Phil. 3249: Philosophy of Technology (Fall 2008)
MW 11:00 – 12:15, Friday 005
Instructor: Gordon Hull

Course Objectives and Description: This course will focus on the relation between modern technology and ethical values (such as autonomy, democracy, etc.). In other words, we will be looking at how different social and technological arrangements support different sets of values and different interpretations of some of the same values. For example, what kind of democracy is supported by strong intellectual property rights? How do these intersect with free speech? In the first half of the course will look at some representative philosophical attempts to frame these issues. 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 inhibiting the attainment of our values.

Required Texts and Materials:

Book – get this at the bookstore or elsewhere:

Clark, Andy. *Natural Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Existence*. Oxford: OUP, 2003.

Articles (on Blackboard):

Balkin, Jack M. "Digital Speech and Democratic Culture: A Theory of Freedom of Expression for the Information Society," *New York University Law Review* 79 (2004), 1-55.

Benkler, Yochai. "Through the Looking Glass: Alice and the Constitutional Foundations of the Public Domain," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 66 (2003), 173-224.

Fisher, William. "Theories of Intellectual Property," in *New Essays in the Legal and Political Theory of Property*, ed. Stephen R. Munzer. Cambridge: CUP, 2001, 168-99.

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.

Haggerty, Kevin D. and Richard V. Ericson, "The Surveillant Assemblage," *British Journal of Sociology* 51 (2000), 605-22.

Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri, "Life on the Market," in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2004, 178-188.

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

Mackenzie, A. Contribution to "We Have always Been … Cyborgs," Review Symposium for *Natural Born Cyborgs*. *Metascience* 13 (2004), 153-63.

Marx, Karl. "Fragment on Machines" (from the *Grundrisse*)

Sunder, Madhavi. "IP^3," *Stanford Law Review* 59 (2006), 257-332.

Grading/Requirements:

> 30% - Midterm
> 30% - Article Summaries (two of them; 15% each)
> 30% - Final paper
> 10% - Thesis/outline

Reading: You need to do the reading for a day *before* the class. That way, you can have something to discuss and you'll be able to follow lecture/discussion. If you don't do the reading, you'll have trouble passing the course, as you will be tested on the reading. Philosophy can be hard to read, but the page counts are fairly low for the more dense materials. Together these mean that you will be able to read material that you find difficult more than once. In fact, you should plan on reading material more than once. I reserve the right to give quizzes if it becomes evident that people are not doing the reading.

Midterm: This is an exam that will cover the material from the first half of the semester. The idea is that you need to master some basic concepts and vocabulary from three of the more influential strains of thought in philosophy of technology. There will be no surprises here (and a lot of review material), but you will need to understand what's going on.

Article Summaries: Two times during the semester, you are to turn a 2-3 page summary and response to the reading for that day. I've assigned summaries for days where the articles are relatively short, say something provocative, and require you to do some work to understand them. I expect you to find this assignment somewhat difficult: good critical reading skills take practice. The summary should have three components:

(a) Concisely and clearly state what the argument of the reading is, and outline how the author develops it. For example, "Bradford argues that deep ecology, as a way of thinking, lacks a critique of social relations under capitalism. For this reason, it fails to offer any truly radical alternatives to the present environmental crisis. He develops this argument in three main points…" This component should be about half of the total length.

(b) State and analyze what you take to be the most significant strength of this argument. For example, "the strength of Haraway's argument is the way that she weaves together so many cultural references into a disturbing picture of technoscience…"

(c) State and analyze what you take to be the most significant weakness of this argument. For example, "Although Ellul paints a compelling picture of how bad life under technology can be, he offers no alternative, and fails to consider that our dependence on technologies such as medicine have unarguable benefits. The last two parts should be of roughly equal length, more or less ¼ of the total, each.

Grading for the summaries is as a check plus, check, or check minus (= A, B, or C).

Final Paper: This is a 6-8 page paper due on the last day of class. Topics will be assigned; 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 in a way that indicates you have assimilated the material. 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.

Paper Thesis/Outline: This is a page or two that presents the thesis you will develop in your final paper, and a brief outline of the argument you intend to make to develop it.

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@uncc.edu. This is probably the best way to get in touch outside of class.
3. Call my office: 704-687-2182 and leave a voicemail. This is less effective than email because I'm bad about checking my messages.
4. My **office hours** are: MW 9:30-11, Winningham 105C, or by appointment.

Disabilities: I share UNCC'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. You'll also need to contact disability services, 704-687-4355 (230 Fretwell).

Academic Integrity: University academic integrity guidelines can be found at: http://www.legal.uncc.edu/policies/ps-105.html#VI. I expect you to follow them.

Detailed Course Outline (not a contract)

Week		Date	Source/Material
1	M	8/25	First Class
	W	1/16	Starter exercise/study
2	M	9/1	**Labor Day**
	W		Clark, *Cyborgs*, "Cyborgs Unplugged" (13-34)
3	M	9/8	Clark, *Cyborgs*, "Plastic Brains, Hybrid Minds" (59-87)
	W		Clark, *Cyborgs*, "Bad Borgs?" (167-95)
4	M	9/15	MacKenzie, "Contribution…"
	W		Marx – Introduction (lecture)
5	M	9/22	Marx, "Fragment on Machines" (1)
	W		Marx, "Fragment on Machines" (2)

6	M	9/29	Heidegger, "Question Concerning Technology" (1)
	W		Heidegger, "QCT" (2)
7	M	10/6	Heidegger, "QCT" (3)
	W		**Midterm**
8	M	10/13	**Fall Break**
	W		Foucault, "Panopticism"
9	M	10/20	Foucault, "Right of Death"
	W		Haggerty and Ericson, "Surveillant Assemblage;" **article summary 1 due**.
10	M	10/27	Fisher, "Theories of IP" (1)
	W		Fisher, "Theories of IP" (2)
11	M	11/3	Hardt and Negri, "Life on the Market" (1); **article summary 2 due**
	W		Hardt/Negri (2)
12	M	11/10	Sunder, "IP^3" (1); article summary 2 due
	W		Sunder, "IP^3" (2)
13	M	11/17	Sunder, "IP^3" (3)
	W		Benkler, "Through the Looking Glass" (1)
14	M	11/24	Benkler, "Through the Looking Glass" (2); **paper thesis/outline due**.
	W		**Thanksgiving Break**
15	M	12/1	Balkin, "Free Speech and Democratic Culture"(1)
	W		Balkin, "Free Speech and Democratic Culture"(2)
16	M	12/8	Last Class; **final paper due**.