

assoc. prof. katherine pandora
hsci 2333 / fall 2010 /

office hours: tu/th 10:30-11:30,
th 1:30-2:30 and by appt.
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Inventing the Modern World



Although humans have been creating and using technology for thousands of years, we are still perplexed by questions about how it affects our personal experience, social worlds, and cultural patterns. Some of the issues we will address are the following: How does a society's technology represent the values that characterize the society and culture in which it is made and used? How are technologies affected by those who use them? How does the adoption of new technology affect people's lives -- their daily activities, their families, their work, their beliefs? How does technological change occur -- and who benefits from these changes, and why?

We will be concerned particularly with the idea of how technology has been understood as underwriting the "modern world." We'll begin with an overview of the last thousand years of technological history in a global perspective, and then take up several case studies that draw on classic themes (technology and war, technology and invention, technology and consumption, technology and mass media) from the vantage point of the American context. Supplementary readings and activities will develop and demonstrate different analytical perspectives that historians put to use in examining the history of technology, and also bring in comparative issues from other cultures as focal points. The coursework encompasses lecture presentations, reading, films, discussion, take-home essay exams, and in-class workshops in which we'll divide up into small groups to produce tentative answers to questions raised in our studies.

Books (in order of use):

Arnold Pacey, *Technology in World Civilization* (MIT Pr, 1990)

David Mindell, *War, Technology, and Experience aboard the USS Monitor* (Johns Hopkins U Pr, 2000)

Theresa M. Collins and Lisa Gitelman, *Thomas Edison and Modern America: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006)

Susan Strasser, *Waste and Want: A Social History of Trash* (Holt, 1999)

Siva Vaidhyanathan, *The Anarchist in the Library: How the Clash Between Freedom and Control is Hacking the Real World and Crashing the System* (Basic Books, 2004)

Overview of Course Assignments and Examinations

- 1) Introductory Essay (Due Week 2 on 9/2): approx. 500-700 words (**graded s/u**) <5%>
 - 2) Take-Home Essay Exam #1 (Due Week 5 on 9/23): approx. 4-5 pages in length <15%>
 - 3) Take-Home Essay Exam #2 (Due Week 8 on 10/14): 4-5 pages in length <20%>
 - 4) Take-Home Essay Exam #3 (Due Week 10 on 10/28): 4-5 pages in length <15%>
 - 5) Take-Home Essay Exam #4 (Due Week 13 on 11/18): 4-5 pages in length <20%>
 - 6) Two-Part Final Take-Home Essay Exam (Due Wednesday, December 15th in PHSC 212 from 1:30-3:30 p.m., the final exam time assigned for this class): 6-7 pages in length <25%>
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Rules of the Road

Attendance: Attendance is required. 6 unexcused absences are allowed; if this number is exceeded the course grade will be lowered by one letter grade. Students are expected to use the allowed unexcused absences for an illness or injury not serious enough to receive medical attention, or for personal or family considerations. Three tardies equals one absence.

Electronic Devices: During classtime, all external communication devices should be turned off. Computers are for note-taking only; if used for any other purpose this privilege will be revoked.

Academic Misconduct: Cheating will not be tolerated. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying the work of another student, using the written work of another author without attribution, or any conduct that seeks to compromise the examination process. *Such conduct will result in an automatic F on that examination and the student may be referred to the Dean for disciplinary action.*

Due Dates: Assignments will not be accepted if turned in late.

Religious Holidays: It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. Please see me in advance.

Students with Disabilities: Any student who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact me as soon as possible, so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and to facilitate your educational opportunities.

Grading Scale: The letter grades for this course conform to a 4-point scale, as follows:

4.0-3.5 = A (A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, A-/B+ = 3.5)
3.49-2.5 = B (B+ = 3.3, B = 3.0, B- = 2.7, B-/C+ = 2.5)
2.49-1.5 = C (C+ = 2.3, C = 2.0, C- = 1.7, C-/D+ = 1.5)
1.49-0.5 = D (D+ = 1.3, D = 1.0, D- = 0.7)
0.49 and below = F

University of Oklahoma Writing Center

Writing Center Introductory Statement from their Website: "Most universities have a writing center, a place for students, faculty, and staff to meet and talk about writing. As a writer you will want to seek feedback from many different readers. The writing consultants at the writing center are able to talk with you about your writing—at any stage in the process and for any course you are taking. You can make an appointment (online or by phone) and you can drop in whenever they are open." For more information, visit their website at: www.ou.edu/writingcenter.