

History 615: Technology and American Culture



Spring 2012 HIST 615-11 Dr. Michael O'Malley

NOTE: CLASS IS NOW MEETING IN ROBINSON B 204

Readings

Carr, Nicholas, *The Shallows*
Chivers, C.J. *The Gun*
Cole, Simon *Suspect Identities*
DelBourgo, James, *A Most Amazing Scene of Wonders*
Haring, Kristen, *Ham Radio's Technical Culture*
Mayr, Otto, *Authority, Liberty and Automatic Machinery*
McShane, Clay, and Joel Tarr, *The Horse in the City*
Nye, David, *Electrifying America*
Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*
Rath, Richard, *How Early America Sounded*
Schivelbusch, Wolfgang, *The Railway Journey*
Singer, Ben, *Melodrama and Modernity*
Thompson, Emily, *The Soundscape of Modernity*
Brown, John, *The Baldwin Locomotive Works*

Grading

Review of single book 20%
Multi-book Review essay 25%
Final paper 35%
Class participation 20%

Week One: Introduction

Week Two, Pollan, *Omnivore's Dilemma*

Week Three, Wednesday, September 10: Machines for Governing

Mayr, *Authority, Liberty and Automatic Machinery* and Foucault, excerpts from *Discipline and Punish* part [1_ch1](#) and [pt. III ch. 1](#)

See also "[Organic and Mechanical Metaphors in Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought](#)," *Harvard Law Review*, Vol. 110, No. 8 (Jun., 1997), pp. 1832-1849

Week Four: Wednesday, September 17 Electrifying. DelBourgo, *A Most Amazing Scene of Wonders*

See also Patricia Fara, *An Entertainment for Angels: Electricity in the Enlightenment*; Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America*

Week Five, Wednesday, September 24: Electrifying, Part II. Nye, David, *Electrifying America* and Jürgen Martschukat, "[The Art of Killing by Electricity: The Sublime and the Electric Chair](#)," in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 89, No. 3 (Dec., 2002), pp. 900-921 (online)

See also Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Night*

Week Six, Wednesday, October 1: Hearing. Rath, *How Early America Sounded*

See also Mark M. Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth Century America*, and Smith ed., *Hearing History: A Reader*

Week Seven, Wednesday, October 8: Hearing II Thompson, Emily, *The Soundscape of Modernity*

See also Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound*

Week Eight, Wednesday, October 15: Traveling. Schivelbusch, Wolfgang, *The Railway Journey*

Week Nine, Wednesday, October 22: Detecting. Cole, Simon *Suspect Identities*

See also "Federal Judge Slams fingerprint "science" http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1571/is_10_18/ai_84019094; Colin Bevin, *Fingerprints*

Week Ten, Wednesday, October 29: Managing Labor. Brown, *The Baldwin Locomotive Works*, and Frederick W. Taylor, [Principles of Scientific Management](#)

See also Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* and John Kasson, *Civilizing the Machine*

Week Eleven, Wednesday, November 5: Urbanizing. McShane, Clay, and Joel Tarr, *The Horse in the City*

Week Twelve, Wednesday, November 12: The Industrial Self

Singer, Ben, *Melodrama and Modernity* and A. Roger Ekirch, "[Sleep We Have Lost: Pre-industrial Slumber in the British Isles](#)," *The American Historical Review* April 2001 (online)

See also Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space*

Week thirteen, Wednesday, November 19: Communicating. Haring, *Ham Radio's Technical Culture*

See also Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting* and Ruth Oldenziel, "Boys and Their Toys: The Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild, 1930-1968, and the Making of a Male Technical Domain," in *Technology and Culture* Vol. 38, No. 1, pp. 60-96

Week Fourteen, Wednesday, December 3: Two Modern Technologies

Either Carr, Nicholas, *The Shallows* or Chivers, C.J. *The Gun*