

## Humanities 6302: Culture and Technology      Fall 2008

Professor Jody Berland

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Office hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays 3:00-4:00, Mondays 2:30-3:30 by appointment.

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This course offers critical interdisciplinary perspectives on the development of technological culture. Western ideals of progress and enlightenment have been increasingly invested in technological progress and the capacity to know and to communicate through technological means. Technology bears a particularly important relationship to temporality, simultaneously placing its users in a heightened present and displacing that present with anticipations of the future. “Culture and Technology” compares critical approaches to technology in modern western culture, and considers how such approaches situate technology in relationship to time, past, present and future. The template of temporality allows us to explore diverse roles of technology in the making and unmaking of culture, citizenship and the self.

Our task will be to mine critical literature on culture and technology, to find where and how technology locates nostalgia, hope, diversity, rationality, magic and dread, and to relate these two themes in critical discussion on culture, technology and the mediation of time.

Course readings are to be supplemented with critical responses to texts in diverse media.

### **Required Texts**

Berland (ed), *Humanities 6302 Coursebook* 2008.

Steven Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*. Harvard University Press, 1983

Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*. Harvard University Press, 1993.

Robert Scharff and Val Dusek (eds), *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition*. Blackwell, 2003.

General reference (on reserve)

Debra Benita Shaw, *Technoculture*. Berg, 2008.

Lauren Rabinovitz and Abraham Geil, eds. *Memory Bytes: History, Technology and Digital Cultures*. Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2004.

### **Evaluation**

This course centres on readings and discussions in a seminar format. Preparation of readings for discussion is essential to its success. Evaluation of students is based on the following:

Participation (including presentation of readings), 20%

Book, film, art review essay, 30%

Final essay (including essay proposal, prerequisite for essay but not independently graded), 50%

## Schedule of readings

September 9 Introduction

September 16 **Foundational texts**

Aristotle (ch 2), Marx and Engels (ch 7), Ellul (ch 16), Mumford (ch 29) and Arendt (ch 30), *Philosophy of Technology (PT)*.

September 23 **Defining technology**

Steven Kline, "What is Technology?," Arnold Gehlen, "A Philosophical-Anthropological Perspective," Pinch and Bijker, "The Social Construction of Facts and Artifacts," Langon Winner, "Social Constructivism, pp 206-243; Lewis Mumford, "Tool-Users vs Homo Sapiens & The Megamachine," *PT* Chapters 19-22.

September 30 **Defining themes**

Steven Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918*. chapters 1-4.

October 7. **Defining themes, continued**

Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, chapters 5-7; Marinetti, "The Futurist Manifesto"

October 14. **Meeting Heidegger.**

"The Question Concerning Technology," *PT*.

October 21 **Heidegger continued and in discussion.**

Scharff, Ihde, Feenberg, Chapters 24, 25, 28, *PT*.

October 28 **Meeting Latour.**

Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 1-90.

Recommended: Latour, "On actor-network theory: A Few Clarifications."

November 4 **Cyborgs.**

Donna Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," *PT*. Haraway, "Cyborgs to Companion Species: Reconfiguring Kinship in Technoscience," *Chasing Technoscience*. Edited by Don Ihde and Evan Selinger, pp 58-82. Zoe Sofoulis, "Cyberquake: Haraway's Manifesto", *Prefiguring Cyberculture*, edited by Tofts, Jonson and Cavallaro, 84-101. (coursekit)

November 11 **Creative Technologies**

Walter Benjamin, The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility," *Illuminations*.

McLuhan "The new art or science...." *Explorations* 1967, Section 11 -14 incl (n.p.)

Nigel Thrift, "Closer to the Machine? Intelligent Environments, New Forms of Possession and the Rise of the Supertoy." *Knowing Capitalism*, London, Sage 2005, 182-196.

Geer Lovink, "The Cool Obscure: Crisis of New Media Arts," and "Theses on Distributed Aesthetics," *Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Culture*, 2008, Chapters 2 & 8 (coursebook).

November 18 **The Logic of Simulation**

Albert Borgmann, "Information and Reality at the Turn of the Century," *PT* chapter 47.

Hillel Schwartz, "Self Portraits," *The Culture of The Copy: Striking Likenesses, Unreasonable Facsimiles*, Chapter 3, 89-141 (coursebook).

Berland, "Postmusics;" Shuhei Hosokawa and Hideaki Matsuoka, "On the Fetish Character of Sound and the Progression of Technology: Theorizing Japanese Audiophiles." *Sonic Synergies: Music, Technology, Community, Identity*, 2008 (coursebook).

John Durham Peters, "Helmholtz, Edison and Sound History," *Memory Bytes: History, Technology and Digital Culture*. Edited by Lauren Rabinovitz and Abraham Geil, 2004.

Rosi Braidotti, "Cyberfeminism with a Difference," *New Formations* 29 (1996), 9-25 (coursebook).

#### November 25. **Cultural technologies at war**

Kern, *Culture of Time and Space*, Chapter 11

Paul Virilio, "A Travelling Shot over Eighty Years," *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, Trans. Patrick Camiller. Verso, London and New York, 1989, ISBN 0-86091-928-5, pp 68-90, 94-5.

Christopher Coker, "The Re-Enchantment of War" in *The Future of War: The Re-Enchantment of War in the Twenty-First Century*, 2004, 1-45 (coursebook).

Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi, "The Convergence of the Pentagon and Hollywood: The Next Generation of Military Training Simulations," *Memory Bytes: History, Technology, and Digital Culture*, pp 150-173 (coursebook).

#### December 2 **Technology, culture and the natural world**

Carolyn Merchant, "Mining the Earth's Womb," Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep," Bill Devall, "The Deep Ecology Movement," Ariel Salleh, "Deeper than Deep Ecology," *PT* Chapters 36, 39, 40, 41.

Joost Van Loon, "Introduction," pp 1-15; Chapter 4, "Assemblages and deviations: biophilosophical reflections on risk," *Risk and Technological Culture: Towards a Sociology of Virulence*. Routledge: NY 2002, pp 63-87 (coursebook).

#### **Additional Recommended Readings**

Acland, Charles (ed). *Residual Media*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Hannah Arendt (ed) and Harry Zohn (trans). New York: Schocken Books.

Acland and Buxton, W (eds) *Harold Innis in the New Century*. Montreal: McGill Queen 's University Press, 2000.

Berland, J. "Cultural Technologies and the 'Evolution' of Technological Cultures." and other articles. Andrew Herman and Thomas Swiss (eds) *Cultural Theory and the World Wide Web*. New York: Routledge 2002.

Bird, Jon et al (eds). *Future Natural: Nature, Science, Culture*. London/New York: Routledge, 1996.

Castells, Manuel. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.

Cooper, Simon. *Technoculture and Critical Theory: In the Service of the Machine?* London, NY: Routledge, 2002.

Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. John Wilkinson (trans). New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.

Grant, George. *Technology & Empire*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1991.

Gross, David. *Lost Time: On Remembering and Forgetting in Late Modern Culture*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000.

Guattari, Felix. *The Three Ecologies*. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (trans). London: The Athlone Press/Continuum, 2001.

Hayles, Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*. University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Kittler, Friedrich. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young & Michael Wutz (trans). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Kroker, Arthur. *Technology and the Canadian Mind*. New York: St Martin's Press/New World Perspectives, 1984.

----- . *The Possessed Individual: Technology and Postmodernity*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992

----- . *Data Trash: The Theory of the Virtual Class*. New York: St Martin's Press/ New World Perspectives, 1994.

---- . *The Will to Technology and the Culture of Nihilism: Heidegger, Nietzsche and Marx*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004

Leslie, Esther. *Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art, and the Chemical Industry*. London: Reaktion Books, 2005.

Lipovetsky, Gilles. *Hypermodern Times*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2005

Marvin, Carolyn. *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking About Electric Communication in the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

McKenzie, Adrian. *Transductions: Bodies and Machines at Speed*. London: Continuum, 2002.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media*. London/New York: Routledge, 1964:2001.

Misa, Thomas J., Phillip Brey, and Andrew Feenberg (eds). *Modernity and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.

Murphie, Andrew and John Potts, *Culture and Technology*. London: Palgrave 2006.

Rabinovitz, Lauren and Abraham Geil (eds). *Memory Bytes: History, Technology, and Digital Culture*. Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press, 2004.

Stamps, Judith. *Unthinking Modernity: Innis, McLuhan, and the Frankfurt School*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1995.

Steigler, Bernard. *Technics and Time*. Richard Beardsworth & George Collins (trans). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Romanyshyn, Robert. *Technology as Symptom and Dream*. London/NY: Routledge 1989.

Shaviro, Steven. *Connected, or What it Means to Live in the Network Society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Tofts, Darren, Annemarie Jonson, and Alessio Cavellaro (eds). *Prefiguring Cyberculture: An Intellectual History*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003.

Trend, David (ed.). *Reading Digital Culture*. Oxford/NY: Blackwell, 2001.

Virilio, Paul. *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. Patrick Camiller (trans). NY: Verso, 1989.

----- . *Open Sky*. Julie Rose (trans). London: Verso, 1997.

Virilio, Paul with Sylvère Lotringer. *Speed and Politics*. New York: Semiotext(e), 1977.

Wajcman, Judy. *Technofeminism*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004

Wilson, Stephen. *Information Arts: Intersections of Art, Science and Technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002

Winner, Langdon. *Autonomous Technology: Technology out of Control as a Theme in Political Thought*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977.

----- . *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in the Age of High Technology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Zielinski, Siegfried. *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing By Technical Means*. Gloria Custance (trans). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.

**Fiction:**

Brin, David. *Earth*. Topeka: Sagebrush Education Resources, 1991.

Leguin, Ursula. "Schrodinger's Cat," in *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences*. London: Penguin Books.

Piercy, Marge. *He, She and It*. Fawcett Crest, 1993.

Powers, Richard. *Galatea 2.2*. New York: Picador, 2003