ARCH 599
PHILOSOPHY OF TECHNOLOGY
3.0 UNITS
SPRING, 2016
M 11:30-1:50pm

WES JONES
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Course Description:

This course provides a broad, general historical survey of the philosophy of technology, using Martin Heidegger's seminal lecture, "The Question Concerning Technology," as an inspiration and guide. Examining the ways in which technology has been addressed through time by different philosophical and critical traditions, from pre-Socratic discussions of techne to Deleuze's machinic delirium, this course charts the progress of the human relationship with technology and the nature it mediates. While primarily concerned with philosophical developments, this course will index the evolution of such thinking to the state of technology and architecture at the time, emphasizing issues of particular importance for architects.

Course Organization:

This is a seminar class. Each class meeting will be devoted a presentation by the instructor, per the schedule below, followed by discussion that includes a review of the weekly assignment. All readings for the course are available on the Blackboard system, and should be read for discussion the following week; students will be responsible for downloading and/or printing these out for themselves and bringing them to class if they don't have a laptop. The readings are formatted to allow for notes in the margin and will be used for annotating the readings and taking notes during in-class discussions. In addition, each week there will be short written assignment related to the reading that should be done prior to class, but will be able to be updated or corrected during class.

Course Objectives:

- To introduce students to philosophical thought and Western metaphysics as they apply to technology and technological conditions in pre-modern and modern society.

- To encourage meaningful connections to architecture and design, recognizing both as basic forms of technology and thus subject to technological empowerment and enframing.

- To build skills in close reading, critical thinking and extrapolated and applied thought.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (11 Jan) *Introduction to course, conduct of class* [2 points for attendance]
Definition of terms; establish historical context for emergence of a philosophy of technology as a distinct discipline; architecture's particular interest; logical preconditions for present argument.

Week 2 (18 Jan **MLK DAY—NO CLASS**) [7 points]
500 word mini-paper: *Heidegger's work as the roadmap*
QCT: the basic text, the hardest questions, and the brightest potential. (reading: Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology")

Week 3 (25 Jan) *Heidegger and the Ancient Greeks* [7 points]
Key concepts from the QCT and how the story begins with advent of the Western Metaphysical Tradition (reading: again, Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology")

Week 4 (1 Feb) *Dawn of the Scientific Revolution* [7 points]
The turn from the pagan Greek Cosmic Harmony to the Christian dominion over Nature (reading: Francis Bacon, various selections from pamphlets, *New Atlantis* and *Novum Organum*)

Week 5 (8 Feb) *The Scientific Revolution* [7 points]
Critical foundations and critics (reading: selections from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*)

Week 6 (15 Feb **PRESIDENTS DAY—NO CLASS***)* [7 points]
500 word mini-paper: *Philosophy becomes technology*
Visions of the technocratic utopia (reading: Auguste Comte, "The Nature and Importance of the Positive Philosophy," from *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*)

Week 7 (22 Feb) *Technology becomes everything* [7 points]
Essential industrial reality and technological determinism vs. social determinism—what happened to that Utopia, anyway? (reading: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, various selections from *Das Kapital* and *The German Ideology*)

Week 8 (29 Feb) *Intentionality and "equipmental being"* [7 points]
Technological essence rooted in the question of Being rather than determinism (reading, again: Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology;" supplemental reading: "Origin of the Work of Art")

Week 9 (7 Mar) *Post Heideggerian critiques of Technology* [7 points]
The irrational element in the rationalization of society (reading: Herbert Marcuse, "On The New Forms of Control," from *One Dimensional Man*

Week 10 (14 Mar) SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS

Week 11 (21 Mar) *Post Heideggerian critiques of Technology* [7 points]
Structuralism, post-structuralism, knowledge and power (reading: Michel Foucault, "Panopticism," from *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*)

Week 12 (28 Mar) *Post Heideggerian views of Technology* [7 points]
Technological determinism or the Social Construction of Technology (SCOT). (reading: Pinch and Bijker, "The Social Construction of Facts and Artifacts," and Winner, "Social Constructivism: Opening the Black Box and Finding It Empty")

Week 13 (4 April) *Post Heideggerian views of Technology* [7 points]
One possible answer to the Question Concerning Technology may be a new technological delirium (reading: Gilles Deleuze, various selections from *A Thousand Plateaus*)

Week 14 (11 April) *Post Heideggerian answers to the Question Concerning Technology* [7 points]
The opposition of environmentalism to technological delusion (reading: Bill Devall, "The Deep Ecology Movement," from *Natural Resources Journal*, and Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement," from *Inquiry 16*)

Week 15 (18 April) *Post Heideggerian answers to the Question Concerning Technology* [7 points]
Will the computer solve everything? The question of resolution, scale, intent (reading: Wes Jones: "The Answer to the Question Concerning Technology," from *SouperGREEN)*

Week 16 (25 April) *Doomsday Scenario for Architecture* [7 points]
The virtual- and nano-technological revolutions, and the loss of architecture's "edge" (reading: TBD)

Grading:

There will be no exams or final paper for this class. Grades will be determined by class participation, marginal notes related to the reading and class discussion, two take-home mini papers and weekly micro-paper assignments, according to a strict numerical accounting. The weekly assignments will each be worth 5 points, for a semester total of 12 weeks x 5 points = 60 points, or 60% of the total grade. The two 500-word mini papers will each be worth 7 points for a total of 14 points, or 14% of the total grade. The marginal notes on the weekly readings and class discussion will be worth another 1 point each, for a total of 12 points and 12% of the grade, and finally class participation will be worth 1 point per meeting, or 14%. 2 points will be given for attendance at the first class to bring this total to 14, given the missing meetings for the two holidays.

12 Weekly assignments	60 (5 ea)
2 Micro-papers (over holidays)	14 (7 ea)
12 Marginal notes	12 (1 ea)
14 Class participation	14 (1 ea)
total	100

Readings / Reference Material (all *assigned* readings will be available on Blackboard)

- *Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition*, ed. Robert Scharrff, Val Dusek (Blackwell, Malden, MA, 2003). Almost all of the readings posted on Blackboard are taken from this source. They have been rendered digital and reformatted with wider margins for note taking. This source also provides a good bibliography for more in depth study of the individual thinkers
- *Philosophy of Technology, An Introduction*, Val Dusek (Blackwell, Malden, MA 2006)
- *Philosophy of Technology, An Introduction*, Don Ihde (Paragon, NY 1993)
- *The Gods and Technology: A Reading of Heidegger*, Richard Rojcewicz (SUNY, Albany 2006)
- *SouperGREEN,* ed. Douglas Jackson (Actar, Barcelona 2016)

The fine print:

Course Requirements and Grades

Grades will be determined based upon quality of work produced, improvement over the course of the semester, completion of class requirements, quality of participation, attendance, attitude and ethical conduct. USC grading policies will be discussed on the first day of studio, and any questions regarding grades or policies should be directed to the instructor and/or the registrar. A passing grade in the course requires committed completion of all work. Incomplete work will not be evaluated.

Class Policies

The class meets Mondays from 1130am to 1:50pm. Attendance is mandatory at all class meetings. If you do not participate you will not receive credit. You are not to work on other classes during class hours. Students are not to use class time to leave school to run errands, etc. All activities that require one to be away should be scheduled to occur outside of class hours. Leaving in the middle of or prior to the end of regularly scheduled class times will result in an absence.

Attendance Policy

Any student who is absent without an acceptable excuse more than three times during a fifteen-week term will not receive credit for the course. The instructor may view unexcused lateness or departures from class as full absences.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 am - 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 7400776.

Accreditation Statement:

The USC School of Architecture's two and three year MARCH programs are accredited by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB). All students can access and review the NAAB Conditions of Accreditation (including the Student Performance Criteria) on the NAAB Website: http://www.naab.org/accreditation/2014_Conditions

2010 Imperative Statement

“The design should engage the environment in a way that dramatically reduces or eliminates the need for fossil fuel.”

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus,* the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:

http://www.usc.edu/studentaffairs/SJACS/