...men have become the tools of their tools.
- Henry David Thoreau

But what good is it to pose questions of motives? of Why?
All that must be the work of some miserable intellectual who balks at technical progress. [...] Technique exists because it is technique. The golden age will be because it will be.
Any other answer is superfluous.
-Jacques Ellul

...embedded in every tool is an ideological bias...
-Neil Postman

...technology is not a destiny, but a scene of struggle.
-Andrew Feenberg

...literacy instruction is now inextricably linked with technology.
-Cynthia Selfe

Writing is pre-eminently the technology of cyborgs...
-Donna Haraway

Course Contact Information
Instructor: Dr. Kevin Garrison
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Telephone: (325) 486-6145
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Office Hours: MW 1:00-4:00

Description
This course will explore theories of technology and connect those theories with studies of writing. For the first half of the semester, we’ll tackle two theoretical questions: 1) what is technology? and 2) what is writing? We’ll challenge our understanding of what we mean when we talk about technology by attempting to define it via multiple approaches – historical, political, biological/evolutionary, sustainability, cultural, and more. Once we have a complex understanding of technology, we’ll move into one of the most difficult questions of the past and present: what happens when we “technologize” language via writing? To answer this question, we’ll examine different theories and examples of technologized language – theories of media ecology, rhetorical theory, the growth and spread of technical writing, origins of language, digital media, and more.
For the second half of the semester, we’ll move from *theory* to *application*. We’ll read several authors who have explored technology as it intersects with numerous areas of writing – literary studies and criticism, pedagogy, studies of rhetoric, digital writing spaces, and technical writing and usability studies. Writing and technology, ultimately, shape nearly everything about the world we live in, and understanding the many ways in which they intersect will give us an ability to respond to two of the most powerful forces in the 21st century.

**Objectives**

1. Read theories of technology, writing, and the intersection between both.
2. Articulate questions, concerns, insights, and responses to various types of readings.
3. Conduct, write, and present graduate level research that yields insights into a question about technology and writing.

**Assignments**

You will achieve the stated objectives by turning in the following assignments this semester:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-Face Meeting and Proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Paper (suitable for a conference presentation)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reading Responses and Participation Grades*

For each of the 13 days that we have readings, you will write a 200-400 word response, formatted as an *MLA* document. Post each response to the discussion board on Blackboard at least 2 hours prior to the class meeting time and print out your response before each class to bring it with you to turn in. Each response should contain three to five “discussion items” (with corroborating citations) that emerged from the reading(s), such as:

1. Responses to the reading (e.g. I was quite annoyed by X…”).
2. Questions about the reading (e.g. “Why is the author so against X?”).
3. Criticisms of the reading (e.g. “The author offers contradictory evidence on page…”).
4. Clarifications about the reading (e.g. “The figure on page X reminds me of a lecture…”).

Each discussion item should be relatively substantial. That is, “Did anyone else understand the reading?” is not a question, “I didn’t get the main point” is not a criticism, and “I liked the readings this week” is not a substantial response.

The responses will provide the foundation for class discussions. During these discussions, you will be required to participate by 1) commenting on other individual’s items, and 2) discussing your own items. Students who consistently participate by offering their responses and responding to classmates will receive an “A” for participation.
Seminar Paper, Proposal, and Presentation
You will write a 12-15 page (double-spaced) MLA formatted research paper that grapples with a question that emerges from the readings/lectures/discussions this semester. This paper should be suitable for a conference presentation, a publication in conference proceedings, or a publication in a graduate journal. You will need to incorporate a minimum of 10 citations from library sources that are NOT a part of the course readings.

As well, you will meet with me prior to spring break and, soon after, provide me with a short (1 page) proposal detailing your ideas for the paper. During final exam’s week, you will share a 10-15 minute presentation over your paper that will be open to the public. I will post detailed assignment descriptions on Blackboard for each of these assignments.

Grades on Assignments
Points earned on assignments indicate the following:

- **A** (89.5 - 100)
- **B** (79.5 - 89.4)
- **C** (69.5 - 79.4)
- **D** (59.5 - 69.4)
- **F** (0 - 59.4)

Additional Grading Policies, including Make-Up Work
Assignments will be assessed a penalty of 10% if turned in after the submission time and 10% more for each additional day late. This includes weekends and holidays. Also, I will not give an “Incomplete” in this class, and I may use your work as examples for future classes.

Materials for this Class
- Articles (PDFs/links provided on Blackboard/syllabus)
- Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*
- Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology*
- Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*
- Christina Haas, *Writing Technology: Studies on the Materiality of Literacy*
- Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
- Amy Koerber, *Breast or Bottle?: Contemporary Controversies in Infant Feeding Policy and Practice (Studies in Rhetoric/Communication)*
- Access to a computer with internet, email, MS Word, and other standard software programs. Contact IT for help with information technology, such as Blackboard access.

Classroom Behaviors and Expectations
- You will adhere to the standards set in the [ASU Student Handbook](#).
- You will adhere to standards of common courtesy (e.g. turn off and put away cell phones, no eating/drinking, no sleeping, no checking Facebook in class, no studying for other courses during class time, etc.). If your actions are disruptive or disrespectful, then I will ask you to stop and/or to visit with me outside of class hours. For continued disruptions, I will ask you to leave the classroom.
- As I will demonstrate and discuss on the first day of class, I have a severe high-frequency hearing impairment. I read lips, so do three things when speaking to me:
  1. Get my attention.
  2. Speak at a volume that everyone in the class can hear.
  3. Don’t cover your mouth.
Email Policy
I will only check my emails during regular business hours. Also, I will not discuss your grades via email since this would violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Academic Misconduct
If you plagiarize, cheat, gain an unfair advantage, or participate in any activities described in the Student Code of Conduct, then you will receive an automatic "0" on the assignment(s) and be required to visit with me in my office. For extreme violations or a second violation, you will fail the course. All violations will be reported to appropriate officials via an Incident Report.

Attendance Policy
You are expected to attend every class. You can, however, miss two classes. After you miss two or more classes, you will lose a letter grade for each subsequent absence.

- **Excused:** The only excused absences are a university-sponsored event or the observance of a religious holy day (OP 10.19), but you must inform me prior to the event for me to excuse the absence and for you to make arrangements for make-up work.
- **Tardies:** A few minutes after class begins, I will close the classroom door and pass around a sheet to sign. If you arrive after the door is closed, then you will be counted absent. You have one “grace” tardy this semester.
- **Leaving Early:** If you leave class early for any reason, you will be counted absent.

Accommodations
If you have a disability (OP 10.15) and would like to request reasonable accommodations, please contact: Dallas Swafford, the Director of Student Disability Services, in the University Center, Room 112. Her phone number is 325-942-2047, and her email is dallas.swafford@angelo.edu.

Title IX
The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at: Michelle Boone, J.D., Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Mayer Administration Building, Room 210, 325-942-2022, michelle.boone@angelo.edu. You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345. For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.
Tentative Schedule
SECTION 1: THEORIES OF TECHNOLOGY

Week 1: 1/16/2020
- Introduction of the syllabus, assignments, expectations, and each other
- Topic: On a Philosophy of Technology

Week 2: 1/23/2020
- Topic: Definitions, Theories, and Critiques of Technology
- Reading: Feenberg – *A Philosophy of Technology*
- Reading: Ellul – *The Technological Society*, excerpts (PDF on Blackboard)

Week 3: 1/30/2020
- Topic: Technophobes, Substantivism, Efficiency, and the Agency of Technology
- Reading: Winner, Part 1

Week 4: 2/6/2020
- Topic: Social Construction and Politics of Technology
- Reading: Winner, Part 2

Week 5: 2/13/2020
- Topic: Posthumanity, Virtuality, and the Exponential Growth of Technology
- Reading: Kurzweil, Part 1

Week 6: 2/20/2020
- Topic: Biology, Evolution, and the Future of Technology
- Reading: Kurzweil, Part 2

SECTION 2: THEORIES OF WRITING

Week 7: 2/27/2020
- Topic: Language as Technological and Introducing Media Ecology
- Reading: Ong, Part 1

Week 8: 3/5/2020
- Topic: Remediation, Secondary Orality, and the Digital Revolution
- Reading: Ong, Part 2
- Research Question and Meeting due this week prior to Spring Break

SECTION 3: APPLICATION

Week 9: 3/19/2020
- Topic: Technical Communication, Rhetoric, and Technology
- Reading: Haas, Part 1
Week 10: 3/26/2020
- Topic: Off the Grid Technology, User-Centeredness, and Pedagogy
- Reading: Haas, Part 2
- Proposal Due

Week 11: 4/2/2020
- Topic: Dystopic Fiction and Technology
- Reading: Huxley, Chapter 1-8

Week 12: 4/9/2020
- Topic: Analysis/Criticism of Huxley’s World
- Reading: Huxley, Chapter 9-18

Week 13: 4/16/2020
- Topic: Disembodied Humans: Intersections between Writing, Media, Users, Politics, Technology, Science, and Disabilities
- Reading: Koerber, Part 1

Week 14: 4/23/2020
- Topic: The Ethics of Technology: What Should We Do?
- Reading: Koerber, Part 2

SECTION 4: PAPER AND PRESENTATION

Week 15: 4/30/2020
- Workshop on seminar papers and presentations
- Rough draft of final paper due

Week 16: 5/7/2020
- Papers due
- Presentations from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM