Phil 294: Philosophy and Technology
Moravian College
Spring 2009

Instructor: Dr. William Falla
Phone: 610/821-8725 (O)
        610/432-8711 (H)
        e-mail: mewsf01@moravian.edu
Office Hours: MWF 10:15-11:15, by appt.

I. Course Description

        We live in a "technosphere" where not only how we live but who we are and how we view our world is impacted by technology. In this course, we will explore how technology shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world as well as the moral dilemmas that it presents for us.

II. Course Objectives

        A. To understand the concepts of technology and techniques.
        B. To understand the historical interconnections between technology and human existence.
        C. To understand and analyze how our technologies shape our understanding of philosophy, its divisions and its concepts.
        D. To develop the ability to reflect and philosophize on how technology serves to define our world and ourselves as humans.
        E. To develop the ability to strategize on how one ought to live his/her daily life in this "technosphere".
        F. To be better able to articulate these ideas, both in written and oral form, in a cogent and coherent manner.

III. Course Materials

        A. Required Books:
                Technology and the Lifeworld, Don Ihde, Indiana U. Press, Bloomington,
1990
                Basic Writings, Martin Heidegger, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1993
                In Our Image, Noreen Herzfeld, Fortress Press, 2002
                The Future of Human Nature, Jurgen Habermas, Polity Press, Cambridge
UK

        B. Supplementary Materials:
                Assigned reserve readings and movies will be available at Reeves Library.
                You will receive handouts as required.

IV. Course Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on the following items:

A. Reflection Papers (60%)
A series of four (4) original reflection papers in which you will address specific assigned questions related to the area under study. You will address these questions with reference to the assigned readings in no more than 3-5 pages. They will be graded on your understanding of the material, the quality of your argumentation and the manner of your presentation. These papers will be used as the basis for in-class discussion.

B. Research Paper (20%)
Beginning with Robert Frost's poem, "At Woodward Gardens", you will reflect on how a particular technology of your own choosing ought to be used to enhance human flourishing or the common good. The paper should be 6-8 pages in length and involve bibliographic research. The paper will be evaluated by the same criteria outlined above.

C. Class Participation (20%)
Discussion is at the heart of the philosophical enterprise, therefore active participation in the class and class discussion is required.

E. Grading Scale:
A	92.5 and up
A-	89.5-92.4
B+	87.5-89.4
B	82.5-87.4
B-	79.5-82.4
etc.	

All work will receive a numerical grade. Your final grade will be rounded to the nearest whole integer.

V. Attendance and Honor Philosophy
Students are expected to regularly attend class. Attendance contributes to your class participation and therefore is important. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor and to insure that arrangements are made to make up all missed assignments or material. You are also expected to hand in all assignments on time. If you must be late with your work, you must make arrangements with the instructor prior to the due date. Failure to do so may result in the lowering of the grade for late submission.

Students have an obligation to exhibit honesty in all their work. You will be found to have violated this obligation if you plagiarize or cheat. Any violation will result in the lowering of your grade. Plagiarizing is presenting the work of others as one's own; cheating is taking, giving or accepting illicit advantage for any course work inside or outside the classroom.

VI. Special Announcements.

Students with special situations that may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Learning Center as soon as possible.

Course Syllabus

Jan 19:   Introduction: The Situation
                         Ihde: 1-30

Jan. 26   Introduction: Phenomonolgy
                         Ihde: 31-41
                         Heidegger: 267-342

Feb. 2   TechnicsI
                         Ihde; 42-71
                         Movie: *Modern Times*

Feb. 9   Technics II   **Paper #1 Due**
                         Ihde: 72-123

Feb. 16   Cultural Hermeneutics
                         Ihde: 124-161

Feb. 23   Computers and AI
                         Herzfeld: 1-9, 33-52

Mar. 2   Spring Break

Mar. 9   Computers & AI II   **Paper #2 Due**
                         Herzfeld: 53-67
                         Movie: *Wall-E*

Mar. 16   Computers & AI III
                         Herzfeld: 68-95

Mar. 23   GET & Stem Cells I   **Paper #3 Due**
                    Habermas: 23-53
                    Karpowicz, Phillip, et.al., "Developing Human-Nonhuman
Chimeras in Human Stem Cell Research: Ethical Issues and Boundaries", *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal,* v.15, #2, June 2005, 107-35

Mar. 30   GET & Stem Cells II
                    Habermas: 53-74

Apr. 6   GET & Stem Cells III
                    Habermas: 75-100
                    Movie: *Gattaca*

Apr. 13   Technology & Environment   **Paper #4 Due**
                    Ihde: 162-217

Apr. 20   Technology & Environment

Apr. 27   Paper discussions & Wrap-up   **Research Paper Due**