

Comparative Studies 367.02: Science, Technology, and American Culture
Summer Quarter 2007; TR 9:30 – 11:18
Instructor: Annette R. Dolph

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Course Description & Goals:

Comparative Studies 367.02 is an intermediate-level writing course that develops and extends skills in critical thinking and writing by asking students to analyze, discuss, and write about topics related to science and technology in the United States. In this section of the course we will be looking specifically at the way in which culture and language construct and define what qualifies as “science” or “technology” and the ethical issues that may arise with the boundaries we draw. Using our course packet, we will examine and analyze the arguments, viewpoints, purposes, and overall rhetoric of various writers and artists to help us develop a more complex and nuanced conception of how “science” and “technology” are viewed in America, and how these labels may be more subjective and relative than we may initially perceive them to be. Your major papers will build in argumentative and rhetorical complexity, but all will involve drawing a conclusion of contemporary cultural, social, or personal relevance via the use of scholarly secondary sources and a careful rhetorical analysis of one or more writers we’ve read. As this is a writing course, you will be expected to complete multiple drafts and revisions of your major assignments, as well as to engage in regular more informal writing both in and out of class.

Comparative Studies 367.02 also satisfies OSU’s diversity requirement. While this course is organized around the broad theme of science, technology, and the American experience, our readings encompass a wide variety of perspectives on how science and technology—and the ethical issues that arise from them—affect various cultures and communities within the United States. This quarter we will often find ourselves considering how race, gender, religion, and region may shape one’s experience of scientific and technological advances for the better or worse.

Required Texts

Course packet available at Grade-A Notes (22 E. 17th Ave.—just east of High St.)

A *Writer’s Handbook* (suggested: *A Writer’s Reference* by Diana Hacker, available at SBX—but any will suffice, including one you may have purchased for English 110)

Additional Required Materials:

- There may be readings on Carmen which you must read in advance of class *and* must print out and bring to class on the day we discuss them.
- An active email account through OSU (you are responsible for any class-related information I send to you through your OSU account, so make sure you check it frequently).

Grade Distribution:

Assignment 1	20%
Assignment 2	25%
Assignment 3	30%
Discussion Leading & Online Responses	15%
Class Participation & In-Class Writing	10%

Draft policies: For each of your 3 major assignments, you will be required to submit a draft. On the indicated due date for a draft, you must bring a) TWO COPIES of your draft, and b) a paragraph which you indicate any problems or questions you have about the assignment and make other notes about your writing process (to be explained in class). **Late drafts will not receive a full response from me** due to the close proximity of draft deadlines to final version deadlines, so turn in your drafts on time. Failure to turn in an assignment draft at all, or turning in a late draft, will result in the deduction of **one-third of a letter grade** on the final version of the paper (for example, B+ to B). Further, as drafts are a part of a peer group exercise, failure to bring a draft on the day it is due will lower your participation grade. Drafts are expected to be full-length versions of your paper, unless otherwise indicated. **All final assignments *must* be accompanied by your draft version with my comments on it.**

Discussion Leading & Online Responses

- **Discussion Leading:** For one class day, you will be assigned to lead class discussion of the readings for that day. This is a two-step process.
 - **Step 1.** To prepare for leading your discussion, you should a) summarize and analyze the author's major points, including any terms/definitions particularly important to that author; b) make note of important stylistic and/or rhetorical methods the author employs, and c) come up with 3 good questions for discussion of the reading. (More guidance on how to formulate a "good" discussion question will be given in class.) **Step 1 must be posted on Carmen's discussion board by 5pm the day before the class period in which we discuss the readings.**
 - **Step 2.** Come to class ready to present your summary and launch our discussion based upon your 3 critical discussion questions. (The morning before class, you may want to log onto Carmen to see if anyone has posted a response to your summary & questions, because it may help you lead discussion—but you won't be held responsible for having done so.) More guidance on how to lead discussion will be offered in class. Step 1 and Step 2 together will count for half of this 15% segment of your grade. An unexcused absence on the day you are to lead discussion will result in an "E" for this portion of your grade.
- **Online Responses to Discussion:** During the quarter, you are responsible for posting 5 responses of approximately 250 words each as replies to what our discussion leader has written. You may post them for whichever readings you choose, with the additional condition that you must post at least 3 of these 5 responses by mid-quarter (July 19). Each response must be posted before the class period in which we have the discussion—responses posted late will receive no credit. In these responses, you can develop, expand upon, disagree with, or otherwise engage with both the readings for the day and the points your peer or other responders have raised about them. Make sure you print off and bring your response to class so you can refer to it to help you remember your ideas for discussion. Responses will be evaluated credit/no credit, and completing all 5 responses thoroughly, thoughtfully, and on time will count for half of this 15% segment of your grade.

Class Participation will be evaluated based upon active engagement in class discussion, completion of in-class writing exercises, participation in peer reviews, and attendance. This class is heavily discussion-based, so come to class ready to participate.

Late Assignments: Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Late assignments will generally not be accepted; rarely, however, I may evaluate on a case-by-case basis. Late discussion postings and online response postings cannot be accepted, as they have relevance and usefulness to a specific day's class discussion. If you have a special situation and need an extension on a draft or a major assignment, I'm willing to work with you individually unless a pattern develops. Please talk to me in advance—as always, open lines of communication are best for both of us. I would far rather grant you a reasonable extension than penalize you with a failing grade.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer. Therefore, each unexcused absence after two will affect your grade, as will frequent tardiness. Five unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course. Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for intercollegiate athletics, will not affect your grade. At the beginning of each class, I will pass around a sign-in sheet, which will act as the final authority on your presence or absence; it's your responsibility to make sure you've signed it should you arrive late.

Mandatory Conferences: You must attend one mandatory conference with me to discuss your third assignment. As this meeting stands in for one class session, failure to attend this conference will result in one class absence.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. The Committee on Academic Misconduct prohibits submitting plagiarized work for an academic assignment. They define plagiarism as follows:
Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas.

Plagiarism is a breach of the OSU student code of conduct, and is punishable by failure of the course in which it occurs. If you are suspected of plagiarism, you will be referred to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. We will discuss source documentation in class, and you can also refer to your writer's handbook's section on MLA documentation/plagiarism.

Changes to Syllabus: I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus or schedule of assignments/readings as I deem necessary to meet the needs of the class. No changes will be made without sufficient prior notice.

Resources:

Writing Center: The OSU Writing Center is available to provide free, professional writing tutoring and consultation. You may set up an appointment by calling 688-4291 or by dropping by the center at 475 Mendenhall. If you are interested in online writing advice, visit the OWL (Online Writing Lab) at www.cstw.osu.edu.

Office of Disability Services: Located in 150 Pomerene Hall, this office offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.

A Final Note: Success in this course is within your grasp; effort is half of the battle. Make sure you come to class, complete all assignments (including reading) on time, participate actively in class discussions, and make a serious effort toward improving your writing over the course of the quarter using the tools we practice, and you will likely do well.

Please don't ever hesitate to contact me with questions or for additional help. I'm here, after all, to share my experience with you and to help you gain as much as possible from this course. During office hours, drop-ins are always welcome. Outside of office hours, email is usually the best way to contact me, followed by instant messenger (AIM). I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours whenever possible, particularly during the week.

Daily Schedule

Comparative Studies 367.02

Note: Readings and assignments are due on the date under which they appear.
Draft return dates are tentative.

Unit 1: Science, Nature, & Technology: Establishing Working Definitions

Week 1: Thematic Topics: Science, nature, and technology as cultural and social constructions
Defining & discussing nature: a starting point for scientific & cultural debate
Writing Topics: What makes "good writing"? What is "rhetoric"? Reading analytically (analysis vs. summary)

T 6/19 Introduction to course, texts, and syllabus

R 6/21 Ralph Waldo Emerson, from *Nature*
(in-class: introduction to Assignment 1)

Week 2: Thematic Topics: Drawing the boundary between "human" and "nature"
Investigating the culturally constructed distinctions we make
Writing Topics: Reading analytically, cont.; Introduction to basic research skills; Formulating a good thesis statement

T 6/26 Carl Sagan, "Can We Know the Universe? Reflections on a Grain of Salt"
Charles Krauthammer, "Saving Nature, But Only for Man"

R 6/28 Theodore Roosevelt, "Wilderness Reserves: Yellowstone Park"
Richard Connell, "A Most Dangerous Game"

Week 3: Thematic Topics: How are our definitions of "technology" relative to our cultural moment?
Writing Topics: The revision process; introductions & conclusions; grammar issues

T 7/3 Esther Dyson, "Cyberspace: If You Don't Love it, Leave It"
Draft Due of Assignment 1; bring two copies
(in-class: writing workshop & peer review)

R 7/5 Lewis Thomas, "The Technology of Medicine"
Gilbert Arizaga, "Curanderismo as Holistic Medicine"
**optional supplemental reading: excerpt, "A Condensed History of Homeopathy"
(in-class: drafts returned; common writing issues review)

Unit 2: Science, Technology, & Ethics: Diverse Perspectives

Week 4: Thematic Topics: Discrimination & the Environment; cultural ties with land and place
Writing Topics: The rhetorical triangle; writing with audience in mind; calls to action (ethos, pathos, logos); thesis statements

- T 7/10** Tara Hulen, "Dispatch from Toxic Town"
Winona LaDuke, "Nuclear Waste: Dumping on the Indians"
Gregory Cajete, "Indigenous Foods, Indigenous Health: A Pueblo Perspective"
(in-class: introduction to Assignment 2)
- R 7/12** Leslie Marmon Silko, "Landscape, History, and the Pueblo Imagination"
Assignment 1 Due

Week 5: Thematic Topics: Women, Technology, and the Environment
Writing Topics: Thesis & thesis development, cont.; linking evidence & claims; transitions between ideas; smoothly incorporating secondary sources

- T 7/17** Terry Tempest Williams, "The Clan of the One-Breasted Women"
Rachel Carson, "The Human Price"
- R 7/19** Paula DiPerna, "Truth vs. 'Facts'"
Londa Schiebinger, "Has Feminism Changed Science?"
Have at least 3 online responses done by this point (not including your own discussion leading)

Week 6: Thematic Topics: Religion & Culture
Writing Topics: Logical fallacy & argumentative structure

- T 7/24** Bertrand Russell, "The Value of Philosophy"
Draft Due of Assignment 2; bring 2 copies
(in-class: writing workshop and peer review)
- R 7/26** Stephen L. Carter, "The Culture of Disbelief"
Eliseo Torres, "Rituals and Practices of Traditional Folk Medicine in the US Southwest and Mexico"
(in-class: drafts returned; common writing issues review)

Unit 3: Intersections of Science, Nature, & Technology in Contemporary American Culture

Week 7: Thematic Topics: Technology & the Visual Arts in America
Writing Topics: kairos; art & film as rhetoric

- T 7/31** Jennifer Price, "A Brief Natural History of the Plastic Pink Flamingo"
(in-class: viewing of installation & multimedia art)
(in-class: introduction of Assignment 3)
- R 8/2** Viewing of TBA film (in-class)
Assignment 2 Due

Week 8: Thematic Topics: The Future of Science, Technology, & the Environment in the US
Writing Topics: Style & the rhetorical triangle, revisited

- T 8/7** Peter Huber, "How Cities Green the Planet"
Michael Pollan, "The Idea of a Garden"
- R 8/9** Isaac Asimov, "The Last Question"
Draft due of assignment 3; bring 2 copies
(in-class: writing workshop and peer review)

Week 9: Thematic Topics: Wrap-Up
Writing Topics: TBA depending upon class needs

- T 8/14** Bring draft to class: style workshop
- R 8/16** Course wrap-up: Student-set agenda; Course evaluations
(in-class: drafts returned; common writing issues review)

Final versions of Assignment 3 due: Wed. August 22 at 11:30 (more details on submission supplied in class)