

## Syllabus for Technology in the Modern World

TCSIIN 437

Autumn 2005

1:45-4PM in SCI 309

[University of Washington, Tacoma](http://www.washington.edu)

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Office hours: before or after class and by appointment

Course URL: <http://courses.washington.edu/tande/tmw/>

### Course Description

Examines the relationship between technology and society. Themes include: the unintended consequences of new technologies; the relationship between technology and the environment; the science-technology relationship; the social shaping of technology debate; production and consumption; and technology's role in mediating power relations along lines of race, class, and gender. Technology in the Modern World is a reading-intensive course that will examine the historical impact of selected technologies on the regional economy, citizenry, and environment. The theme for the Autumn of 2005 is gender and technology. The course will be organized around case studies of various topics with an emphasis on the sources and methods historians use to study interactions and relationships between gender and technology and change over time. Members of the class will apply various analytic methods to document and understand how technological change works. Individual projects will likely place a local industry in a global context. Students will actively contribute to the class by discussion, by periodically presenting the results of their independent reading to their classmates, and by giving a presentation of their news analysis project. The writing projects, although short, allow students to shape the course to meet their own needs and interests. A research paper, due at the end of the term, will allow students to synthesize the modes of inquiry in a project of their own design that address some aspect of gender and technology.

Although technology is regarded as perhaps the dominant force in shaping the modern world, the relationship between technology and culture remains of the great unsolved riddles of the twentieth century. Once thought of as a linear, unidirectional model, with technology shaping culture, the inter-relationships have been shown to be much more complex. This course uses a historical framework and methodology to examine the technology-culture relationship. It fills a gap in the curriculum by teaching students how to synthesize social, cultural, and historical studies of the role of technology in the modern world. The emphasis of this course will be on twentieth-century North America, but examples from other continents and time periods will be used for comparison. Individual research projects increase students' skills in finding and critically examining information from a wide variety of sources. Class discussions build upon readings of primary and secondary sources in order to strengthen essential skills in critical analysis, thinking, and speaking. This course will appeal to students in a wide variety of concentrations whose studies touch upon industrialization, de-industrialization, the information economy, and environmental consequences of technological choices.

### Course Objectives:

Through historical inquiry students will gain an understanding of many of the complex factors significant in the cultural, economic, and social history of technology. Equally important to the class will be the development of research, writing, and critical-thinking skills through written assignments including essays and research papers. This course will provide the opportunity for students to:

- Integrate methods from the social sciences, natural sciences, and the humanities
- Extend their analytic skills by critiquing recent scholarship
- Give short presentations in front of their peers
- Write a 15 page research paper
- Use a historical perspective to assess current technology policy

Required Readings (available at the [University Bookstore](#) and UWT library)

- Nina E. Lerman, Arwen Mohun, and Ruth Oldenziel,, *Gender and Technology: A Reader* (Baltimore, 2003).
- Reserve Readings are on the [UWT Library E-RESERVES SITE](#) at <http://ereserves.tacoma.washington.edu/> and are noted on the attached reading schedule with an "®."
- Some readings from the Web, including Bill Joy's essay, "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us" at: [http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy\\_pr.html](http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy_pr.html)
- Wendell Berry, *In the Presence of Fear: Three Essays for a Changed World* (2001).

Recommended texts:

- William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* Oxford University Press; 2nd edition (2003) ISBN: 0195166094
- Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*. (any edition will be fine. widely available used)

Grading and Evaluation:

- Class Participation, Preparation, & Presentations (your on-time attendance is implicit) 20%
- Précis (4 sentences each) and news citations with one-sentence annotation 20% (thus, each one will count for about 4% of your grade)
- Critical Book Review # 1 (5 pp.) 15%
- Critical Book Review # 2 (5 pp.) 15%
- Take-home essay (News Analysis) (5 pp.) 5%
- Research paper (15pp) 25%

Exceptional work will earn an A; work well-above average a B; average work a C; below average a D. Work that fails to meet minimum standards for written work or which is not turned in on time will yield an F. The take-home essay will be a synthetic project that covers all readings, discussions, and presentations.

Conduct in the Classroom:

Students are advised to familiarize themselves with UW policies published at: <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/conduct.htm> and to note that any activity that may distract other students from course content is explicitly prohibited. These activities include:

- use of cell phones, pagers, walkman, iPod, blackberry, or similar devices
- talking, whispering, sending SMSs, emailing, chatting, or web surfing
- making unnecessary noise or other distracting behavior (quietly eating, sipping a beverage, or slipping out to the restroom is OK)
- arriving late or leaving early

Class Preparation and Participation

This is not a lecture course, it is run as an upper-division seminar. The success of the class for each student will depend on how well he or she is prepared and to what extent each student contributes to furthering the class discussion. The quality of preparation and participation will be as important as the quantity. **Coming to class unprepared will count as a zero for the day.** Preparation includes not only a précis of one of the day's readings, but also notes on all the readings and a list of points you wish to discuss. If I notice a lot of students are unprepared any week I may even offer a pop quiz for your enjoyment. I hope that these guidelines will reveal the value I place on each student's contribution to everyone's education.

You are responsible for finding out from other students what happened during any class you miss. So find a "buddy" and exchange contact info.

Writing Assignments:

### Précis: (also called treatments)

For each class you will select one of the day's readings and write a brief précis, of less than one page (a single, well-written paragraph will suffice), in which you summarize the author's thesis, the nature of the supporting evidence; and the significance of the reading. **These are not "response" papers. It is generally not appropriate to use the first-person singular for class assignments.** You are strongly encouraged to use the Peterson model for "treatments," but you may customize it to meet your own style. See <http://courses.washington.edu/tande/tmw/treat.htm> for detailed instructions. Each précis will be graded on a 10 point scale for quality of analysis, thoughtfulness, and the insight it offers into the reading. This year (2005), these treatments will be collected **at random** for a sampling of your writing. Because of this, they cannot be turned in late. Each student will be allowed to miss one without penalty, after that missing treatments will count as a zero against your grade.

### Critical Book Reviews

In each critical book review, the student will analyze a book from the course bibliography (or one that you think should be on the course bib.), but which has not already been assigned as a class reading. You will write a 5 page analysis of the author's sources and discuss the methods by which the author uses those sources to make an argument. You will also have the opportunity to make a brief presentation of your analysis to the whole class. You are responsible for obtaining your books or articles in a timely manner so you can submit your analysis on the due date. These analyses are intended to get you to think critically about the ways in which other authors write history. The presentations will provide an opportunity to articulate your comments and ideas, in addition to giving the rest of the class an overview of the different research and analytical methods you have employed in your work. (See the detailed instructions at [http://courses.washington.edu/tande/book\\_reviews.htm](http://courses.washington.edu/tande/book_reviews.htm) for details.) Books and articles reviewed must be from the course bibliography but not already assigned as readings. If they are not from the course bibliography they must be approved in advance.

### Take-Home Essay:

This will be an exercise in which you have the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of the course materials, methods, principle theorists and theories by using them to analyze a story from the news (must be dated after 1 October 2005). You will have five pages to complete this synthetic tour de force. My best advice is to keep up with the assignments and to ask questions as they arise.

### Research Paper:

An original fifteen-page analytic paper addressing a question related to the theme of the course. Chicago style, at least 15 non-internet sources from scholarly works, convincingly argued in support of your thesis. See the checklist at <http://courses.washington.edu/tande/res/checklist.pdf> for details. If you need a refresher or have not written a real research paper, I urge you to buy, read, and digest *Writing History: A Guide for Students* by William Kelleher Storey Oxford University Press; 2nd edition (2003) ISBN: 0195166094.

### General Evaluation of Written Work:

All assignments will be graded for clarity of composition and grammar as well as content. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, with at least one-inch margins, in 12-point type (Roman preferred). Sources will be cited in footnotes using A to Z. If you have any doubts you may also consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (available in the UWT Library on the Writing Resources shelf, near the reference desk) or contact the Writing Center. All assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will be dropped one grade for each day late, except in extreme circumstances (death certificates must be notarized copies with raised seals). No extensions will be granted except for a written medical excuse presented **before** the due date of the assignment.

**Work must be thoroughly proofread.** A "Spell check" on your word processor may be the first step, but it does not constitute proofreading. Failure to proofread your work will automatically drop your grade. Work returned for failure to proofread will be counted as late. If you have any doubts about the

need to proofread your writing consult the UW Writing Center. The consultants at the Writing Center will not proofread your paper, but they can tell you if your writing needs it and they can provide instruction about how to proofread your work yourself. Email however is an informal medium and lives by its own, constantly evolving rules.

Writing effectively includes writing clearly and concisely and using correct grammar.

GRADING METHODS: Excellent (i.e. 9 and above) papers will meet all of the following criteria:

1. The paper addresses all of the questions and issues posed in the assignment.
2. You avoid the use of the words "I," "me," or "myself."
3. The paper draws upon relevant readings and class discussions. The paper applies what you have been learning.
4. The paper adds your own insights to the analyses. The quality of your own ideas is important. Show your own independent thinking as much as possible.
5. The paper is convincing. You have the responsibility to justify your arguments. You must back up your points and conclusion. Support your argument by using evidence from the class readings or other sources. Use explicit examples to illustrate what you say. Do not assume anything on the part of the reader.
6. The paper is well organized. It has an introduction with a thesis (argument), it has a body supporting this thesis, and it ends with a conclusion summarizing the main points.
7. The paper has no spelling or grammatical errors.

#### Miscellaneous:

I accept assignments as HARD COPY ONLY (because it would take too long to print all your papers if you emailed them). **I do not use Bb.** Papers are **due the day they are due, at the beginning of class** and you will lose one grade per day for late assignments. I do this out of fairness to those students who, despite obligations to jobs, families, and full course loads still turn in their work on time. If you cannot get your work in on time, you may be taking too many courses per quarter.

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a temporary or permanent disability, contact Lisa Tice, Manager for Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Mattress Factory Bldg, Suite 206. An appointment can be made through the front desk of Student Affairs (692-4400), through Student Development and Success (692-4501), by phoning Lisa directly at 692-4493 (voice) or 692-4413 (TTY), or by e-mail [ltice@u.washington.edu](mailto:ltice@u.washington.edu). Appropriate accommodations are arranged after you've conferred with the DSS Manager and presented the required documentation of your disability to DSS.

#### *"Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech. . . ."*

The right to free speech applies in our classroom as well as in your written work. Let me assure you that you will not be graded on your opinions, but on the quality of the evidence and the cogency the argument with which you support your position. Members of the class will probably disagree often, but we will strive to remain polite and respectful to each other. Heated discussions can enliven a class, but they are only worth it when conducted with the utmost courtesy to our classmates.

Course Schedule can now be found at [http://courses.washington.edu/tande/tmw/tmw\\_sched.htm](http://courses.washington.edu/tande/tmw/tmw_sched.htm)  
See the course [Bibliography for Technology in the Modern World at http://courses.washington.edu/tande/tmw/tmw\\_bib.htm](http://courses.washington.edu/tande/tmw/tmw_bib.htm)

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