

Politics of Technology

PSCI 353
Spring 2014
B Quad
Wednesday 6:30-9:45
MSC 304

Dr. Noah J. Toly

MSC 223

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Office Hours:

<http://www.booknow.so/noahjtoly>

Required Texts

1. DeLillo, Don. 1984. *White Noise*. New York: Penguin.
2. Mumford, Lewis. 1952. *Art and Technics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
3. Ellul, Jacques. 1964. *The Technological Society*. New York: Knopf.
4. Winner, Langdon. 1986. *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
5. Paterson, Matthew. 2007. *Automobile Politics: Ecology and Cultural Political Economy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
6. Noble, David F. 1997. *The Religion of Technology: The Divinity of Man and the Spirit of Invention*. New York: Penguin.
7. Additional readings on Blackboard.

Course Expectations

Students will be expected:

1. **To attend class sessions:** Students will be expected to attend all class sessions.
2. **To read the assigned materials:** The readings for this course provide us with the common ground upon which we will base individual discussions. Without careful attention to the readings, our conversations will fall flat.
3. **To be attentive and participate in class:** Students should participate by actively following and contributing to class discussions and by reflecting the substance of those discussions in papers and presentations.
4. **To complete required assignments in a timely fashion:** You and your classmates will get the most out of the course only if you submit your work on time. See below for policy on late work.

Course Requirements and Assessment

1. **Attendance, preparation, and participation (25%)**
 - a. Attendance: Attendance will be kept. Students may have one *excused* absence without penalty. Any unexcused absences or any absences beyond one will result in a penalty: 2.5% of the course grade under most circumstances, 5% for an absence when we have a guest speaker or are attending a conference.

Excused absences must be discussed in advance unless they are emergencies (e.g., severe contagious disease, hospitalization), in which case we will expect documentation from Student Development.

- b. Preparation: Preparation is expected and will be assessed through occasional reading quizzes.
 - c. Participation: All students are expected to participate fully in each class session. This does not mean that you need to “have all the answers.” It also does not mean that a normally quiet student must suddenly embrace a large speaking role in the class. The requirement can be met by thoughtful comments *or* questions that demonstrate attentiveness to the class session, earlier class discussions, and the readings.
2. **The politics of everyday technologies (25%):** Assignment guidance sheet provided on Blackboard.
 3. **Response papers and discussion leading (25%):** Assignment guidance sheet provided on Blackboard.
 4. **Final paper (25%):** Assignment guidance sheet provided on Blackboard.

Writing for this Course

1. Writing accounts for a considerable portion of your grade in this course. You will be graded on strength of interaction with course themes and readings as well as on validity of critique and quality of writing. Please feel free to consult with us on your writing assignments. Consider taking advantage of the resources available on campus, including the Writing Center, located in Buswell Library.
2. For your reference:
 - a. Wheaton College Writing Center handouts:
http://library.wheaton.edu/writing_center_handouts
 - b. University of Chicago Press Staff (ed.). 2003. *The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (or current ed.).
 - c. Strunk, William and E. B. White. 2000. *The Elements of Style, 4th Edition*. New York: Longman (or current ed.).
 - d. Williams, Joseph M. 1995. *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (or current edition).

Integrity of Scholarship

The Wheaton College catalog includes the following statement on academic integrity (emphasis added). All students in this class are expected to conduct their work according to this policy:

“By affirmation of the Wheaton College Community Covenant, all students, faculty, and staff are expected to understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and to take personal responsibility and accountability for their work. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense against an academic community and against the standards of excellence, integrity, and behavior expected of its members. Academic dishonesty degrades the educational and research mission of the College. **Truth and honesty are to be followed in all academic endeavors, including the taking of examinations and in the preparation of class reports and papers.** Areas of

concern related to academic integrity include plagiarism, cheating, fabrication of information or data, unauthorized collaboration, lying, defrauding, misrepresentation, or deception related to assigned or voluntary academic work. The definition of academic dishonesty, the method for reporting violations, and the procedures of the disciplinary process are stated in the 'Policy on Academic Honesty' in the Student Handbook, available in the Student Development Office."

Suggested reading:

Lipson, Charles. 2004. *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Late Work

Please submit all work on time. Apart from written notice from Student Development, late assignments will be docked 5% per day to a maximum of 35% and assignments more than one week late will not be accepted.

Gender-Inclusive Language

For academic discourse, spoken and written, the faculty expects students to use gender inclusive language for human being.

Accommodations for Learning Disabilities

Whenever possible, classroom activities and testing procedures will be adjusted to respond to requests for accommodation by students who have documented their learning disabilities with the registrar.

Wheaton College is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability needing academic adjustments is requested to contact the Academic and Disability Services Office as early in the semester as possible. Please call 630-752-5941 or send an e-mail to jennifer.nicodem@wheaton.edu for further information.

Use of Portable Electronic Devices

This policy to be negotiated by the class on March 19.

Communication with the Professor

Do not assume that the professor will check email on evenings and weekends. This means that you should not expect immediate replies to what may seem to you like urgent inquiries, if you make them overnight or on the weekend. Please chart your course through the semester carefully, so that you can ask questions or deal with concerns during class, after class, or during office hours.

Class Schedule, Topics, and Readings

The following schedule of topics and readings is subject to revision. Note that readings average 146 pages per week (not including our first week), *but these pages are not evenly distributed*.

The number of pages assigned for each week is given in the schedule so that you can carefully chart your course through the quad and complete all of the readings in a timely fashion.

Date	Topic	Readings	Pages	Notes
Mar 19	Syllabus and Introduction; Imagining Technology	DeLillo, <i>White Noise</i>	336	---
Mar 26	What is Technology? Introducing the Politics of Technology	Mumford, <i>Art & Technics</i> (all except "Symbol and Function in Architecture"); Mumford, "Authoritarian & Democratic Technics"	141	---
Apr 2	Technology and the Technological Society	Ellul, <i>The Technological Society</i> (front matter, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2)	148	<i>Koyaanisqatsi</i> (film) in class
Apr 9	Politics, Economics, and Technology	Ellul, <i>The Technological Society</i> (Chapters 3-4)	151	---
Apr 16	The Politics of Risk	Winner, <i>The Whale and the Reactor</i>	178	---
Apr 23	Everyday Technologies and Global Challenges	Paterson, <i>Automobile Politics</i> (Chapters 1-4)	120	---
Apr 30	Everyday Technologies and Global Challenges	Paterson, <i>Automobile Politics</i> (Chapters 5-8)	115	---
May 7	Religion and the Politics of Technology	Noble, <i>The Religion of Technology</i> (Part I and Conclusion); Toly, "The Macondoization of the World"	~120	Recommended: Brock, "Technology for Good and Evil" and "Political Reconciliation in the Community of Worship"