This seminar is one of the designated “headwaters” courses of the RTC program. As such, it is meant to provide overall context to the three disciplinary strands represented in the title of the course. In addition, we will locate these strands into the context of the RTC program by focusing on topics and issues that arise within the fields, but also that are particular to this graduate program. Finally, we will not only overview these disciplinary areas, but we will delve into the depths through some close reading of chosen texts, as well as close attention to the theories and practices of appropriate scholarly research methods and methodologies.

Required Assignments and Activities of the Course

Weekly Readings and Leading a Discussion (15%)
As in any graduate seminar, there will be readings each week that you are expected to complete. Some of these readings will be chosen by me, but you will also do some choosing. I am including a list of the readings I have chosen for the first half of the semester below in the “Required Readings” Section.

In addition to these readings, I will ask each of you to choose one reading from the field of technical and scientific communication that has been published in the last 10 years (since Central Works was published). This will acquaint you with new scholarship in the field, and will allow you to explore various journals and edited collections. Beginning in the third week, one person per week will be responsible for reading and then reporting on that reading to the class. In essence, you will be responsible for leading discussion on the reading you have selected for about 20-30 minutes of conversation and activity related to that reading. We will discuss this assignment in more detail during the first few classes.

Weekly and Periodic Writings (15%)
For the first two weeks of the semester, the entire class will be required to write what I will call a Summary/Inquiry response to one of the texts we have read. These should be about 500 words and will consist of two parts. The first part will be a summary of the article that attempts to explain the content and significance of the article to the other members of the class (and to me, of course). The second part of these responses will be to write a couple questions that inquire into some aspect(s) of the reading that you want to probe with other members of the class. I will collect these papers and provide responses to you the following week.

Beginning with Week 5, you will not have to write and hand-in one of these each week, but I do want each of you to produce 2 more of these over the semester. Further, these responses should attempt to synthesize some of the previous readings.

You can choose the weeks you want to write these for me, but I will have a sign-up sheet so that we don’t get them all clumped together. (Of course, some of you may choose to write these every week, especially if you find them helpful to you. However, you only have to hand in four total over the semester).
Professional Explorations (10%)
An integral part of our curriculum is to begin preparing you for your eventual professional goals. In this class, we will do three specific things to this end:

• Explore the various job markets. We will look at articles about the job search process from The Chronicle, the MLA, and other professional publications. These will be fodder for your own exploration, but we will also discuss these communally in class.
• Explore the career path of one of our graduates. I will provide you with lists of our PhD and MS graduates over the past 20 years. You will contact one of them and interview them (over email or phone) to prepare a short oral and written report for the other members of the class.
• Explore the preparation of professional documents such as vitas and resumes. We will also spend some time on the ways that publication works in the profession.

Mid-term Exam (25%), Book Review (25%), Final Roundtable Discussion (10%)
First, you will have a mid-term exam modeled after a comprehensive exam. You will be able to craft your own question, similar to the way you will later in preparation for your post-coursework Comprehensive Exam. This will be a take-home exam, allowing you about a week to write 10-12 pages in response.

The second product will be writing a book review of Alone Together aimed at a specific journal. We will talk more about this several weeks into the semester. My hope is that you will actually try to publish this review as Turkle’s book is brand new and has not been reviewed, as far as I know.

Third, you will write a short proposal (ala the CCCC, ATTW or CPTSC) for a conference presentation on a topic relevant to the class. The proposals will be copied and distributed to the other members of the class and will serve as pre-presentation abstracts for a Roundtable where we will talk about your aspirations for actually sending the proposal to a future conference.

Required Texts and Materials

Central Works in Technical Communication by Johnson-Eilola and Selber.

Philosophy of Technology: The Technological Condition. Scharff and Dusek.


Photocopies of various articles, assignments, etc.
Weekly Readings and Activities

The readings below are identified by the two major anthologies for the class: CW for *Central Works* and PT for *Philosophy of Technology*. The parentheses after the readings are the chapter numbers. Note that I have not listed the Introductions to each section of these texts, but I will expect that you have read them for the appropriate readings each week. At Week 10, we will assess our progress and determine readings for the rest of the semester.

Week 1
(Aug. 30)
Introductions
Overview of Course
Discuss Reading sent to course listserv

Week 2
(Sept. 6)
CW: Connors (1); Rutter (2); Miller (4)
Themes: History, Rhetoric, Disciplinarity

Week 3
(Sept. 13)
CW: Johnson (7); Driskill (5); Johnson-Eilola (12)
PT: Marx and Engels (7)
Themes: Audience, Workplaces, Work

Week 4
(Sept. 20)
PT: Aristotle (2); Kline (19); Arendt (30)
One student choice reading
Themes: Rhetoric, Technology, Agency

Week 5
(Sept. 27)
PT: Tuana (11); Harding (14)
CW: Durack (3); Lay (10)
One student choice reading
Themes: Feminist Views, Politics, Science

Week 6
(Oct. 4)
PT: Bacon (3); Merchant (36); Devall (40); Salleh (41)
One student choice reading
Themes: Nature, Environmentalism, Ecology

Week 7:
(Oct. 11)
PT: Pinch & Bijker (21); Winner (22 & 51)
CW: Katz (13)
One student choice reading
Themes: Determinism, Agency, Disciplinarity

Week 8:
(Oct. 18)
CW: Charney (19); Sullivan & Porter (20); Doheny-Farina (22)
Begin mid-term take home exam
One student choice reading
Themes: Methods, Methodologies, Rhetoric Theory

Week 9:
(Oct. 25)
Hand in mid-term exam
One student choice reading
Discuss analyses of professional journals
Week 10: Present your Professional Explorations
(Nov. 1) Discuss the final Roundtable and conference proposal process
One student choice reading

Week 11: Begin discussion of Alone Together
(Nov. 8) One student choice reading
Discuss the writing of book reviews
Conclude Professional Explorations, if necessary

Week 12: Conclude discussion of Alone Together
(Nov. 15)

Week 13: NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break
(Nov. 22)

Week 14: Discuss more about conference proposals and presentations
(Nov. 29) Conduct peer reviews of your book reviews

Week 15: Hand in book reviews
(Dec. 6) Hold the Roundtable on conference proposals

MTU Policies and Academic Assistance Documents

Academic regulations and procedures are governed by University policy. Academic dishonesty cases will be handled in accordance the University's policies. If you have a disability that could affect your performance in this class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please see me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements. The Affirmative Action Office has asked that you be made aware of the following: Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or the Affirmative Action Office, at 487-3310.

Academic Integrity: http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html
Affirmative Action: http://www.admin.mtu.edu/aaq/
Disability Services: http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/studenthandbook/student_services.html#disability