HIGR 243: Historical Scholarship in Technology

UCSD - Winter 2006
Thursdays 9:30 AM - 12:20 PM, HSS 3086

Professor Emily Thompson
HSS 4059  822.1532  emilyt@ucsd.edu  Office Hours: Mon 1:30-3:00
or by appt.

This graduate course will introduce students to scholarly literature in the history of technology. Readings include classic texts as well as more recent scholarship, and demonstrate a variety of approaches to the task of thinking and writing about technology from a historical perspective.

BOOKS: The following books are available for purchase at the UCSD Bookstore. You are welcome to purchase them from any bookseller you choose. Copies are also on reserve in Geisel Library.


Additional readings listed on the SCHEDULE below are available electronically, as e-journals or on e-reserve, through the library.
FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS: The course will generally require the focused reading of one or two books, plus a relevant article, per week. All students are required to complete all reading and be prepared to discuss it in class each week. Supplementary reading lists that expand on each week’s topic or theme will also be distributed, to serve as a guide for those students wishing to read more comprehensively in the field.

All students are required to write two 800-word reviews of books selected from the list of required readings. The first review must be submitted on or before 9 February, and the second review is due on or before 9 March. The review should be written as if it were being submitted to a scholarly journal.

A final, 12-page paper is also required and is due Thursday 23 March, during Finals Week. This paper will be either A) a historiographical essay that reviews the scholarly literature on a technological topic relevant to the student’s own interests; or B) a proposal for an introductory undergraduate course that deals with some aspect of the history of technology. Topics for this paper (either type) may be defined in a number of ways. For example, students may focus on the history of technology in a particular time period or national context; they may investigate a particular kind of technology; or they may review the ways that technology has been examined in other scholarly disciplines. Each student will define and execute their own project, which must be approved in advance by the Professor.

GRADING: In assigning final grades, the following weighting applies:

Seminar Participation: 35%
Book Reviews (2 @ 15%): 30%
Final Paper: 35%

SCHEDULE:

WEEK DATE TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT

1 12 JAN Course Introduction + Library Visit

2 19 JAN Technological Determinism and Environmental Approaches

### SCHEDULE (cont.):

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<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT</th>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>26 JAN</td>
<td>Environmental Approaches and Literary Studies</td>
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|      |      | Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden.* (1964)  
| 4    | 2 FEB | Social History / Labor History |
| 5    | 9 FEB | Social Construction: **Book Review 1 Due** |
| 6    | 16 FEB | Women and Work |
| 7    | 23 FEB | Reports on Journals in the Field |
| 8    | 2 MAR | Gender: Special Visitor Prof. Sarah Schneewind! |
| 9    | 9 MAR | Geography: **Book Review 2 Due** |
| 10   | 16 MAR | Reports on Students’ Final Papers |

**FINALS WEEK:** Final Papers Due THURS 23 MAR, 4:00 PM.