

HTS 3084, Fall 2009
TTH, 12:05-1:25
304 D. M. Smith

Professor S. W. Usselman
TTH 10-11, and by appt.
137 Old CE

TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE

Introduction

This course explores how Western cultures incorporated technologies of mass production, mass media, and mass spectacle from the turn of the twentieth century to the Space Age. Through readings, lectures, and media presentations, we examine the ways in which these technologies altered relations among individuals and compelled them to reconsider the roles of nation states in human affairs. Though focused primarily on developments within the United States, the course draws frequent comparisons to Germany, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union as it attempts to sort out similarities and differences among competing systems of governance and alternative political ideologies.

Requirements

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Please arrive promptly with the assigned readings completed. Materials presented in class complement the readings but do not duplicate them. We seek to draw connections among these different sources, and you will miss important cross-references if you do not stay current with the readings. I encourage your active, informed participation in class discussion and will take it into account when determining borderline grades.

Grades are based primarily on two in-class quizzes, each worth 20% of your final grade; a research paper of approximately 2,000-2,500 words (8-10 double-spaced type pages), worth 30% of your final grade; and a final exam worth 30% of your final grade. I will provide detailed information on these assignments in class and separate handouts.

Though I encourage you to form study groups and otherwise discuss course materials with your fellow class members, students should complete the graded assignments independently, free of plagiarism from fellow students or other sources, in full compliance with the Georgia Tech Honor Code.

Office Hours and Communications

I keep office hours as noted above. (Be forewarned that 137 Old CE is hard to find; take the small hallway past the restrooms, turn left at the elevator, and go to the door just past the alcove with the vending machines.) You can usually grab me for a brief chat just after class, and I also make appointments. Though I monitor email fairly closely and usually respond to it within a day and sometimes much faster, my official policy is to respond no later than the end of my next scheduled office hour after receiving the

message. I do not maintain an extensive website for the course and prefer to utilize Buzzport for mass emails and posting files. You will find a copy of this syllabus there.

Readings

Though I reserve the right to assign additional brief readings from web-based sources, most of the readings will come from three books available from Engineers Bookstore:

Thomas Hughes, *American Genesis*
Gualliaume de Syon, *Zeppelin!*
Susan Douglas, *Listening In*

SCHEDULE*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
8/18	Introduction	
	Part I. Machines, Marvels, and Madness: To WWI	
8/20-25	Invention and Imperialism I, St. Louis 1904	Hughes, Ch. 1-2
8/27-9/1	Systems	Hughes, Ch. 3-5
9/3	No Class -- President's Inauguration	
9/8-15	Invention and Imperialism II, The Geat War	<i>Zeppelin</i> , Ch. 1-3
9/17	FIRST QUIZ	
	Part II. Masses and Modernity: The Interwar Years	
9/22-10/1	New Age, New Media	Douglas, Ch. 1-5
10/6	No Class -- President's Inauguration	
10/8-15	American Technology, European Culture	Hughes, Ch. 6-7 <i>Zeppelin</i> , Ch. 4-5
10/20-27	Watershed: The Thirties	Hughes, pp. 353-381 <i>Zeppelin</i> , Ch. 6 Douglas, Ch. 6
10/29	SECOND QUIZ	

Part III. Anxious Affluence: The Forties and Fifties

11/3-10	From Hot War to Cold	Douglas, Ch. 7-8 Hughes, pp. 381-441
11/12-24	Spacing Out: Ike, Elvis, and Suburbia	Douglas, Ch. 9
11/26	No Class – Thanksgiving	
12/1-3	Techno-Skepticism: Glimpsing the 60s and 70s	Douglas, Ch. 10 Hughes, Ch. 8
12/10, 11:30	FINAL EXAM	

*Though I will do my best to maintain this schedule, deviations will occur.