ENC 6421.001. Fall 2020

CRN 95405, 3 credit hours

Prof. Carl G. Herndl. cgh@usf.edu

Office: CPR 335

Online office hours: Wednesday 4:00-5:00 and Friday 11:00am-noon

And by appointment

The course meets online Thursdays at 3:30-6:15. You are required to attend the Blackboard Collaborate Ultra session in real time each week with your computer camera on.

**Official USF Course Description**

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| “Examines the intersection of Rhetoric and technology, with emphasis on contemporary critical issues in composition studies.” |
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**About the course**

This course will engage the literature on technology--what it is, how it shapes human activity, how technology is integrated into society—and then explore the rhetorical consequences or mediations of technology. The course is structured in three sections.

Section 1 “Introduction: Critical Theory of Technology and Social Order” (weeks 1-6), introduces the critical theory of technology and the tradition of critiques of technology and its influence on the social order. We will begin with Andrews Feenberg’s *Questioning Technology,”* and Heidegger’s influential essay “The Question Concerning Technology” to which Feenberg’s work is party a response. Heidegger sets out a dark theory of how technology determines and oppresses humanity. In response to the Heideggerian tradition in the Frankfurt School, Feenberg establishes a theory in which technology is neither a neutral tool nor an oppressive inevitability. For Feenberg, technology is shaped by the cultural and material context in which it circulates, and he explores the possibility of making technology serve liberatory human ends. As a contemporary example of this dynamic, we will then read works by Ruha Benjamin, Safiya Noble and Brendesha Tynes which explore the ways technology promotes oppressive racial politics. The section ends with Donna Haraway’s classic book [*Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millenium.FemaleMan*](mailto:Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium.FemaleMan) *©\_Meets\_OncoMouse TM: Feminism and Technoscience* which explores how technology emerges in a capitalist culture and, like Feenberg, seeks ways to shape technology to make a “more lively and livable world.”

Section 2 “Technology in Rhetoric and Composition” (weeks 7, 8 and 9) will explore the ways scholars in rhetoric and composition have engaged with technology. This is where we “explore the rhetorical consequences or mediations of technology.” In this section members of the class will explore their own interest in technology and writing or rhetoric and present material to the class. Each member of the class will identify one article or book chapter about the relationship between technology and writing, rhetorical theory or professional practice. You will send the article/chapter you’ve selected to me at least one week before you present the material to the class, and I’ll post them on the course Canvas page. Everyone in the class will read all the selections for each class and individual class members will present their selection to the class.

Section 3 “How New Technology Changes the Rhetorical Practice of Science” explores the influence of modeling technology on the rhetorical practice of science and its relationship to science policy. New technologies not only change how science works, but how science engages with fields like medicine and policy. For example, the advent of supercomputers made Bayesian statistics practical and changed the ways we calculated probability or ran clinical trials on HIV. In climate science and related systems theory, modeling technology changes not only how science works, but the rhetorical affordances and challenges facing science as it engages with the public and with policy. This section will be a case study of how modeling technology alters the historic relation between science and public policy in the age of the anthropocene.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, you will be able to**:**

--Describe the major theories about the relationship between technology and society;

--Identify important ways in which technology influences rhetoric and writing;

--Describe the ethical and political implications of technology;

--use technology self-consciously and ethically.

**Work**

**reading and participating in class discussion**. (30%) of final grade) Graduate school should not be a spectator sport even online. It should be a place where everyone is engaged and talks about their ideas, about what they’ve read and what they think. There is a lot of reading in the course, some of it rather dense. I expect you to read all the assigned material and come to class prepared for serious discussion. While discussion is harder online than in a face to face situation, it is still central to the way we engage texts, ideas and other scholars. I expect everyone to come to (virtual) class prepared and to participate in discussion. If you are someone who is reticent to speak in class or worried that you’ll sound dumb (you won’t), the QCCQs (see below) are a way to prepare yourself to talk in class. You can ask questions, respond to things other class members ask or say, introduce an idea or interpretation you think is important and interesting. **Being present but not speaking gets you a “C” in class participation**. Participating regularly and substantially in the discussion gets you an “A” in participation.

**weekly QCCQs**. (30% of final grade) Each week starting in week 2 you will pick a passage from one of the assigned readings which you think is especially important or interesting and write about its meaning and significance. You will **Quote** the passage, **Comment** on the meaning and significance of the ideas, **Connect** the passage to other parts of the reading or to other things you’ve read in rhetoric which provide a context for interpreting the passage, and generate a **Question** for class discussion. Your comment/interpretation can be global and engage with large theoretical questions, or it can be very narrow and be a type of close reading of an especially crucial passage.

These QCCQs serve three purposes:

1) they prepare you to participate in class discussion;

2) they provide you with a record of your reading and thinking, and;

3) they keep me in contact with your thinking and allow me to shape class discussions to address the things in which you are interested. This means that I read every QCCQ and write comments on them.

These QCCQs will be due by **noon**each Thursday so I can read them before class and build them into my class plan. Suggested length 350-500 words. QCCQs will be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being the highest.

**class presentation**. (10% of final grade) During the second section of the course, weeks 7, 8 and 9, each class member will present the book chapter or article they selected for the class to read and discuss. You should locate a journal article or book chapter that reflects your own interest in the relationship between technology and writing, rhetorical theory or professional practice. These pieces could be pedagogical, theoretical, methodological, historical, as long as they take up the role, function or use of technology in writing and rhetoric.

You should send me a PDF of your article or book chapter by Friday, September 25. Please include the abstract or your own brief description of the piece (200 words) that tells me what the piece is about. I will review the materials and then group readings so that there is as much consistency and coherence in each day’s readings as possible. I will let you all know the schedule for the readings and presentations by Monday, September 28, giving you as much time as I can to prepare. The first day of presentations is Thursday 10/8.

These presentations and discussions should last 30-35 minutes (maximum) and should be accompanied by a one page (single spaced) handout that identifies the major concepts of the reading, suggests why it is significant in relation to our other readings or trends in the professions, and generates prompts for class discussion. Since there will be three or four presentations a day during this section of the course, limit your presentation to 30 or 35 minutes, and do not write more than one page for the handout. You can structure your presentation however you think will work best for you and for the material, but I have two requirements.

1) **do not read your handout at the class.** You can talk from the handout and elaborate on what you’ve written, but do not read what you’ve written.

2) make sure you leave ample time for discussion so others can talk. It is you job to help the class engage the material not to lecture for 30 minutes.

**written project**. (30% of final grade) The final part of your work will be a substantial piece or pieces of writing. Since some of you are completely unfamiliar with this material while others will have read greater or lesser parts of it, I will let each of you determine what purpose and form your writing will take. I am open to any reasonable proposal for what you write in this course as long as it engages the topic and materials of the course. The precise nature of your writing project will be negotiated individually so that you can each tailor the project to suit your scholarly strengths and interests, your place in the program and your research opportunities. And I encourage you to talk with me about your interests and your ideas for a course writing project.

Think about what is going to be most useful for you and write me a proposal in the form of a “writing contract”: what will you write? what purpose does it serve for you? how long will it be? when will I get it? This proposal should be informal, between 100 and 200 words, and is due at the end of the sixth week (Friday, 10/2), but the sooner you can decide on a project the better.

Here are a few suggestions for the kind of thing you might decide to do for this assignment. The point is for you to do serious intellectual work that fits into your individual plans and place in the program and discipline. As you review the options, recall what John Connor said to the Terminator: “you can mix them up too.”

* You might write part of a dissertation or thesis chapter, or part of a dissertation or thesis proposal that is in the general field of the rhetoric and technology.
* You might write a review of a new book or books in the area using your class readings as the basis for the review, and then send the review to the appropriate journal (this last would be required if you write a review).
* You might use some of the course readings in addition to outside reading to develop a case study of a specific technology.
* You might develop proposals and papers for conferences.
* You might develop a substantial bibliographic essay on a relatively well focused issue or problem. This could contribute to the “literature review” section of a thesis or dissertation. Alternately, it might be a resource for further research on topics such as race and technology or modeling technology and science policy.
* You might even write collaboratively or prepare a hypertext file.

Suggested length: Ph.D. students should aim at 10-15 pages. MA Students 10 pages. Final projects are due on the day scheduled for the final exam in the course.

**Grade Categories and Weights**

Reading and Participating in Class Discussion 30%

Weekly QCCQs 30%

Class Presentation 10%

Written Project 30%

**Grading Scale**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Grading Scale (%) | |  |
| 94-100 | A |  |
| 90 – 93 | A- |  |
| 87 – 89 | B+ |  |
| 84 – 86 | B |  |
| 80 – 83 | B- |  |
| 77 – 79 | C+ |  |
| 74 – 76 | C |  |
| 70 – 73 | C- |  |
| 67 – 69 | D+ |  |
| 64 – 66 | D |  |
| 60 – 63 | D- |  |
| 0 – 59 | F |  |

**Texts**

In an effort to reduce your out of pocket expense, I have requested that the library place all texts for the course on electronic reserve and ordered them as “recommended” at the book store. You may buy them in print copy or read/download them from the course reserves. Unfortunately, I could not get an electronic copy of Donna Haraway’s book *Modest Witness*; you will have to purchase a print copy of that book.

We will read all or selections from the following texts:

Benjamin, Ruha. *Race After Technology*

Edwards, Paul. *A Vast Machine: Computer Models, Climate Data and the Politics of Global Warming*.

Feenberg, Andrew. *Questioning Technology*

Haraway, Donna. [Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millenium.FemaleMan](mailto:Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium.FemaleMan) ©\_Meets\_OncoMouse TM: Feminism and Technoscience.

Jasanoff, Shelia *The Fifth Branch: Science Advisors as Policymakers.*

Noble, Safiya. *Algorithms of Oppression*

Noble, Safiya and Brendesha Tynes (Eds.) *The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class and Culture Online.*

Pielke, Roger*. The Honest Broker: Making Sense of Science in Policy and Politics*.

Shapin, Steven and Simon Schaffer. *Leviathan and the Airpump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life.*

Winsberg, Eric. *Philosophy of Climate Science*

Articles and book chapters selected by students for class presentations will be loaded onto Canvas files.

**Schedule of readings**

**Introduction: Critical Theory of Technology and Social Order**

WEEK 1

Thurs. 8/27 Feenberg. Andrew. From *Questioning Technology.* “Preface,” “Technology, Philosophy, Politics” and Part II: “Democratic Rationalization” (chs. 4, 5, 6)

WEEK 2

Thurs. 9/3 Feenberg, A. *Questioning Technology*. and Part III (chs. 7, 8, 9)

Heidegger “The Question Concerning Technology”

WEEK 3

Thurs. 9/10 Benjamin, R. *Race After Technology* Introduction and chs. 1-4

WEEK 4

Thurs. 9/17 Benjamin, R. *Race After Technology. Ch 5 “Retooling Solidarity, Reimagining Justice”*

Noble, S. *The Intersectional Internet: Race, Sex, Class and Culture Online.* “Introduction” (1-20) & Tynes, Schuschke & Noble “Digital Intersectionality Theory and the #Blacklivesmatter Movement” (21-40)

Noble, S. *Algorithms of Oppression* 1-29.

WEEK 5

Thurs. 9/24 Haraway. [Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millenium.FemaleMan](mailto:Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium.FemaleMan) ©\_Meets\_OncoMouse TM: Feminism and Technoscience. Parts 1 and 2 (pages 1-124)

WEEK 6

Thurs. 10/1 Haraway. [Modest\_Witness@Second\_Millenium.FemaleMan](mailto:Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium.FemaleMan) ©\_Meets\_OncoMouse TM: Feminism and Technoscience. Part 3 (pages 125-275)

**Technology in Rhetoric and Composition**

WEEK 7

Thurs. 10/8

Katz, S. “Ethics of Expediency.” (Andrew Petrykowski)

Adams, et al. “Acting with Algorithms: Feminist Propositions on Rhetorical Agency” (Amy Brill)

Garrison, K. “Moving Technical Communication off the Grid.” (Jessica Griffith)

Szabo, V. “Apprehending the Past.” (Nickolas Brown)

WEEK 8

Thurs. 10/15 Barad, K. “Getting Real” (Justiss Burry)

Fancher, P. “Embodying Turing’s Machine.” (Yulia Nekrashevich)

Miller C. & Shepherd. “Blogging as Social Action” (Kaelah Scheff)

Shivener, R. “Pressurized Bodies.” (Peter Fields)

WEEK 9

Thurs. 10/22 Shew, A. “Ableism, Technoableism and the Future AI.” (Ben Kinney)

Matthews, N. & Sunderland N. “Digital Life-Story Narratives as Data for Policy Makers and Practitioners.” (Haley Jones)

Skinner, D. “Race, Racism and Identification in the Era of Technosecurity.” (Marshall Martin)

“Defending Race Privilege on the Internet: How Whiteness uses Innocence Discourse Online.” (Matthew Gallot-Baker)

**How new technology changes the rhetorical practice of science**

WEEK 10

Thurs. 10/29 Egan, J. “Black Box” (Kelcee Sykes)

Shapin & Schaffer. *Leviathan and the Airpump* Chs. 1 & 2 (pages. 3-79) and Ch 8 (332-34)

WEEK 11

Thurs. 11/5 Jasanoff. *The Fifth Branch.* ch. 1: (pages.1-19); ch. 5: (pages. 84-100); ch. 8: (pages.152-53 & 177-179); ch. 11: (pages.229-236)

Pielke. *Honest Broker* chs. 1 & 2: (pages. 1-21) and ch. 6: (pages.76-96).

WEEK 12

Thurs. 11/12 Edwards, P. *A* *Vast Machine* Introduction: xiii-xxiii. 395-430

Winsberg, E. *Philosophy of Climate Science* chs. 1 through 4: (pages. 1-54)

WEEK 13

Thurs. 11/19 IPCC Modeling/scenario chapter (TBA)

Burkhart et al. “Impacts of Integrated Crop-Livestock systems on Nitrogen Dynamics and Soil Erosion.”

WEEK 14

Thurs. 11/26 Thanksgiving

WEEK 15

Thurs. 12/3 Class Cancelled for Writing

**Course Policies**

**Inclusion Statement.** I believe in the value of diverse learning spaces. As such, this class will value and respect those of diverse backgrounds including but not limited to: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, culture, and religion. Please be sure to inform me of what name and pronoun you want to go by. I will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students. If you have concerns or suggestions for improving the classroom climate, please do not hesitate to speak with me.

**University policies:** <https://www.usf.edu/provost/faculty/core-syllabus-policy-statements.aspx>

**Attendance** I expect you to be in class (virtually) and engaged in discussion every week. This is often difficult material, and you’ll learn more if you are in class working at it every week. Everyone has a complicated life and missing one or even two weeks of class is unfortunate—“Stuff Happens”--but won’t hurt your grade if you are participating well otherwise. After you miss two classes, I’ll lower your course participation grade by a full letter for each absence. If you have a medical situation that causes you to miss a lot of classes, please talk with me and we’ll see how we can accommodate your situation.

**Students in need of academic accommodations** for a disability may consult with Student Accessibility Services ([www.usf.edu/sas](http://www.usf.edu/sas) and [sas-info@usf.edu](mailto:sas-info@usf.edu)) to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation. Each student making this request must bring a current “Memorandum of Accommodations” from the Student Accessibility Services office I will accommodate your specific needs and keep these arrangements confidential. If you have a disability that makes it difficult for you to leave the building in case of emergency, please let me know.

**You are excused from class** for major observances of your religion. Inform the instructor at the beginning of the term when you expect to be absent for these events.

**Plagiarism** See http://www.usg.usf.edu/catalogs/0405/adap.htm for *USF Undergraduate Catalog's* definitions and policy, and consult with the instructor if you are uncertain. Essentially, plagiarism refers to using another writer's words or ideas without proper citation. This boils down to doing your own work and giving credit to others when you copy and use their words. You can’t copy and paste materials from the web into your writing without acknowledging the source of the materials. And buying a paper off the internet is the equivalent to an academic felony. If I catch someone plagiarizing, I will give them an “F” in the course and turn them over to the university’s disciplinary mechanism.

**Email communication** Please use only your USF email account for class business. I will communicate with you using your university account and you are responsible for checking that account regularly.