TEC154 2014S, Class 01: An Introduction to the Course

Overview

- Preliminaries.
  - Class Notes.
  - Admin.
  - Handouts.
  - Assignments.
- What is technology?
- How does one study technology?
- Course structure.
- Expectations.

Preliminaries

Notes on the Class

- Two students are assigned to take notes on each class period (the assigment rotates).
- Because we're just getting started, I'll also take electronic notes on this "electronic white board"

Admin

- Welcome to TEC 154!
- The course Web is in a bit of a state of flux. Expect it to change a bit over the next few days.
- Just so you know, we keep hot water and mugs in the CS commons if you want to make yourself tea (coffee? oatmeal?) right before class.
  - You will need to bring your own supplies.
- Extra credit for tonight's MLK day talk, 7:30 p.m., JRC 101.
- I will take attendance for the first few class periods. You should also preface any comment you make in class with your name.
  - When responding during attendance, please let me know your preferred gender pronoun (he/she/zhi) and/or title (Mr., Ms., etc.)

Assignments

- For Wednesday, fill out the Introductory Survey and Course Details. Copies distributed in class.
- For Wednesday, read Weinberg's "Can Technology Replace Social Engineering?", Berry's "Why I am Not Going to Buy a Computer", and Florman's "Technology and the Tragic View".
  - You should make sure to read the instructions for responding to readings before you start the reading.

○ As I mentioned in email, I have some copies of two textbooks to loan to people. Grab them at the end of class.
○ I have a few extra copies of Wednesday's readings, for those who don't yet have the textbooks. Grab them at the end of class.

What is technology?

- Not a quiz! Take a sheet of paper and write down a definition of "technology"
- Man-made matter created with the intention of fulfilling needs/wants/desires of humans
- Something to help humans accomplish tasks

- Constantly evolving

- Themes

    ○ Aid humans
        - Maybe attempting to
        - Sometimes making tasks simpler and more efficient
    ○ Improving (it changes; it is not static)
        - Our understanding of needs changes

Concerns about technology ... is it always this positive? (Boy that's giving away the answer)

- Weapons allow us to get rid of unnecessary people.
- Allows us to subjugate the environment as is our G-d-given right.
- Can help us (and our culture) develop in bad ways
    ○ Ignore the needs of other species

While there are negative consequences, we HOPE that technology is intended to aid humans

M-W: "Applied Knowledge."

Sam hopes that we will look at how technologies are developed, how they might aid people (and what aid we intend), what knowledge they apply, and so on and so forth.

How should one study technology? (in this course)

- Study particular technologies (which ones, how?)
    ○ Scientific method -
        - General: Form hypotheses, design experiment, conduct experiment, learn
        - Specific: Randomized controlled experiments about the efficiency and happiness of people who use the technology vs. those who do not
        - Specific: Observational approach
    ○ Social scientific approach - Consider the context of the things - what social forces create it, what effects it has on people and society
        - Consider effects on job market

○ Study by use - what's it like to use the technology? (indidualized environment)
- In this course
  ○ Develop lenses to view technologies - Lots of readings and discussion Questions to ask about technologies *Study specific technologies - We will bring in guest speakers to talk about technologies

Course structure

- Most of the details are online and part of the first assignment.
- We'll look at the overview.
- Three textbooks plus lots of additional readings.

Expectations

- Show up and participate.
- Warning! Different levels
- Very tutorial-like in approach to readings for the first few weeks
  ○ What is the thesis?
  ○ What is the structure of the argument?
  ○ What evidence does the author provide?
  ○ Etc.

Notes from SA

A few thoughts from SamR on how these notes could be improved: 1. Clarify which things are questions from the professor and which are responses from students. (I don't want it to sound like this is all stuff that came from me; most of it is your ideas.) 2. Perhaps a bit more detail/context. For example, in the little "Readings" section at the end, it might be useful to have a note that "Sam is going to ask us to start with a relatively basic approach to readings." Similarly, rather than "details are available online", you should probably have the links. 3. A "key points" summary at the end would be helpful. Of course, it may be that there were no key points today.

- MLK day talk 7:30pm, JRC 101 for some extra credit.

Assignments for Wednesday:

1. Introductory survey
2. Three short readings
   - Two questions in total for the three readings.

What is technology?

- Man-made matter created with the intention of fulfilling needs/wants/desires of humans
- Something to help humans accomplish tasks
- Constantly evolving

- Themes:
  - Aid humans
    - Maybe attempting to
  - Improving
    - Our understanding of needs change constantly

Concerns about technology/is it always positive?

- Weapons - kill people
- Allows us to subjugate the environment
- Can help us and our culture develop in bad ways (ignore the needs of other species)
- While there are negative consequences, we hope that technology is intended to aid humans.

Merriam-Webster

[http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/technology]

- The practical application of knowledge in a particular area
- A capability given by the practical application of knowledge
- In general - building things by applying knowledge

Sam hopes that we will look at how technologies are developed, how they might aid people (and what aid we intend), what knowledge they apply, and so on and so forth.

How does one study technology?

- Study particular technologies
  - General: Form hypothesis, design and conduct experiment, learn
  - Specific: Scientific method - randomized controlled experiments about the efficiency and happiness of people who use the technology vs. those who do not
  - Specific: observational approach
  - Social scientific approach - consider the context of things â what social forces create it, what effects it has on people and society
  - Study by use - what's it like to use the technology? Individualized environment

In this course:

- Develop lenses to view technologies
- Study specific technologies

Course structure: details are online

Expectations: attend and participate [*A full list of expectations is on the course Web site. There are daily questions on the readings, a mid-semester examination and final, a final paper and presentation, and a few other compnents.*]

Readings:

- What is the thesis?
- What is the structure of the argument?
- What evidence does the author provide?

Notes from EL

- Course materials/information is online at Sam's CS website
- Extra credit for MLK talk tonight in 101 at 7:30pm
- Please preface comments in class with your name
- Please do the introductory survey for Wednesday and answer the questions
- Read Weinberg, Barry's and Forman's essays and respond to readings by emailing 2 Questions about any readings for the day---not 2 for each reading but 2 total

What is technology?

wrote our own definitions and discussed them

themes:

- constantly evolving (improving, it is not static, our understanding of needs change though)
- man-made matter with the intention to aide humans (or attempts to make something similar, or more efficient) Webster's Definition "application of knowledge" rather than the creation/discovery of knowledge which is common in other sciences

Concerns?

- can be used for weapons which increases human deaths, environmental effects, privacy issues, etc

Sam wants us to look at how technologies are developed, how they might aide people (what aide we intend for them), and what knowledge they apply

How should we study technologies? (in this class)

- Study particular knowledges--but which ones and how?
- Scientific Method is a common tool
- general: form hypotheses, design and conduct experiments,
- specific: randomized controlled experiments
- specific: observational approach
- Social scientific approach: consider content of the things--what social forces create it, what affects it has on people and society
- Study by use--what is it like to use technology (individualized environment)

In this course

- study technologies through different lenses
- will have guest speakers talk about technologies tehy are passionate about

Expectations for students in the course:

Show up and participate, different levels of academic experience are within the class so be aware that it may seem very tutorial like for the beginning few readings (asking questions such as what is the thesis, etc.)