UN1001: Staying Human in a Technological World

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Every technology is both a burden and a blessing; not either-or but this-and-that. —Neil Postman

Course Description
This course explores the interface between humans, technology, and culture to better understand the ways in which society and our own humanity are influenced by and often defined by technology. By exploring the impact of our technological mindset through films and readings, we will address fundamental ethical questions about our own relationship with technology and the role of humanity in this new age. We will also investigate the relationship between technology and our environment in order to identify ways that we might create a sustainable technological relationship for ourselves and for the world.

Course Requirements
• Read all material required for the course by the due date
• Think critically about and be ready to analyze the course readings
• Complete all assignments, including reading responses, by the due date
• Attend class and participate in class discussion

Required Texts
Feed by M.T. Anderson
Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology by Neil Postman
Better Off: Flipping the Switch on Technology by Eric Brende

Additional readings in .pdf format should be printed, read, and brought to class on days assigned.

Resources
• Additional readings, course assignments, and general resource information can be found at my website: www.hu.mtu.edu/~cliweberb
• For questions regarding the course and assignments, please email me at any time or stop by during my office hours.
• For general assistance with research, writing, editing, and presentations, contact the MTU Multiliteracies Center at 7-2007.

ADA Compliance
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please call the Student Affairs Office (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

Academic Integrity Policy
Presenting others’ work as your own or failing to credit resources results in plagiarism, which can lead to academic probation. If you ever have any questions regarding this issue, please talk to me or consult a coach in the Multiliteracies Center (7-2007).
General Policy
Cell phones, iPods, and computers should be turned off and stowed away during class time unless otherwise directed by your instructor. Computers are not necessary for use in class except for presentations.

Assignment Policy
All assignments are due on the day they are assigned, at the beginning of class. You are responsible for all assignments, even if you are absent. Check the course schedule for due dates, especially for those assignments that have multiple components. **Please note that each course reading is considered an assignment.**

Grading Policy
Your final grade will be calculated based on the following percentages:

- **Attendance and Participation** (10% of final grade)
  Attendance includes not only coming to class, but also participating in the activities and discussions. I expect you to be prepared, having completed all readings and assignments due for the day, and to actively listen and contribute. You are responsible for informing me in advance if you know you will be absent, and must make arrangements for handing in all assignments due for that day. In unforeseen circumstances, such as illness, email me as soon as possible regarding the situation. Because participation is an integral part of learning in this course, **more than three unexcused absences will affect your final grade.**

- **Quizzes** (20% of final grade)
  To review key concepts of the readings and class materials, short quizzes will be given in class most Wednesdays.

- **Reflection Papers** (20% of final grade)
  To practice both thinking critically and transferring those thoughts into written language, you will be asked to reflect and respond to specific questions in a short paper. Reflection prompts will be posted to my website or given out in class and will comprise both specific questions and general entries related to the readings, films, and discussion. **Entries must be completed prior to class and should be two pages typed, 12pt. font.**

- **Class Topic Presentation** (15% of final grade)
  As part of a small group (2 members), you will choose a topic drawn from the class readings, compile research on the topic, and prepare a 15-minute class presentation.

- **Research Paper and Presentation** (35% of final grade)
  In this assignment, you will conduct research on an aspect of technological sustainability and the human/technology balance, compile your research into a critical argument, and present a synopsis of your argument to the class.

To receive a C in this class (remember, C is average) show up to class and complete the minimum requirements for all assignments. To receive an A or a B, you must participate in daily class activities and discussions and complete work beyond the minimum — work that demonstrates critical thinking and understanding of and engagement with the subject matter.

**Important Note:** I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time to meet the needs of the class.
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