ENG 384: Literature and Technology
Fall 2010
ONLINE
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Objectives
In this course we will explore the relationship between literary production and technological innovation during the past two centuries. Throughout the semester, we will address two central questions:

1. how have specific technologies—and in particular the social and moral implications of these technologies—been treated as themes in prose fiction, poems, dramas, film, and other literary media?

2. how have technologies such as print, cinema, hypertext, animation, and multimedia facilitated the development of both traditional and experimental literary forms and modes of distribution?

The issues we will discuss include the Industrial Revolution and its effect on social relations in England and the U.S. in the nineteenth century; the development of science fiction; the connection between technological change and the rise of literary modernism and postmodernism; technological utopias and dystopias; the ethical questions surrounding robots, cyborgs, and clones; and the current role of computers and the Internet in the creation and reception of new works of literature.

In addition to giving you insight into the many ways literature and technology intersect, this class is designed to build your skills in reading, critical thinking, interpersonal communication, and argumentative writing.

This is an online class. All class activities will take place within the Laulima online learning environment. You will be interacting with your classmates throughout the week using Laulima’s Forums, responding to questions from me and commenting on your classmates’ responses. You will contribute a minimum of five (5) well thought-out postings to Forums each week by the scheduled deadlines. We will use Laulima’s Discussion tool for these exchanges. I will take part in these Forum discussions along with you.

You will also collaborate with your classmates to build a Wikipedia-style glossary of terms and concepts derived from your reading and research throughout the semester. We’ll use Laulima’s Wiki tool for this project.

You will submit all writing assignments to me and to your editing partners using Laulima’s Drop Box system.

All quizzes and exams will be administered through Laulima’s Tests & Quizzes system. I’ll have more information about testing locations after the start of the term.

You also have the option of meeting me for office hours in Laulima’s Chat Room. You can use the Chat room for study sessions, collaboration, and other kinds of class-related interactions throughout the semester.

This course has a UHM Contemporary Ethical Issues (E) Focus designation. Contemporary ethical issues are fully integrated into the main course material and will constitute at least 30% of the course content. At least 8 hours of class time will be spent discussing ethical issues. Through the use of lectures, discussions and assignments, you will develop basic competency in recognizing and analyzing ethical issues, deliberating responsibly on ethical issues, and making ethically determined judgments. Many of
your writing exercises will ask you address the ethical implications of technology as they are reflected in
the assigned materials.

**The course also has the UHM Written Communication (W) Focus designation.**
The class uses writing to promote the learning of course materials. You will get feedback and support
from the instructor and your classmates while you do the assigned writing. Your writing for this class will
be substantial—a minimum of 4,000 words, or about 16 pages. Written assignments make up to 60% of
your final course grade. You will turn in drafts of all your major writing assignments; I will make
suggestions for improvement and you will have a chance to revise before turning in the work for a final
grade. At least one of your classmates will also read and comment on your work and make
recommendations for revision.

**Required Primary Texts [with summaries]**

**novels and dramas:**

A didactic novella from 19thC United States; focuses on social and moral problems of factory
workers.

Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times.*
A classic 19th-century “condition of England” novel critiquing the exploitation of factory workers,
the hypocritical moralizing of factory owners, and the British legal system.

Čapek, Karl. *RUR.*
A groundbreaking science fiction drama that gives us the word “robot”; imagines a robot-
production factory in which the robots revolt and ultimately take control of humanity.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never Let Me Go.*
A novel set in a boarding school for children who have been cloned to provide organs for
donation; deals subtly with the ethical questions around cloning.

The most recent novel by the cyberpunk author whose *Neuromancer* more or less created the
genre; a multifaceted mystery involving GPS-based virtual art and various forms of “social
networking.”

**films** (you must view the films on your own prior to the weeks in which we’re discussing them):

Lang, Fritz. *Metropolis.*
A classic early science fiction film that imagines a luxurious high-tech city supported by the labor
of enslaved workers who ultimately revolt, with devastating and morally edifying consequences.

A science fiction film that imagines a virtual world controlled by computer programs and fueled by
enslaved human beings, some of whom have escaped and are planning a revolt.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course you should be able to

- read literary texts and view films critically, attending to details such as narrative structure, style,
  figurative language, allusions, and dominant themes
- situate literary texts and films in their historical and social contexts, accounting for formal, stylistic,
  thematic, and other relevant features in relation to these contexts
- identify and describe major developments in technology in the past three centuries, situate them
  in their historical contexts, and discuss their ongoing impact on culture and society
- identify key philosophical frameworks for ethical deliberation
• deliberate thoughtfully on ethical questions or dilemmas in formal and informal academic writing
• write clear, coherent analyses of literary texts and films for an academic audience
• demonstrate sound argumentation in your writing
• document sources accurately and responsibly in your writing using a standard academic style
• use online resources effectively for research, synchronous and asynchronous communication, and collaborative writing

Policy

Assignments
Your grade will be based on your performance in the following assignments:

Two 6-7 page critical analyses of assigned texts (15% each = 30%)

Weekly postings to the asynchronous class discussion forum (a minimum of 5 postings each week (20% total)

Two complete contributions to the collaborative Wiki class encyclopedia (10% total)

Five quizzes (10% total)

A mid-term examination (15%)

A final examination (15%)

Assignment Details:

Two 6-7 Page Critical Analyses of Assigned Texts
(15% each = 30%)

You will choose your own topics for these papers, but I will provide a list of possible topics early in the semester. Your paper should engage at least one of the literary texts and at least one of the philosophical readings on ethics. If you choose to write about material other than the assigned readings, please consult with me well in advance of submitting your draft.

You will submit drafts of these papers and I will return them with suggestions on how to improve the paper. I will not read drafts that come in more than two days after the deadline. Your drafts should be as complete as possible; the more you can give me, the more suggestions for improvement I can give you.

You will also submit your paper to at least one fellow student, and you will comment on at least one draft by one of your peers.

Keep the following points in mind as you develop your papers:

1. The minimum number of pages is 6; do not go beyond 10. Writing a short, well-argued paper is a challenge. Filling up more pages does not guarantee a more successful essay.

2. You must develop an argument. Papers summarizing a text or describing some other phenomenon will not be successful. You should present your argument clearly in one or two sentences in the first or second paragraph of the essay. A good way to determine if you have a workable idea for your paper during the early drafting stages is to try to state your claim (the thesis of your argument) in one or two sentences.
3. Your paper can focus on virtually any aspect of your discussions this semester. You must, however, refer explicitly to concrete examples as evidence supporting your argument: citing texts; offering detailed descriptions of film scenes or quoting dialogue; providing screen captures, quotations, individual images, or source code from web sites or multimedia projects; or documenting your evidence in other ways.

4. You must incorporate research in the form of scholarly articles, technology-focused journalism, or other sources in addition to the primary materials on which your paper focuses. You must cite these sources as support for your arguments. The minimum number of secondary sources is three, but successful papers are likely to have more than three sources.

5. You must use MLA style to document your sources. The Purdue OWL guide to MLA style in the Laulima Resources will help you conform to the conventions of this style.

Weekly Postings to the Asynchronous Class Discussion Forum
(A Minimum of 5 Postings Each Week)
(20% total)

The bulk of your interactions with other class members this semester will be in your discussions in the Forum section of the Laulima site, so your contributions to these online conversations are an especially important part of your performance in the class. **Schedule at least 50 minutes twice a week to engage in these asynchronous discussions.**

To cut down on the amount of Forums reading you have to do, you will work in small groups (4-5 people) that will rotate members every week. At the beginning of each week I will assign you to new groups, so please watch for these messages.

Every week I will post new Topics to the group Forums. The reading guides for the assigned texts will also give you prompts for the Forum discussions, but your conversation should also develop organically as you respond to each other’s posts. Use **Post New Thread** to initiate your group’s conversation about the Topic or to start a new strand of the conversation. To respond to a thread someone else has posted, use **Reply**. New Threads and Replies count equally toward your 5 required posts, but I encourage you to contribute a mixture of the two each week.

Let me know right away if you have questions about using the Forums interface.

I will be reading all your postings and tracking the number of times you post. Please make your posts relevant, thoughtful, and respectful. Don’t just say anything to get in your quota of posts.

I will respond to many of your posts, but probably not to all of them. My participation is meant to encourage and provoke; don’t rely on me to start new topics or to develop a line of argument.

Remember that the newest Topics are on the **top** of the Forums list. If I provide more than one Topic for the week, you might want to start with the one on the **bottom** and work your way up.

Two Contributions to the Collaborative Wiki Class Encyclopedia
(10% Total)

You will choose two terms relevant to the themes of the class (concerning either the history of technology or ethics) and develop a 250-500 word definition to include in our class-specific encyclopedia of terms in the class wiki.

You must include some discussion of the history of the term, giving the etymology of the term where appropriate. You should also connect your term to discussions that have developed in the class. Why is the term or concept particularly relevant to the issues we are dealing with?
Your entry must contain at least two relevant outbound links to reliable, appropriate resources on the Internet, and you must provide a clear annotation for these resources.

You must use MLA style to document any resources you use to produce your entry, and a list of Works Cited must follow your entry.

Deadlines for each of the entries are listed in the Syllabus. You may make changes to your entries until the last week of class, when they must be finalized.

**Five Quizzes**  
(10% Total)

The quizzes are announced in the syllabus by week; the specific day will be determined and announced in advance. Quizzes cover the text we are currently discussing and will be made up of short-answer identification questions and at least one passage identification question. You will be given a short passage of text and will have to identify the text and author to which it belongs. You will also have to provide a short commentary on the significance of the passage to the work as a whole.

**A Mid-Term Examination and Final Examination**  
(15% each)

The exams will have three sections:

1. A short-answer section (about 12 questions) that ask you to identify characters, events, and historical contexts related to the assigned texts, as well as terms from the study guides. (You will answer all the questions.)

2. A passage identification and commentary. You will be given a short passage of text and will have to identify the text and author to which it belongs. You will also have to provide a short commentary on the significance of the passage to the work as a whole. (You will have a choice of questions to answer.)

3. An essay question that will connect one or more texts with one or more of the readings in ethics. (You will have a choice of questions to answer.)

**Grading**

All assignments are due by class time on the day on which they appear in the schedule. You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this class. Grades for late assignments will be lowered by one letter grade for every day past the due date. I will not read drafts that are submitted more than two days past the deadline.

I will assign grades based on the +/- system. I will use the following values to compute your final grades:

- A+ = 4.0  A= 4.0  A- = 3.7
- B+ = 3.3  B = 3.0  B- = 2.7
- C+ = 2.3  C = 2.0  C- = 1.7
- D+ = 1.3  D = 1.0  D- = 0.7
- F = 0.0

In compliance with university policy, I will give incompletes only in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.
Attendance
Interactions in this class are asynchronous, so you’re not required to show up at a particular place at a particular time. You are required, however, to post regularly and thoughtfully to the Forums and to complete the other assignments on time. I’ll get in touch with you if I believe that you are falling behind.

Conduct
Your relationships with your classmates and with me are governed by the Student Conduct Code, which also applies in all the online environments we will be using this semester. I expect you to act in a professional and respectful manner in all of these settings. I also expect you to adhere to the UH Executive Policy on the Use and Management of Information Technology Resources and the policies of the English Studies Computing Center. See the Laulima web site for this class for links to these documents.

If you feel that the conduct of another student in the class is interfering with your ability to work productively, please speak with me about the problem immediately. If you feel that my behavior is impairing your learning, speak with the Associate Chair of the Department of English in KUY 402.

Scholastic Dishonesty
The University of Hawai’i regulations strictly forbid plagiarism and collusion. Submitting someone else’s work as your own, arranging for someone else to do your writing for you, or purchasing papers will earn you a failing grade for the assignment and may result in a failing grade in the class.

Access
If you feel you need reasonable accommodations because of the impact of a disability, please contact the KOKUA Program at 956-7511 or 956-7612 in Room 013 of the QLCSS. You should also speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs. I am happy to work with you and the KOKUA Program to meet your access needs related to your documented disability.

Schedule
(subject to change)
You can find all the online/downloadable materials in the folders for each week in the Laulima Resources. If I don’t give page numbers after the title of a text, you’re expected to read the whole thing for that week.

WEEK ONE (Aug 23 - Aug 27)

The Technological Citizen Blog, “Are You a Techno-Optimist or a Techno-Pessimist?” (URL in Resources)
Forster, “The Machine Stops” (PDF in Resources)
Freise and Freise, The Machine Stops (short film) (URL in Resources)
Freise and Freise, “The Making of The Machine Stops” (short film) (URL in Resources)

WEEK TWO (Aug 30 - Sep 3)

Dickens, Hard Times (3-102)
Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics, Book II (URL in Resources)

WEEK THREE (Sep 6 - Sep 10)

Dickens, Hard Times (103-197)
Nunokawa and McWeeny, “Utilitarianism, Political Economy, and its Discontents” (Hard Times 302-319) (also available as PDF in Resources)

Quiz 1
WEEK FOUR (Sep 13 - Sep 17)
Dickens, *Hard Times* (198-264)

WEEK FIVE (Sep 20 - Sep 24)
Nussbaum, “Fancy,” from *Poetic Justice* (PDF in Resources)

WEEK SIX (Sep 27 - Oct 1)
Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills*
Marx, from *The Communist Manifesto* (URL in Resources)

Quiz 2

WEEK SEVEN (Oct 4 - Oct 8)
Čapek, *RUR*
Lang, *Metropolis* (view independently; I’ll put a copy on Reserve in the Wong AV Center in Sinclair)

WEEK EIGHT (Oct 11 - Oct 15)
Review for Midterm Exam

Due by midnight MONDAY: Draft of Paper 1

MIDTERM EXAM
Friday, Oct 15 (time and procedure TBA)

WEEK NINE (Oct 18 - Oct 22) [Oct 22: last day to withdraw with “W” grade]
Kant, from *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (PDF in Resources)
Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (3-125)

Due: Wiki Encyclopedia Entry 1

Quiz 3

WEEK TEN (Oct 25 - Oct 29)
Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (126-288)

Due by midnight MONDAY: Paper 1
WEEK ELEVEN (Nov 1 - Nov 5)

Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (126-288)

Pinker, “The Moral Instinct” (URL in Resources)

Quiz 4

WEEK TWELVE (Nov 8 - Nov 12)

Wachowski and Wachowski, *The Matrix* (view independently; I’ll put a copy on Reserve in the Wong AV Center in Sinclair)

Hilferty and Silver, “William Gibson Discusses Spook Country and Cyberpunk” (short film) (URL in Resources)

Gibson, *Spook Country* (3-168)

Due: Draft of Wiki Encyclopedia Entry 2

WEEK THIRTEEN (Nov 15 - Nov 19)

Gibson, *Spook Country* (169-332)

Due by midnight MONDAY: Draft of Paper 2

WEEK FOURTEEN (Nov 22 - Nov 26)

Gibson, *Spook Country* (333-480)

Quiz 5

WEEK FIFTEEN (Nov 29 - Dec 3)

Morrissey, *The Jew’s Daughter* (URL in Resources)

Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries, *DAKOTA* and *NIPPON* (URLs in Resources)

Pound, selections from *Cantos* (PDF in Resources)

Joyce, selection from *Ulysses* (PDF in Resources)

WEEK SIXTEEN (Dec 6 - Dec 9)

Review for Final Exam

Due: Paper 2

Due: final versions of Wiki Encyclopedia Entries 1 and 2

FINAL EXAM
Friday, December 17, 12:00 - 2:00 (procedure TBA)