

# Philosophy of Technology (Phil. 343)

Section A (MWF 12:10), Ross 029

Instructor: Hull

**Course Objectives and Description:** This course will focus on the relation between modern technology and democratic values (such as autonomy, equality, etc.). Many think that technology is inherently damaging to these values and thus to the possibility of leading a meaningful human life. In the first half of the course, we will look at some important philosophical attempts to frame and deal with this problem and a concurrent problem about the status of “nature” in technologically mediated life. The second half of the course will examine current questions of law, values, and technology prompted by the spread of the Internet. We will focus specifically on privacy, speech, and property, and study the extent to which the growth of cyberspace can be seen as enhancing or detracting the attainment of our values.

**Warning:** some of the readings are quite difficult. Be patient with them!

**Required Texts and Materials:** There’s one book; the other readings are available on WebCT as PDF files, generally scanned from books (I’ve included the citations if you have access to the books). You should do the reading for a class *before* that class meets. That way, you’ll be able to follow discussion and lecture. You’ll also be able to pass the reading quizzes.

## Book to Get (at the bookstore or elsewhere):

Lessig, Lawrence. *Code: Version 2.0* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), ISBN-10: 0465039146; ISBN-13: 978-0465039142

## Articles on WebCT:

Balkin, “Digital Speech and Democratic Culture: A Theory of Freedom of Expression for the Information Society,” *New York University Law Review* 79 (2004), 1-58.

Ellul, Jacques. “The Search for Ethics in a Technicist Society,” in *Research in Philosophy and Technology* 9, ed. Carl Mitcham. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1989.

Foucault, Michel. “Panopticism,” in *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1977, 195-230.

Foucault, Michel. “Right of Death and Power over Life,” in *History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

Haraway, Donna. “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1977), 311-341.

Latour, Bruno. "Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts," in *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change*, ed. Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992), 225-258.

Nissenbaum, Helen. "Privacy as Contextual Integrity," *Washington Law Review* 79 (2004), 101-39.

Wagner, R. Polk. "Information Wants to Be Free: Intellectual Property and the Mythologies of Control," *Columbia Law Review* 103 (2003), 995-1034.

### **Grading/Requirements:**

Reading Quizzes: 30% total

Final paper: 20%

Tests: 25% each

**Reading Quizzes:** These will be short quizzes, given at the start of class, to ensure that you have done and gotten something out of the reading for that day. They do not require that you have a perfect understanding of the material – after all, some of it is difficult. But they do require that you have read it attentively. There are no makeup quizzes: if you're not there, it's a zero. However, I will drop the lowest 2 of your quiz scores.

**Final Paper:** This is a 5-6 page paper due on the last day of class. Topics will be assigned; the grading standards are similar to the short paper (see below), except that you will need to specifically reference/cite and discuss at least *two* of the readings from the semester. By "specifically reference/cite," I mean quote. For the sake of your grade, you should have a clear thesis and an "In this paper I will argue that x" sentence, somewhere in the first paragraph. I'll have more details for you closer to the due date.

**Tests:** There are two of these, multiple choice and/or short answer, to make sure that you've been doing the reading and following the discussion. They are on the days noted.

**Attendance/Participation:** You can't learn very much in philosophy by just sitting there. You learn even less if you're not there at all. However, I am not going to be monitoring your attendance. Historically, in my classes there has been a strong correlation between attendance and class grade. This probably means that if you're the sort of student who cares enough to come to class, you're also likely to be the sort of student who will work enough to do well in the course. So I view the question of attendance as self-correcting. If you don't show up to class, you can't ask questions about material that you don't yet understand. I am under no obligation to repeat course materials that you missed.

**Contact Information/Getting Assistance:** It is important that you not fall behind. I want to help you avoid doing so. To get help from me:

1. Speak to me before or after class; we can set an appointment to meet at a later time if need be.
2. Email me at [ghull@iastate.edu](mailto:ghull@iastate.edu). This is probably the best way to get in touch outside of class.
3. Call my office: 294-5400 and leave a voicemail. This is less effective than email because I'm bad about checking my messages.
4. My **office hours** are: T 1:30-3:00, Catt 432, or by appointment.

**Disabilities:** I share ISU's commitment to provide reasonable accommodations to enable students with disabilities to access course material. Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request (SAAR) form from the Disability Resources (DR) office (515-294-6624). DR is located on the main floor of the Student Services Building, Room 1076.

### **Detailed Course Outline (not a contract)**

Week	Date	Topic/Reading
1	8/21	First class
	8/23	Introductory lecture/discussion
2	8/28	Heidegger, "Question Concerning Technology" (1: Overview)
	8/30	Heidegger, "QCT" (2: Greeks)
3	9/4	Heidegger, "QCT" (3: Art)
	9/6	Ellul, "Search for Ethics"
4	9/11	Foucault, "Panopticism"
	9/13	Foucault, "Right of Death"
5	9/18	Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto" (1)
	9/20	Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto" (2)
6	9/25	Latour, "Missing Masses" (2)
	9/27	Latour, "Missing Masses" (2)
7	10/2	<b>Test 1</b>
	10/4	Lessig, <i>Code</i> , chs. 1-5 (1)
8	10/9	Lessig, <i>Code</i> , chs. 1-5 (2)
	10/11	Property – Ppt
	10/16	Property – Ppt (2)
9	10/18	Property – Ppt (3)
	10/23	Lessig, "Intellectual Property"
10	10/25	Wagner, "Information Wants to be Free"
	10/30	Lessig, "Free Speech"

	11/1	Balkin, "Digital Speech and Democratic Culture" (1)
12	11/6	Balkin, "Digital Speech" (2)
	11/8	<b>No class – professor at conference</b>
13	11/13	Privacy Ppt (1)
	11/15	<b>Test 2</b>
	11/19- 11/23	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>
14	11/27	Privacy Ppt (2)
	11/29	Lessig, "Privacy"
15	12/4	Nissenbaum "Privacy as Contextual Integrity"
	12/6	Last Class, <b>final papers due</b>

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