

Moravian College
Phil 252: Philosophy of Technology
Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. William Falla

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Office Hours: Comenius 108B, MWF 9:30-11:00, R 2:00-3:00, 1/2 hour before or after class

I Course Description:

We live in a “technosphere” where not only how we live but who we are and how we view our world are impacted by technology. In this course we will explore what technology is beyond what it does; how it shapes our understanding of ourselves and our world; and the moral dilemmas that it presents for us.

II Course Objectives:

- A. To understand the concepts of technology and technics.
- 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 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 in both written and oral form in a manner that is cogent, consistent and coherent.

III Course Materials:

A. Required Books:

Heidegger, Martin, *Basic Writings*, Harper-Collins, New York, 1993

Ihde, Don, *Technology and the Life World*, Indiana Univ. Press, Bloomington, 1990

Serres, Michel, *Thumbilina*, Rowan & Littlefield, New York, 2015

B. Supplementary Materials:

Assigned readings and movies will be available at Reeves Library or electronically through the Library Homepage.

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 materials under study. You will address these questions utilizing the assigned reading and/or movies in 4-5 pages. You will be graded on your understanding and use of the class material as well as the quality of your argumentation and presentation.

B. Final Paper (20%)

You are to analyze the argument of Michel Serres in his recent book, *Thumbelina*. Though this involves a careful reading of the text, this is not to be a book report. You are to tell why you agree or disagree with his argument using the materials from the course as well as any outside sources you may find to support your argument. The paper is to be 5-7 pages in length and will be evaluated on your understanding, and use, of course materials as well as the quality of your argumentation and writing. Further rubrics will be made available during the semester.

C. Class Participation (20%)

Active participation over and above class attendance is required. This includes active involvement in the class discussions and the asking of pertinent questions.

D. Grading Scale:

A= 92.5 & 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.

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

VI Accommodations and Special Consideration

Students who wish to request accommodations should contact the Academic Support Center, located on the first floor of Monocacy Hall (extension 1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Syllabus

Sept. 3: Introduction: The Situation

 Ihde: 1-30

 Movie: *Space Odyssey: 2001*

Sept. 10 Introduction: Phenomenology

 Ihde: 31-41

 Heidegger: 267-342

Sept. 17: Technics I

 Ihde: 42-71

 Stiegler, Bernard, "Technics of Decision", *Angelaki*, vol. 8, #2,
August 2003, 51-3 (electronic)

Sept. 24: Technics II

Paper #1 Due

 Ihde: 72-123

 Movie: *Modern Times*

Oct. 1: Cultural Hermeneutics

 Ihde: 124-161

- Oct. 8: Theory Review **Paper #2 Due**
 Bishop, Jeffery, "Transhumanism, Metaphysics and the Posthuman God" *Journal of Medicine & Philosophy*, vol. 35, #6, Dec. 2010, p. 700-20 (electronic)
- Oct. 15 Computers and AI I
 Herzfeld, Noreen, "Created in our Own Image: Artificial Intelligence and the Image of God", *Zygon*, vol. 37, #2, pp.303-16 (electronic)
 Hefner, Philip, "Technology and Human Becoming", *Zygon*, vol. 37. #3, Sept. 2002, p. 655-65 (electronic)
- Oct 22 Computers and AI II
 David Berry, "The Social Epistemologies of Software", *Social Epistemology*, vol.26, #3-4, Oct. 2012, p. 379-94 (reserve)
- Oct. 29 AI-Human Interface I **Paper #3 Due**
 Kull, Anne, "Speaking Cyborg: Technoculture and Technonature", *Zygon*, vol. 37, #2, June 2002, p. 279-87 (electronic)
 Peters, Ted, "The Boundaries of Human Nature", *Dialog*, Spring 2014, vol. 53, #1, p. 58-68 (electronic)
- Nov. 5 AI-Human Interface II
 Herzfeld, Noreen, "Terminator or Super Mario: Human/Computer Hybrids, Actual & Virtual", *Dialog*, vol. 44, #4, Winter 2005, 347-53 (electronic)
- Nov. 12 Transhumanism I **Paper #4 Due**
 Jotterand, Fabrice, "At the Roots of Transhumanism", *Journal of Medicine & Philosophy*, vol. 35, #6, Dec. 2010, p. 617-21 (electronic)
 Hughes, James, "Contradictions from the Enlightenment Roots of Transhumanism", *Journal of Medicine & Philosophy*, Dec. 2010, vol. 35, #6, p. 622-40 (electronic)
- Nov. 19 Transhumanism II
 Movie: *AI*
- Nov.26 **Thanksgiving Day**
- Dec. 3 Transhumanism III
 Koch, Tom, "Enhancing Who? Enhancing What? Ethics, Bioethics and Transhumanism", *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, Dec. 2010, vol. 35, #6, p. 685-99 (electronic)

Tennison, Michael, "Moral Transhumanism: The Next Step",
Journal of Medicine & Philosophy, vol. 37, #4, Aug. 2012, p. 405-16 (electronic)

Dec. 10

Summation

Final Paper Due

Movie: *WALL-E*