



Introduction to Technoculture

Credit Hours: 3

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Office Hours: by-appointment (send me an email to schedule)

Course Description

This course introduces the concept of “**TechnoCulture**” – a term that aptly describes the culture we live in now when technology infuses every aspect of daily life. You can think of it as the ways that technology and culture influence each other in a co-productive relationship.

We spend upwards of 9 hours a day consuming media through various devices. Smart phones provide on-the-go entertainment. Social media apps enable us to share experiences with people at a distance. We have become just-in-time learners who rely on digital assistants and “how-to-videos” to fill in knowledge gaps. We easily habituate to new devices. As our personal habits synch with the device habits of other people, new ways of interacting spawn new rituals of connection and communication. These habits become the foundation of **enculturation** – the process whereby we become members of a culture.

Digital networks enable the wide circulation of ideas by providing opportunities for information exchange and creative expression. Memes function as cultural viruses by transmitting information from host to host to host. When a joke, outrageous behavior, or social commentary goes viral, it infects networked populations with fresh ideas, language, and visual imagery. When we share memes, we participate in creating a common culture.

Global telecommunication networks, international banking operations, geographic energy distribution, local water purification, food production and delivery...these all require massive efforts of integration and coordination. Our daily lives rely on the maintenance of these complex technological systems, yet we rarely think about them until they fail. When that happens, we are forced to confront the technocultural reality that these systems provide the life-support infrastructure of human existence.

Throughout the course we will investigate the many ways in which technology and culture are intertwined, to consider how technologies shape cultures, and how cultures transform technologies. We will read historical accounts of the development of significant technologies to understand the cultural contexts that influenced

their use. We will discuss the intimacy of personal technologies, as well as the social impact of large-scale technological projects. We will analyze the role of popular culture and science fiction in shaping our technological hopes, dreams, and nightmares. This material will inform our discussions about the distribution of power, the expression of identity, and the ethics of our contemporary technoculture.

The course is organized around 5 key questions:

- What is culture?
- What is technology?
- How have the relationships among humans, technologies, and culture changed over time?
- How do we understand the multiple and (often) contradictory effects of technology?
- How do we imagine the cultural possibilities (both positive and negative) of emerging technologies?

Learning Goals - Through participation in course activities students will learn how to:

- *recount* the technocultural history of a significant object or process
- *create* new understandings about the complex relationship among human beings, technology, and culture
- *read* difficult academic writing to sharpen concentration and understanding of complex ideas
- *pose* questions to generate insights about a media or technological object
- *engage* open-ended questions to demonstrate their thinking process
- *synthesize* information from multiple sources to develop informed opinions about pressing technocultural issues

ATCM 2300 is approved for General Core 090 that has these learning objectives:

- **Critical Thinking (CT)**—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information
- **Communication (COM)**—to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- **Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS)**—to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- **Teamwork (TW)**—to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- **Social Responsibility (SR)**—to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- **Personal Responsibility (PR)**—to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

Required Texts and Screenings

There is one required text and 2 required screenings.

(1) *Introduction to TechnoCulture*, 2nd Ed. by Dr. Anne Balsamo

(Kendall-Hunt Publication, 2022)

Students must purchase a subscription for the web textbook for their individual use. Subscriptions cannot be shared. Each web textbook module includes a pre-test and a post-test that must be completed before the next module is unlocked. Completion of these tests are part of the course participation grade. Help/support for the textbook can be reached at any time using this email:

websupport@greatriverlearning.com

To purchase the textbook:

ACCESS CODE: To purchase access to the 2nd edition of *Introduction to TechnoCulture*, visit

<https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/introduction-technoculture>. After your purchase, you will receive an email with a unique access code, which you will use in the following steps.

LOG IN INSTRUCTIONS:

Browser minimum: Internet Explorer 11, Firefox 3.6 +, Safari 4.0 +, and Chrome 9.0 +. JavaScript must also be enabled in your browser. Some online publications may require additional free browser plug-ins (e.g., Flash, Adobe Acrobat).

Go to: <https://www.khpcontent.com/>

You will use your one-time-use online access code to set up your account the first time that you access this page. After you set up your account and create a password, you will be able to enter the Login portion of this page.

TO SET UP A NEW ACCOUNT:

1. Go to <https://www.khpcontent.com/>. In the First Time User (with access code) section, enter the Access Code provided below. Click the Next button.

2. Confirm your institution and your publication. Click Next.

3. If your publication has multiple sections, you must select the section you are enrolled in. If there is only one section available this step will be skipped and you will be taken directly to the Create An Account page. **You are enrolled in section 0W2.**

4. Once on the Create An Account page, you will set up your user account and create your username and password. **Your username will be the e-mail address that you enter.

Write down your Password to ensure your success in entering the publication after the initial setup.

5. Upon entering the information to create your account, click Next.

6. Your Registration is complete! Click on the "Login to WebCOM" button to access your publication.

7. Now that you have created an account, you can log into the publication through the Sign In portion of the home page.

(2) SCREENING: ***Bladerunner: The Final Cut*** (Film Directed by Ridley Scott, 1997)

Available for rent at the following sites: YouTube, Vudu, Amazon Prime Video, Google Play.

Rental fee is \$3.99

(3) SCREENING: *You will select one of the films below to screen for your midterm exam.*

Top Secret Rosies: The Female 'Computers' of WWII (Directed by LeAnn Erickson, 2010)

Available for free through UTD Library (<https://www.kanopy.com/en/utdallas/video/122786>)

Hidden Figures (Film Directed by Theodore Melfi, 2016)

Available for rent at the following sites: YouTube, Vudu, Amazon Prime Video, Google Play

Rental fee is \$3.99

The Social Dilemma (Film Directed by Jeff Orlowski, 2020)

Available on Netflix (subscription)

The Wild Robot (Film Directed by Chris Sanders, 2024)

Available for rent at the following sites: YouTube, Google Play, Apple TV, Amazon Prime Video

Rental fee is \$5.99

Available on Peacock (subscription)

Course Platforms

eLearning platform

ATCM 2300.0W2

Abby Cole – Summer 2025

<https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning>

Follow the link to eLearning Login

ATCM 2300.0W2 eLearning site

- This is the eLearning site for the LECTURE videos and materials, syllabus, assignments and announcements. **UPLOAD ASSIGNMENTS TO THIS SITE.**

TEAMS Channels

- ATCM 2300.0W2: The main course TEAMS channel is designated by this badge. It will not be used often. Please email rather than TEAMS message me.

Student Participation and Assessment

Requirements

- **Readings:** Assigned on a weekly basis
- **Video Screenings:** Assigned during week 5 and week 9
- **Participation and Engagement with TEXTBOOK**
 - Students are assigned one or two modules from the web textbook each week.
 - Each module includes a Warm-Up quiz and Wrap-Up quiz.
 - Textbook modules are made available on a week-by-week basis. Students must complete the Warm-Up and Wrap-Up quiz for the previous module before gaining access to the next module.
- **Participation and Engagement with LECTURE**
 - Students are expected to watch the weekly lecture videos, which include specifics related to the weekly module and readings, as well as assignments and announcements. Evidence of student engagement with the lecture videos should be apparent in student assignment responses (e.g., weekly assignments, midterm, final project).

Exam Dates

Exam details will be posted on eLearning separately and discussed in the video lectures.

- **Mid-Term Exam:** available for submission Monday, June 30
Due: Sunday July 6 @ 11:59 PM
- **Final Assignment:** available for submission Monday, Aug. 11
Due: Thursday, Aug. 14 @ 10 AM *note the earlier submission time

Course Grade Determination

Engagement: 40%

Textbook's exercises: (200, 20 points per Module)

Creative assignments: (200, 1 @ 20 points weekly)

Mid-Term Exam: 30% (300 pts)

Final Project: 30% (300 pts)

Final Grading Scale: A+, A, A- B+, B, B- C+, C, C-, D+, D, D- F

Course Grading Scale/Calculation of Course Grade

Total Number of Points	Letter Grade
970+	A+
940-969	A

900-939	A-
870-899	B+
840-869	B
800-839	B-
770-799	C+
740-769	C
700-739	C-
670-699	D+
640-669	D
600-639	D-
599 and below	F

(Note: We will make use of plusses and minuses (e.g., B+, C-) for grades as stipulated by UTD.)

Student Commitments and Responsibilities

- Students are expected to complete weekly assignments before the next week’s lecture.
- Students are expected to turn in required assignments on time. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- Students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner in the use of speech, language, images, video, games, and audio
- Students are expected to protect their intellectual integrity: no plagiarism and no use of artificial intelligence
 - Professors are authorized to set their own policies for classes. I recognize the benefit of learning to work with emerging technologies while also preserving the role of knowledge production in all parts of the learning process. As such, the general rule is that you cannot use AI in this course. However, given the advancements of this technology, if I find that experimenting with it would be beneficial, as in with any creative exercises, I will note it on the individual assignment and in the lecture. Overall, representing work generated by AI as your own is plagiarism and is prohibited. If you have any questions about this, please ask.
- Students will include proper citations for the use of media made by other people in their own work
 - Purdue Owl - <https://owl.purdue.edu/> is a great resource for citations. Students can use any recognizable format (i.e., APA, MLA, Chicago Style).
- Students will abide by the policies for *fair use* when they use media materials made by other people
- Students will communicate with the instructor through email.
- Students will respect their peers and instructors, and refrain from harassment, name-calling, or strident arguments.
- Student will understand that diversity in terms of sex, gender, race, national origin, language, physical ability, age, and cultural experiences enriches and inspires learning from one another.

Classroom Conduct and Communication Protocols

My goal is for students to be comfortable in the classroom. I welcome students from all backgrounds and recognize that we are all at different points in learning about the world. I do not include any content that would intentionally shock, traumatize or degrade any one or any groups of people. The learning process sometimes requires us to discuss difficult subjects in class. No one can predict the effect some materials or discussions may have on someone else. Please keep this in mind and be willing to give one another the benefit of the doubt. This class is a space for learning for all of us, which is enhanced by the respectful and open sharing of various viewpoints.

Communication Protocols

- Indicate the name and any additional preferences you have when corresponding
- Use your UTD email address for any correspondence
- Use the subject heading: ATCM 2300
- No messages through text, social media, or phone

THINK about the identity you create for on-line communication. This course often requires students to post to online discussion space. I encourage students to use the name they prefer for face-to-face interactions. It helps instructors learn your name. It enables accountability.

RESPECT your peers and instructors. ATEC brings together people from diverse backgrounds and identities, in terms of sex, gender, race, national origin, language, physical abilities, age, and cultural experiences. This diversity is a rich source of inspiration.

Violence, harassment, name-calling, or any other disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated, and instances will be addressed immediately. Snarky or sarcastic comments on chat channels are easily made public and when taken out of context can have negative consequences for the person who posts the comment.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is required, without exceptions, without excuses.

Plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students.

UTD Handbook policy statement:

"The university expects from its students a high level of responsibility with respect to academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends on the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student maintains a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. The Dean may initiate disciplinary proceedings under subchapter C against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty upon complaint by a faculty member or a student."
<http://www.utdallas.edu/dept/graddean /gsPolDishonesty.htm>

Disciplinary actions by the University may include:

- failing the assignment
- failing the course
- expulsion from the program

Protect Your Intellectual Credibility

Tip #1: Always make a note of where you found something (an image, a quotation, a song lyric, a piece of music, a person's photograph)

Tip #2: Learn to love citations! Give credit where credit is due!

Tip #3: Learn how to READ Wikipedia critically, so you can use it as an effective research tool

Tip #4: You are smarter than a robot! Do not be tempted by artificial intelligence. I'm interested in what YOU are learning and the unique perspective you have.

Lecture Recordings

Any recordings will be available to all students registered for this class as they are intended to supplement the classroom experience. Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures.

Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation.

If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Accessibility

It is our responsibility to enable the full participation of all students in terms of access to course materials, lectures, and other activities. If you require accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act -2008 (ADAAA), please present your **letter of accommodations from the Office of Student AccessAbility on or before the FIRST DAY of class**. This is very important so that we can make appropriate arrangements to enable your participation. ALL DISCUSSIONS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.

For more information about the UTD, Office of Student AccessAbility:

Office phone: 972-883-6104

Email: studentaccessability@utdallas.edu

University Policies

<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>

- Sharing Confidential Information about sexual misconduct
- Campus Carry policy
- Technical Support for your UTD account
- Field Trip Policies and Off-Campus Instruction
- Student Conduct and Discipline
- Academic Integrity
- Copyright Notice
- Email Use
- Withdrawal from Course
- Student Grievance Procedures
- Incomplete Grade Policy
- AccessAbility Services
- Religious Holy Days

- Success Service

**The syllabus is subject to change at instructor discretion.*

WEEKLY SCHEDULE
Summer 2025
Intro to TechnoCulture

1) Read the book – 2) Watch the video lecture – 3) Complete weekly creative assignment

<u>Day & Date Posted</u>	<u>Weekly Deadline</u>	<u>Week #</u>	<u>Module</u>	<u>Video Lecture</u>	<u>Book Reading</u>	<u>Creative Assignment</u>
Monday June 2	Sunday June 8 @ 11:59 PM	1	Module 1	Introduction to the course	Module 1	• Close Reading Wikipedia (20 points max)
Monday June 9	Sunday June 15 @ 11:59 PM	2	Module 2	Evocative Objects <i>Introduction to Visual Culture</i>	Module 2	• Love Letter to an object (20 points max)
Monday June 16	Sunday June 22 @ 11:59 PM	3	Modules 3 & 4	Making Meaning for the Eye + Making Meaning for the Ear	Modules 3 & 4	• View a point (20 points max) • Technoculture in the news (20 points max)
Monday June 23	Sunday June 29 @ 11:59 PM	4	Module 5	Hidden from History Technologies as socio technical systems	Module 5	• The Socio Techno-System of a Loved Object (20 points max)
Monday June 30	Sunday July 6 @ 11:59 PM	5	n/a Complete midterm	MIDERTM EXAMS	n/a	Submit midterm paper
Monday July 7	Sunday July 13 @ 11:59 PM	6	Module 6	Unintended Consequences	Module 6	• Loved Object Unintended Consequences (20 points max)

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Summer 2025

Intro to TechnoCulture

Monday July 14	Sunday July 20 @ 11:59 PM	7	Module 7	Designed for Dreaming + <i>Final project introduction</i>	Module 7	• The War of Generations (20 points max)
Monday July 21	Sunday July 27 @ 11:59 PM	8	Module 8	Montage of a Dream Deferred	Module 8	• New modes of witnessing (20 points max)
Monday July 28	Sunday Aug. 3 @ 11:59 PM	9	Modules 9 & 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Science Fiction Imaginaries• <i>Blade Runner Screening</i>• What Comes Next? Emergent Technologies	Modules 9 & 10	• Bladerunner reflection (20 points max)
Monday Aug. 4	Sunday Aug. 10 @ 11:59 PM	10	n/a Work on final project	Speculating the Future Discussing ChatGPT and other technologies.	n/a	• Dear AI letter (option 1) OR • Speculating the Future (option 2) (20 points max)
Monday Aug. 11	Thursday, Aug. 14 @ 10 AM	11		Instruction for Final Presentation submission		• Final Presentations (30 points)

Grade Scale

Engagement: 40% (400 points total)

Textbook's exercises: 200 (20 points per Module)

Creative Assignments: 200 (20 points each)

Mid-Term Exam: 30% (300 points total)

Final Project: 30% (300 points total)