

PRO-SEMINAR IN MEDIA THEORY/DIGITAL MEDIA STUDIES

LCC 8001 / T 4:35pm-7:25pm / Skiles 010

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The aim of this pro-seminar is to provide PhD students with a set of foundational readings that inform the diverse field of media studies. You are encouraged to use this seminar to compile readings for your qualifying exams.

The list of readings below is, of course, incomplete, and should serve more as a guide for furthering your interests. The readings for each week generally contain three kinds of texts:

- Background readings in Western philosophy (from Plato and Aristotle to Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud);
- A juxtaposition of readings in computer and information sciences (cybernetics, information theory, etc.) and that of critical and cultural theory (including literary theory, visual culture, cultural studies, post-structuralism and postmodernism);
- Contemporary readings & presentations of artifacts in media studies, new media, digital art, and cyberculture.

Throughout the semester we will also look at a range of artifacts, including art, film, video, new media art, games, software art, and so on. You will help lead discussion on different weeks, also bringing in media artifacts to serve as a platform for discussion.

Required Books (will be read throughout the course)

Terry Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*

Charlie Gere, *Digital Culture*

Michael Rush, *New Media in Art (Thames & Hudson World of Art Series)*

Schedule (* = Indicates entire works that you will need to buy, borrow, copy or otherwise read)

Week 1 – ‘Never mind that man behind the curtain...’

In-class readings...

Screening from *The Wizard of Oz*

Screening from *THX-1138*

Week 2 – Technology, Technics, and *technê*

Aristotle, from *Nicomachean Ethics* (on *technê*)

Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology”

Manovich, “New Media from Borges to HTML”

Week 3 – Technics, Politics, and Poetics

Aristotle, *Poetics**

Benjamin, “The Work of the Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics**

Fuller, from *Behind the Blip*

Week 4 – Debating Technics

Adorno & Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry as Mass Deception”

McLuhan, “The Medium is the Message”

Williams, “The Technology and the Society”

Week 5 – Technics, Idea, and Ideology

Plato, from *Republic* (the “allegory of the cave”)
Marx, from *The German Ideology*
Foucault, from *Discipline & Punish*
Chun, from *Control and Freedom*

Week 6 – Technics, Game, and Play (LIVING GAMEWORLDS SYMPOSIUM)

Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play**
Bataille, “The Notion of Expenditure”
Baudrillard, from *Simulacra and Simulation*
Galloway, “*Warcraft* and Utopia”

Week 7 – Mind, Body, and Machine

Descartes, from *Meditations on First Philosophy*
Wiener, “Men, Machines, and the World About” or Licklider, “Man-Machine Symbiosis”
Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”
Haraway, “The Cyborg Manifesto”

Week 8 – Technics and Aesthetics

Kant, from *Critique of Judgment*
Bergson, “The Perception of Change”
Virilio, from *War and Cinema*
Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect”

Week 9 – Technics and Politics

Marx, from *1844 Manuscripts*
Marx, from *Capital*
Enzensberger, “Constituents of a Theory of the Media”
Debord, from *The Society of the Spectacle*
Critical Art Ensemble, “Electronic Civil Disobedience”

Week 10 – Technics, Identity, and Society

Freud, from *The Interpretation of Dreams*
Freud, from *Civilization and Its Discontents*
Lacan, “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I”
Butler, from *Gender Trouble*
Nakamura, from *Cybertypes*

Week 11 – Technics, Sign, and Code (SPRING BREAK)

Saussure, from *Course in General Linguistics*
Weaver, “Recent Contributions to the Mathematical Theory of Communication”
Barthes, from *Mythologies*
Hall, “Encoding/Decoding”

Week 12 – Deconstructing Technics

Plato, *Phaedrus**
Derrida, “Signature, Event, Context”
Kittler, “Gramophone, Film, Typewriter”
Stiegler, from *Technics and Time, vol. I*

Week 13 – Postmodernism, or, Post-Technics?

Nietzsche, from *The Birth of Tragedy*
Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in an Extramoral Sense”
Lyotard, from *The Postmodern Condition*
Jameson, “Postmodernism; or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”
Deleuze & Guattari, “Rhizome”

Week 14 – Networks, Multitudes, and Control

Deleuze, “Post-script on the Societies of Control”

Mattelart, *Networking the World**

Hardt & Negri, “Globalization and Democracy”

Wark, “A Hacker Manifesto”

Week 15 – Technics and Life

Aristotle, from *De anima*

Lily Kay, “Cybernetics, Information, Life”

Hayles, from *How We Became Posthuman*

Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal**

Week 16 – Technical Being

Svendson, *A Philosophy of Boredom**

FINAL PAPER DUE