This seminar approaches information and communication technologies from critical and historical perspectives. We will investigate theories of the relations among technology, information, ideology, culture, and social structure, as well as methods for studying those relations.

First, we will survey the available theories and methods for understanding large scale technological systems, including the social construction of technology, technological determinism, feminist technology studies, and the political economy of information and communication. We will ask about the interests, motives, and tactics of news media, pop culture producers, amateurs, universities, corporations, and governments in promoting, sustaining, and interpreting information and communication systems. Finally, we will ask how information systems mediate, alter, or entrench power relations and cultural practices. While our focus will be on media and information technologies, more theoretical or methodological readings will necessarily cover other systems. Case studies may include investigations of writing, the printing press, industrialized printing, telegraphy, telephony, computing, and the internet.

Course objectives are to:

- attain familiarity with literature in the sociology of technology
- develop ability to critique methodological approaches to technology study
- attain familiarity with literature on the history of information and communication technologies
- develop ability to pursue independent research in the history and sociology of information

This is a seminar; preparation and participation are required. Written assignments include a scholarly review of a recently published book, two short critical response papers, and a term paper. The term paper may take the form of a proposal for a research project.

Grades will be calculated as follows:

- Participation 10%
- Critical response papers 15% each
- Book review 15%
- Term paper prospectus 15%
- Term paper 30%
READING LIST


---

### CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READING(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Intro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Approaching Technology</td>
<td>Hughes, Smith, Star and Bowker, Williams, Winner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Approaching Technology</td>
<td>Law (both) Latour (“On Recalling…”), Pinch and Scranton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Information, communication, technology and reality</td>
<td>Kuhn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Information, communication, technology and reality</td>
<td>Latour (<em>Pandora’s Hope</em> excerpts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ideology and culture in and through media</td>
<td>Carey (Ch 8), Marvin Critical response paper 1 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Case study: Writing</td>
<td>Carey (Ch 6), Ong (Ch 1-4), Scribner and Cole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Discussion of term paper prospectuses.</td>
<td>Term paper prospectuses due.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Gender, race, and technology</td>
<td>Wajcman (Ch 1, 3, 6), Maines, Winston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Information technology and capitalism</td>
<td>Braverman, Noble, Robins and Webster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Communication, machines, and marginal practice</td>
<td>Suchman (excerpts), Haraway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Critical response paper 2 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Case study: The printing press</td>
<td>Clanchy, Eisenstein (excerpts), Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Case study: The telephone</td>
<td>Fischer (excerpts), Martin (excerpts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Book review due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>