Professor Anita Chari  

PS 410: Technology and Its Discontents  

Draft Syllabus—syllabus subject to change

This class will explore the social and political consequences of technology, with a focus on the vast transformations in technological innovation in the digital era. We will read theorists of technology, both classic and contemporary, to grasp technology as a particular form and approach to action. Not only will we read philosophical approaches to technology, we will also explore various technological forms and practices at an experiential level, using contemplative techniques to gain awareness of the effects of technology on consciousness and subjectivity. The class is both practical and theoretical, introspective and analytical. Theorists we will read may include: Aristotle, Arendt, Heidegger, Foucault, Turkle, Volte, Chun, Galloway, Lessig, Castells, Rose. We will also watch films and listen to audio based media.

Assignments:

Midterm: 30%  
Final Project (written portion + in class presentation): 30%  
Participation: 20%  
Discussion assignments: 20%

Readings:

All readings will be in course packet available for purchase at Duck Store

Reading Schedule:

**Week 1: Theoretical Foundations: Techne**  
Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, Book VI  
Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, excerpts

**Week 2: Theoretical Foundations: Techne II**  
Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology.”

**Week 3: Theoretical Foundations: Culture and Technology**  
Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Ch. 1  
Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

**Week 4: Technologies of the Self**  
Foucault, *The Care of the Self*  
The Matrix Trilogy
Week 5: “Hacktivism”
Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies*
Primary Source documents
*Midterm Due*

Week 6: Communication Technologies
Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together*
*The Social Network*--Film

Week 7: Reproductive Technologies

Week 8: Cultural Technologies
Reading TBD

Week 9: The Digital Divide
Manuel Castells, TBD

Week 10: Class Presentations