH
Tuesday September 20

Thursday September 22

III. WRANGLING CAMBRIDGE
Tuesday September 27
Thursday September 29

EITHER

OR

AND

IV. ADA’S WORLD
Tuesday October 4


Thursday October 6

Tuesday October 11 ** MEET @ MSU LIBRARY **

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 12 AT 7:00PM: MIDTERM ESSAY DUE

Thursday October 13

Tuesday October 18

Thursday October 20

V. The Census to WWII (When Computers Were Still Human)
Tuesday October 25

**Thursday October 27**

**Tuesday November 1**

**Thursday November 3**
NO CLASS. I will be in Atlanta, GA presenting my research at the History of Science Society Annual Conference. My suggestion: use this time to start investigating topics and sources for your culminating research paper.

**VI. FROM HUMAN COMPUTERS TO COMPUTING HUMANS (OR, WWII TO NOW)**

**Tuesday November 8**

**Thursday November 10**

**Tuesday November 15**

**Thursday November 17**

**Tuesday November 22**
Nathan Ensmenger, “‘Beards, Sandals, and Other Signs of Rugged Individualism’: Masculine Culture within the Computing Professions, Osiris 30.1 (2015): 38-65 [27pp].

**Thursday November 24**
NO CLASS / THANKSGIVING

**Tuesday November 29**
Student Presentations
Thursday December 1
Student Presentations

Tuesday December 6
Student Presentations

Thursday December 8
Student Presentations

Wednesday December 14 7:00PM – Culminating Research Papers Due