

ATCM 2300 : Introduction to TechnoCulture

Fall 2019

Discussion Section Syllabus

Section 2300.205

Section 2300.208

Day and Time: Friday, 8:30am – 9:45am

Day and Time: Friday, 10am – 11:15am

Room: ATC 1.305

Teaching Assistant Contact Information

Cameron Irby

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NOTE: Please include ATCM2300 in the subject line of your email.

Office Hours

Tuesdays 3:30PM – 4:30PM; ATC 1.905

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the concept of technoculture through a focus on five key questions:

- (1) What is culture?
- (2) What is technology?
- (3) How have the relationships among humans, technologies, and culture changed over time?
- (4) How do we understand the multiple and contradictory effects of technology?
- (5) How do we imagine the possibilities (both positive and negative) of emerging technologies?

We encourage you to think more complexly about technology and culture, and about the many ways in which the two are always inextricably linked.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Research the technocultural histories of significant object or process
- Describe how an object evokes meaning
- Analyze an object to elaborate how technology and culture are related
- Create an original analysis of an object that illustrates the complex relationship of human beings, technology, and culture
- Read academic writing, so as to engage in informed discussions about significant topics
- Apply critical method of analysis to open-ended questions
- Synthesize information from multiple sources to create new insights

Required Texts and Films

Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Ballantine Books (2008)

Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore. *The Medium is the Massage*. (original 1968)
Republished. Gingko Press, 9th edition (2001)

Hidden Figures (Directed by Theodore Melfi, 2016)

Bladerunner: The Final Cut (Directed by Ridley Scott, 1997)

GATTACA (Directed by Andrew Niccol, 1997)

NOTE: ADDITIONAL required readings will be posted on the eLearning Course site

DISCUSSION SECTION DESCRIPTION

You will meet with an ATEC Teaching Assistant each week in a 75-minute session. These sessions give you opportunities to explore course topics in small groups. Over the course the semester you will be assigned readings, film screenings, creative activities, and critical writing projects.

Attendance is taken at every discussion session. It is expected that you have ATTENDED the weekly lecture, that you have READ / VIEWED assigned materials, and you have COMPLETED assigned activities.

You are allowed **2 absences a semester from the lecture sessions** and **2 absences a semester from the discussion sessions**. This does not include absences for religious purposes.

If you are absent FOR ANY REASON, you must contact your Teaching Assistant, preferably before you miss a session. Every absence beyond those allowed will result in a reduced letter grade.

Student Participation and Evaluation

Non-graded requirements

- **Attendance: Mandatory**
- Screenings: Assigned on a weekly basis
- Readings: Assigned on a weekly basis
- **Creative exercises: Mandatory**

Graded Activities

- **Mid-Term Project:** Your midterm project will be due during discussion sections on **Oct 3 and 4th, 2019. Midterm grades are posted by Oct 12**
- **Final Group Project:** For the final project, students work in small groups to create an original analysis of an evocative technocultural object. The final project includes a written research statement, an in-class presentation, and a reflective account of the group process. **FINAL GRADING PERIOD: December 7 – December 18**

NOTE: All information on the syllabus is subject to change. Please check E-Learning for the most recent version.

LATE WORK

Due to the nature of the course, late work can be submitted up to one week after the initial deadline, with one letter grade dropped (10%) per day overdue. After the one-week grace period, all further submissions for that assignment will be rejected and given a zero (0).

If an extension is needed, please let me know at least one week in advance, so that arrangements can be made.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

By submitting work in this course, you are declaring that the work you produce is your own. UT Dallas has numerous policies regarding plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty and considers them serious offences. All suspicions of plagiarism will be investigated. More investigation is available on the website: <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>

ACCOMMODATION

Students with disabilities are encouraged to utilize the on-campus resources at the Office of Student AccessAbility. You can contact the office at 972-883-6104 or by email: studentaccessability@utdallas.edu. Their office is in the Student Service Building (SSB), suite 3.200. They can provide documentation and details for accommodations to address your individual needs. If you need any special accommodations to complete this course successfully, please provide me with this information as soon as possible, so we can make appropriate arrangements.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

If you are feeling sick, the Student Health Center is at SSB 4.700:
<https://www.utdallas.edu/healthcenter/>.

If you want to learn more about healthy living on campus, visit the Student Wellness Center:
<https://www.utdallas.edu/studentwellness/>.

If you are looking for a support group, visit the Center for Students in Recovery:
<https://www.utdallas.edu/recovery/>

If you need to talk to someone about anything else, the Student Counseling Center is available 24/7 from their website: <https://www.utdallas.edu/counseling/>.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

If you have questions about something other than what I have provided here, please visit <https://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

WEEKLY OUTLINE

NOTE: Assignment details will be available on E-Learning as needed.

Aug 22

Week 1 *Inspiring the Technological Imagination*

KEY QUESTION: **How do we imagine new technologies?**

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- Introductions
- Review discussion section syllabus

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

- WRITE: *A LOVE LETTER TO AN OBJECT*
- VIEW: *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger: EPISODE 01 (Available on YouTube)

Aug 29

Week 2 *Evocative Objects*

The CAMERA

KEY QUESTION: **How does an object acquire meaning?**

DISCUSSION SECTION TOPICS:

- *The camera as the eye of history*
- *Camera as memory machine*
- *The rise of visual culture*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- Share Love Letters
- Make connections to *Ways of Seeing*

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

READ: *Medium is the Message* (pg 1 - 41)

READ: Excerpt from the "Medium is the Message" (E-Learning)

Sept 5
Week 3

Making Meaning for the Eye
The BOOK

KEY QUESTION: **What is culture?**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *When old technologies were new*
- *Librarians and fans as keepers of culture*
- *The medium is the message*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES

- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- Make connections to McLuhan readings
- Discuss “Massage” and “Message”

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

ASSIGNMENT: “Making Meaning for the Ear” Audio Project

READ: *Medium is the Massage* (pg 111-120)

Sept 12
Week 4

Making Meaning for the Ear
The TURNTABLE

KEY QUESTION: **What is culture?**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Listening technologies*
- *Recording culture*
- *Laws of Media*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- Discuss weekly assignments
- Collaborate: Tetradic Analysis on a common technology
- INTRODUCE E-LEARNING PORTFOLIOS

DISCUSSION SECTION ASSIGNMENT:

SCREENING: *Hidden Figures* (Directed by Theodore Melfi, 2016)

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

Submit “Making Meaning for the Ear” Audio Project to E-Learning Portfolio

Sept 19
Week 5

Socio-Technical Systems
HIDDEN FROM HISTORY

KEY QUESTION: **What is technology?**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *What is a computer?*
- *Human history of the computer*
- *How to think in systems*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS *Hidden Figures*
- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- Review E-Portfolio Entries
- INTRODUCE MID-TERM

NEXT ASSIGNMENTS:

- READ: Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts have Politics?"
- MID-TERM PREPARATION
- ASSIGNMENT: "*TAROT of TECH*" card deck activity

Sept 26
Week 6

Unintended Consequences
DIGITAL PIRACY

KEY QUESTION: **Do technologies have politics?**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Security and surveillance technologies*
- *Distributed identity, fractured selves*
- *How to think the unthinkable*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- DISCUSS ASSIGNMENT "*TAROT of TECH*" activity
- REVIEW for MID-TERM

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

PREPARE FOR MID-TERM exam

Oct 3
Week 7 **Special Guest Lecture**

Oct 3 & 4 DISCUSSION SECTIONS: IN-CLASS MIDTERM

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

READ: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Chapters 1-11

Oct 10
Week 8 ***Designed for Dreaming***
The CAR and the SUBURBS

KEY QUESTION: **How are technology and culture entangled?**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Technology infrastructures culture*
- *Culture scales technology*
- *The American Dream: A Case Study*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- REVIEW MIDTERMS

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

READ: *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Chapters 12-22

ASSIGNMENT: "Montage of a Dream Deferred" Group Project

Oct 17
Week 9

Montage of a Dream Deferred
Social Movements and Video Activism

KEY QUESTION: **Can technologies serve social good?**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Documentation versus interpretation*
- *Technologies of witnessing*
- *Making the invisible visible*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- DISCUSS “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?”
- DISCUSS ASSIGNMENT: “Montage of a Dream Deferred”

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

SCREENING: *Bladerunner: The Final Cut* (Directed by Ridley Scott, 1997)
ASSIGNMENT: Submit “Montage” Assignment to E-Learning

Oct 24
Week 10

More Human than Human
Cyberpunk and BLADERUNNER

KEY QUESTION: **What does it mean to be human?**

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Science fiction futurism*
- *Technology sub-cultures*
- *Post-humanism*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS LECTURE TOPICS
- DISCUSS novel, film, and technology sub-cultures
- DISCUSS ASSIGNMENT: “Montage of a Dream Deferred”

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

- ASSIGNMENT: Reflection on “What Does it Mean to be Human?”
- WRITE: one piece on work by Professors Terry, Scott, and burrough

Oct 31

Week 11

Emerging Art

ATEC Professors: Dean Terry, Andrew Scott, and xtine burrough

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Sound and performance art*
- *3-D sculpture*
- *Projection mapping*
- *Participatory art*
- *Art as social practice*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS “Creativity and emerging technologies”
- INTRODUCE FINAL PROJECT
- FINAL Project Workshop #1

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

- WRITE: one piece on work by Professors Lee and Schich

Nov 7

Week 12

Emerging Communication

ATEC Professors: Angela Lee and Max Schich

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Media, attitudes and behavior*
- *Social science research methods*
- *Data analytics*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS “What does it mean to be literate in a digital age?”
- FINAL Project Workshop #2

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

- WRITE: one piece on work: Professors Wu and Sung

Nov 14

Week 13 ***Emerging Media***

ATEC Professors: Ann Wu and Wendy Sung

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- *Critical play*
- *Reality television*
- *Critical media studies*

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- DISCUSS “What if everything is media?”
- FINAL Project Workshop #3

NEXT ASSIGNMENT:

- VIEW: *GATTACA* (Directed by Andrew Niccol, 1997)
- WRITE one piece on work: Deans Balsamo and MacDonald

Nov 21

Week 14 ***Emerging Technologies***

Dale MacDonald, ATEC Associate Dean of Creative Technologies
Anne Balsamo, ATEC Dean

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- DISCUSS “How / Why to study emergence”

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- FINAL Project Workshop 4

NEXT ASSIGNMENT

- Prepare for PROJECT SHOWCASE
- WRITE: a letter “Dear AI...”

NOVEMBER 25-29: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec 5

Week 15 ***Finale and Student Showcase***

DISCUSSION SECTION ACTIVITIES:

- SHARE: a letter “Dear AI...”

Dec 7-13

Finals Week