In our contemporary world market dominated by economic consumerism it is becoming more evident that our dependency on the use of technological devices is becoming a totalizing relationship. This era in which students entering the university do not know of a time when personal computers and the internet were not around and to which everyone is connected to on hand-held devices, it is not hard to come to the conclusion that us “late moderns” have a serious and growing dependency on gadgets. Sixty years ago, Martin Heidegger and Herbert Marcuse recognized a growing dependency on devices, which evidenced significant social and political implications. These thinkers sought to articulate a critique of technology as a symptom of modernism. This class will explore these founding critiques as well as responses to them (including: Andrew Feenberg, Iain Thomson, Bert Dreyfus, Gianni Vattimo) and explore their relevance to our contemporary world of instant communications.

Course Materials: Materials with an asterisk (**) will be made available at the Literary Guillotine. Those without an asterisk will be made available as electronic selections on ecommons (make sure to print out a copy of electronic materials to bring to course meetings).


Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*.  

Andrew Feenberg “Critical Theory of Technology” in *Tailoring Biotechnologies* Vol.1 Issue 1, Winter 2005 pp. 47-64


Grading:
Final grades will be determined by evaluation of writing proficiency on one final term paper (3,000-4,000 words) and one in class 20 minute paper presentation (This works out to approx. 2,500 words) on one OR both of the readings to be covered that same meeting (I will need these typed out and handed in). The term paper is worth 50%, the presentation is worth 30% and attendance is worth 20%. For all written materials please use double-space 12pt. font. Be sure to cite all sources, etc.

Reading Schedule:

Week 1:
1) Introduction to the philosophy of technology and politics. Why is it important and how is it relevant? Assignment of presentations and minutes.
2) Iain Thomson “Phenomenology and Technology.” Heidegger’s reading of history as a grounding for a critique of technology: From The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays “The Word of Nietzsche ‘God is Dead’” pp. 54-112. (Supplementary reading, from The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays, ”Introduction.”)

Week 2:
2) Danger and Saving Power (cont.) from The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays “The turning” pp. 36-49.

Week 3:
2) Vattimo from *Nihilism and Emancipation* “Introduction” and “Postmodernity, Technology, Ontology.”

**Week 4:**

1) Vattimo, *A Farewell to Truth* Introduction and Ch.1 “Beyond the Myth of Objective Truth” pp. xxv – 45
2) *A Farewell to Truth* Ch. 2 “The Future of Religion” pp. 47-87,

**Week 5:**

1) Vattimo, Ch. 3 “The End of Philosophy” pp. 89-140. Vattimo from *Nihilism and Emancipation* “Liberty and Peace in the Postmodern Condition.”

Final paper due via ecommons on Thursday of this week (July 24).