

Universität der Künste Berlin
Studium Generale
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Anna Thieser
akt2147@columbia.edu

Technology Critique and Its Alternatives

Tentative Syllabus

This syllabus describes the course curriculum for *Technology Critique and Its Alternatives*, offered at UdK Studium Generale during the Spring semester of 2022. The course is designed to introduce you to the concepts and discourse of science and technology studies (STS), and to give you tools to think about the social determinants and consequences of technological change. It should also enable you to provide your artistic or academic practice with a broader critical context, and to learn more on your own by finding your way through an often intimidating and impenetrable debate.

Session structure: Our sessions run from 4pm to 7:30pm on Thursdays. For the first 15 minutes, I will introduce the topic and readings, and place them in a wider theoretical and political context, as well as ask some questions we can use for discussion. Next, we will have about 45 minutes for read, discuss with your peers and collect your thoughts. From 5pm – 6pm we will have one hour of discussion. Afterwards, there will be a 15 minute break until 6:15, followed by another 60 minutes of discussion led by class participants and focused on discussing our own ongoing projects, optional texts, or other topics we are interested in.

Presentations or final projects: As an alternative to writing an essay, you can give a presentation. I would like you to choose one thing you are interested in and give presentation on the topic that is suited to inspire discussion in the second debate session of our meeting. This could be an assigned or optional reading, sharing with us your practice, recent work or speaking about an artwork you find interesting in the context of this class. Please email me as soon as you know what you would like to do, so we can discuss it and find a time within the course. The written final assignment has the same format – I am asking you to write 3500 words excluding references.

Readings: All readings will be made available on the course Moodle page in PDF or link form. If you have trouble accessing materials which are required or recommended, or you want to find free versions of other sources, try [Library Genesis](#) for books or [Sci-Hub](#) for research papers. Although these services are not legal in a strict sense, you will not get in trouble for using them.

A final note. The readings for the syllabus below are ambitious. If your study program does not normally involve reading (academic) texts, you might feel overwhelmed. That's okay. Read as much as you can, and come with questions – failing to get through the essays is fine but I do expect you to try. Sometimes there are more readings on the syllabus than we will be able to discuss, and we will decide together what to focus on the week before.

Session 1: (Why) Has critique run out of steam?

[Bruno Latour: Why has critique run out of steam?](#)

[Lee Vinsel: You're Doing It Wrong. Notes on Criticism and Technology Hype.](#)

[Mike Pepi: Elements of Technology Criticism.](#)

Session 2: STS on the relationship between technology and society

[Karl Marx. Grundrisse: Fragment on Machines.](#)

Trevor Pinch. The Social Construction of Technology, Chapter 9.

[Langdon Winner: Do Artifacts Have Politics?](#)

[Bruno Latour: Technology Is Society Made Durable.](#)

Session 3: What's techno-utopianism? The 1960s-1990s, counterculture and the free web

Fred Turner: From Counterculture to Cyberculture. Selections.

[Richard Barbrook/Andy Cameron: The Californian Ideology.](#)

[Richard Stallman: The GNU Manifesto.](#)

[Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace.](#)

Second half of class – techno-utopian feminist manifestos

[Donna Haraway: A Cyborg Manifesto](#)

[VNS Matrix: Bitch Mutant Manifesto](#)

[Feminisms of the Future, Now: Rethinking Technofeminism and the Manifesto Form](#)

Session 4: Platforms and their adversaries

Nick Srnicek: Platform Capitalism. Selections.

[Robert Prey: Locating Power in Platformization. Music Streaming Playlists and Curatorial Power.](#)

[Mike Pepi: Heavy Machinery.](#)

Session 5: The Mid-2010s – Accelerationism and Post-Internet

[Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek: #ACCELERATE. Manifesto for an accelerationist politics.](#)

[K-HOLE. Youth Mode: A Report on Freedom.](#)

[Ullens Center for Contemporary Art Beijing: Art Post-Internet.](#)

Session 6: Late 2000s to Present – From Bitcoin to Web3

[The Declaration of Bitcoin's Independence.](#)

Lana Swartz. What Was Bitcoin, What Will it Be?

[Jan Groos. Crypto Politics: Notes on Sociotechnical Imaginaries of Governance in Blockchain Based Technologies.](#)

Possible guest: Maria-Paula Fernandez.

Session 7: Quo Vadis

TBD.