SOCIOLOGY 3460
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY
Winter 2007

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Office Hours: 3.30-5.50 pm Wednesday

Schedule of Classes and Location: 3.30 to 4.45 pm on Tue & Thu at 209 MDLBH

Password for e-reserves: soc3460

Course Description:
In the last few decades science and technology have permeated our lives as never before. This has led to wide ranging debates on the relationship between science, technology, and society. This course, which is organized as a lecture-seminar, aims at critically investigating different aspects of the relationship between science, technology, and society.

Each class will have one or two students presenting the article(s) that has been assigned for the day. Presentation should be around 5 minutes and should highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the article(s). This will lay down the basis for further discussions in which students will have to participate. This is very important because the aim of this course is not just to provide information about different theories and events concerning science, technology, and society but also to aid in a deeper understanding. Students will be evaluated for their presentations as well as contribution to discussion in the class.

There will be four assignments for this class. For the first assignment students will investigate constructions of American “technological identity” in the media. Students can choose a particular TV show(s) or film and analyze how media has attempted to represent relationships between science, technology and American identity. Students should pay special attention to representations of race, gender, and class.

The third assignment will be a biography of a technology. Each student will choose a particular technology whose biography s/he wants to write. Instructor should be informed about the choice before hand so that two students do not end up writing on the same technology. For the biography of a technology assignment students will have to utilize the theories taught in the class (from the section on Theoretical Approaches) to explain
the relationship between that particular technology and its development in the society. Both the assignments have to be five double spaced, typewritten pages. Internet can serve as a valuable tool for this purpose.

The second and fourth assignments would be critical analyses of the readings assigned for the class. They will be five double-spaced, typewritten pages on the question/theme that will be assigned.

There will be no extensions for the assignments. Plagiarism will result in the student getting an F in the course. If a student wants to obtain honors for this course s/he should contact the instructor; the student will be assigned additional work for this purpose.

**Course Requirements**

Grades will be based on class participation (20%) and assignments: (i) construction of American technological identity in the media (20%), (ii) biography of a technology (20%), (iii) critical analysis of readings # 1 (20%), and (iv) critical analysis of readings # 2 (20%).

**Syllabus**

**Enchantment and Disenchantment with Science & Technology**

16th Jan. Handing over of the syllabus


6th Feb. Assignment on media construction of American technological identity due
Theoretical Approaches


Bridging Nature and Society


8th Mar. Assignment on critical analysis (1) of readings due

Human-Technology Interactions


**SPRING BREAK**

3rd April. Biography of Technology assignment due


**Technology and the War**

10th April. Film


24th April Virilio, P. 1989. *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception* (London: Verso), Preface (pp. 1-4), ch. 3 “Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter the Hell of Images” (pp. 31-51), and ch. 5 “The ‘Fern Andra’ Cinema” (pp. 52-60).


3rd May. Review

7th May. Final Assignment on critical analysis of readings due.