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Since the beginnings of Anglophone literature, psyches, societies, places, environments and bodies have been dramatically reshaped, again and again, by technology. Indeed, that process is accelerating rapidly today; some even feel that we have long since passed the point we live in a natural or given universe and that we now, instead, dwell in a wholly artificial, and increasingly easily modified life-world—a life-world that has become a technosphere. Whether this is catastrophe or triumph is hotly debated.

In this class, we will focus on a long history of technological intervention and how, unebeknownst to many of us, literary culture has been affected by and responded to it. In fact, history's accumulation of technologies and techniques arguably is one of the large, relatively unexamined and often unconscious foundations of our psyches, societies, and cultures. From the time English literature begins, people have been consciously and unconsciously changed and shaped by a succession of specific in(ter)ventions, from gunpowder and printing to steam power, electricity, the automobile, television, computers, genetic technology, and robotics. But our growing technological unconscious is not just littered with these; some have tried to find order within this welter of technological changes and assert that it has a definite historical shape. The idea that there has been, in Western history, a succession of different technological "revolutions" has become familiar to many of us, as people have argued that we have gone through not just one, but two, three, or even four of these "revolutions"—i.e. larger systemic changes that have come from an accumulation of many symbolic and literal synergies between society and sets of individual technologies.

We will consider how these in(ter)ventions and the synergies between them throw new light on not just historical, but also cultural change. From Renaissance humanism to postmodern simulation, new technological eras have provided ghostly companions to the eras mapped out by literary and cultural history. Also, individual texts are regularly responsive to, and a key part of society's absorption of, technological change. Texts that reveal these parallels between technological infrastructure and imagination are extremely various. We will pick a limited number of poetic, fictional, non-fictional, and filmic texts to show how probing their technological unconscious greatly expands their range of possible meanings and even provides an interesting new perspective on their changing styles and kinds of aesthetic impact.

Throughout the course, we will be mindful that our subject engages one of the most talked-about and thought-about issues in today's public discourse, namely the character and value of the technologized world we increasingly inhabit. These issues are fascinating intellectually and also crucial to the shape and perhaps even continuance of lifeworlds, our economy, our society, our culture, and even, some say, our biosphere.

Two key things to remember as we proceed in the course are 1) You DON'T need to be a technological enthusiast to thrive in this course; we will criticize every bit as much as we honor technology in our attempt to see how it is interwoven into our culture. 2) We will constantly THINK HISTORICALLY, always keeping our eye on the intertwining of literary and cultural history with technological history.

Booklist:
Marie Borroff, ed. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Norton, ISBN#0393930254
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. Norton, ISBN# 0393978192
Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. Norton, ISBN# 0393964523
Philip K. Dick, *Ubik*. ISBN# 0679736646
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*. Norton, ISBN# 0393964582
Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. Norton, ISBN# 039397779X
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*. Scribner, ISBN# 0684801523
Richard Powers, *Galatea 2.2*. Picador, ISBN# 0312423136
Octavia Butler, *Lilith's Brood*. Grand Central Publishing, ISBN 0446676101
Wendell Berry, *Remembering*. Counterpoint, ISBN# 1582434158

There will be some additional readings on Blackboard. See Schedule of assignments below.

Course Expectations:

The seminar this fall will be intensive, demanding, and hopefully also exciting. The key things you will need to do are as follows:
1. Always keep up with the reading and always come to class prepared to discuss it. Your regular attendance, preparation, and class participation are all crucial.
2. Choose several topics you are interested in for a class presentation from the sheet of topics I am circulating among you. We will then figure out who gets which topic, and that topic you will research and prepare for a presentation on the week for which it is assigned. Perhaps the hardest part of this preparation will be keeping your presentation to the maximum length: 20 minutes. This limit will mean making your presentation crisp and compressed, as well as substantial. (The only exception is this: each topic ends by asking you to engage the class in a discussion of how your research relates to the text(s) we are discussing that week. This part of the presentation can go on beyond the 20 minute time limit.
Once topics are assigned, I want to confer with each person at least several weeks before presentation, just as they are beginning work on the topic.

3. During the course of the semester, I will ask you to do short entries on specific questions/topics in blogs which you all will keep. Second, I will give you deadlines for developing a prospectus for your Honors Thesis. This means picking and honing in on a topic and beginning to think about and research it. Third, I will give you a deadline for handing in an annotated bibliography for your topic.

4. You will then hand in 2 copies of the first draft of your honors essay on the last day of class. Jesse and I will read these over the holidays and communicate with you (via email) over the semester break. You will then revise the essay for the first week of the second semester, when we will workshop it.

Grading:

Your grade for the semester will be given for your performance in the above 4 categories, each being weighted ¼.

Remember that the grades I give you in the seminar are *different from* the determination at the end of the year whether you get honors and what level of honors (honors, high honors, highest honors) it might be. Those designations are made not by me, but a committee I am not part of. Further, the committee makes its determination **not** on your fulfillment of the course expectations above, but solely on the basis of your performance on the exam, your performance on the Honors Essay (both of which they read), your overall GPA and your GPA in English.

Learning Goals:

1. I want you to emerge from the course with a firm grip on a difficult interdisciplinary subject: namely the ways in which the history of Anglophone literature from the 15th century to the present is intertwined with the ideologies and histories of technology during this time. More specifically, I want you to be able to interpret specific texts from the novel perspective of technological history and second to be able to parallel narratives of the eras of literary history from medieval times to the present with those of technological history.

2. I want you to become proficient in utilizing technology (old and new, print-based and electronic) in both research and the presentation of ideas both orally and in writing.

3. I want you to come out of the seminar confident in your ability to carry out scholarly research, do scholarly writing, and otherwise contribute to public discourse in advanced topics in Anglophone literature and cultural studies.

Assignments:

(Important) Note #1: the following assignments are identified as sections of the course, rather than by date. This is to give us some flexibility in proceeding. My estimate now is that each section will be roughly a week's work, but that some (like sections 2, 4, and 5) could take longer or shorter.

Please count on us using our class time fully, perhaps even using our scheduled 15th (exam) week as a class.

Also, you can plan on individual conferences outside of class during the semester, and and please be proactive in talking with Jesse and me whenever something comes up.

(Even more important) Note #2: I emphasized above that I wanted you to think HISTORICALLY. To that end, I have organized the course roughly as a literary and technological historical narrative, to show how culture and literature have changed as technology has developed. LOOK CLOSELY at the titles for each section, as they are clues to BOTH the literary and technological developments in that period. But BEWARE of one thing: BEWARE of Section 3. It's the joker in the historical pack. Coming just after the Renaissance, it plunges us all into some of the weirder features of our postmodern present. Then we are back to the 17th-18th centuries, and, from there, we proceed on back to the present. Why would I do this—other than general craziness? We'll see . .

Section 1: **The Medieval Background and Introduction to the Course**
> Read Sir *Gawain and the Green Knight.*

Section 2: **The Imprint of the Printing Press, or From Magic to Art; or, Invention(s) of the Renaissance and the Emergence of Modern Western Culture**
> Read William Shakespeare, *The Tempest.* Read excerpts from David Noble, *The Religion of Technology,* on Blackboard.

Section 3: **A Look at the Results of the THIRD Industrial Revolution Even Before You Have Encountered the First, Second and Third; or, The Making of Postmodern Culture, Part I: Technologizing Consciousness in a Simulated World:**
> Read Philip K. Dick, *Ubik.* Also reading in Blackboard, excerpt from Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction.*

Section 4: **The Beginnings of Modern Science, the rise of the Mechanical Arts, and the Ethos of Improvement; or, Invention and the Origins of the English Novel**
> Read Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe.* Read on Blackboard the two entries entitled "From *The Tempest* to the Machine, part I"; also read on Blackboard excerpts from Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel.*

Section 5: **The Enlightenment That Had Two (Technological and Cultural) Faces**
> Continue discussing Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe.* Also read, on Blackboard, excerpts from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso,* Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus,* and Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

Section 6: **From the Clock to the Steam Engine, or The FIRST Industrial Revolution and the Age of the Machinery: or, The Embrace of the Enlightenment and the Complexity of Emerging Romanticism**
> On Blackboard, read "From *The Tempest* to the Machine," *Part II*"; Walt Whitman, "To a Locomotive in Winter"; excerpt from Frank Norris, *The Octopus;* and excerpt from Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*; William Wordsworth, "Steamboats, Viaducts and Railways"

Section 7: **Bringing the Mechanical Arts to Life: Romantic Science Life Science and Literature's Reaction to the FIRST Industrial Revolution**
> Read Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein.*

Section 8: **The Woeful Climax of the FIRST Industrial Revolution, and The Birth-Pains of Modernity and the SECOND Industrial Revolution: or, Romanticism Hits a Wall, or the Rise of Realism and Naturalism**
        Read Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle.* Read excerpts from Leo Marx on "technology" vs. "the mechanical arts" in Blackboard.

Section 9: **The SECOND Industrial Revolution, and the Emergence of Technology; or the Making of Modernism and "Modern" Culture, Part I, Electricity**
        Read F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*. Read excerpts from Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* on Blackboard.

Section 10: **The Second Industrial Revolution and the Emergence of Technology; or The Making of Modernism and "Modern" Culture, Part II, Speed**
        Read, on Blackboard, F.T.Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism." 1909; excerpts from Hart Crane's long poem (the opening and the last two sections) *The Bridge*; excerpts from Crane's letters; and Allen Ginsberg, part I from *Howl.*

Section 11: **The THIRD Industrial/Technological Revolution, or, The Making of Postmodern Culture, Part II: Computers, or Machinery Comes Alive**
        Read Richard Powers, *Galatea 2.2*

Section 12: **The THIRD Industrial/Technological Revolution, or, The Making of Postmodern Culture, Part III: Genetic Technology, or, Life Becomes Engineered:**
        Read Octavia Butler, *Dawn*.

Section 13: **The Dawn of a FOURTH Industrial Revolution, or Nostalgia for What's Gone; The Postmodern Condition and Green Culture Today**
        Read Wendell Berry, *Remembering*.

For those who like shorter and simpler narratives:
Think of this as a very compressed version of the narrative of technology (albeit a narrative disrupted by the maverick placement of Section 3.)

1. Magic and art yield to/become machinery.
2. The beginnings of what we know today as technology; it, however, wasn't called technology yet. It is called the mechanical arts and it gives the rise to the hugely influential idea/metaphor of the machine.
3. Machinery used by people to "improve" their world; or, the human **and** the machine.
4. Machinery impacting people and nature; or, the machine against the human and natural. The woeful climax of the first IR.
5. The invention and spread of the term "technology." People dwell in technology, literal and metaphoric. The human *in* the machine. Nature removed to a (sometimes) faraway distance. The second IR.
6. Nature as machinery/technology; machinery/technology in people; humans and nature **are** technology. The third IR. The invention of the term "technosphere."