LCC 3314-N: Technologies of Representation

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Technologies of Representation explores historical, cultural, and theoretical issues raised by technologies of representation, including written, spoken, and gestural languages; print, painting and illustration; still and moving photography; recorded sound; and computer-mediated communications and interactive digital media. This iteration of the course will explore the rise of writing and print as technologies of representing. We will then move on to explore the rise of wide range of technologies of representation in the Victorian era and how the Victorians reacted to their own media explosion. The course will then go on to explore how we can use what we’ve learned from the Victorians and apply it to our own media explosion—the Internet, digital media, computer-mediated communications, etc.

Texts:
Dracula—Bram Stoker, Broadview Press.
The Difference Engine—William Gibson & Bruce Sterling, Spectra Reissue.
Readings available via WebCT.
Access to a good dictionary.

Assignments:
Précis: You will write a formal two précises or summaries of one of the theoretical texts we are reading or that are in the “Readings” section of WebCT. Each précis should deal with a different text. Each précis should be 350-400 words long and be prepared according to MLA style.

Critique: You will write a formal critique of one or more of the theoretical texts we are reading or that are in the “Readings” section of WebCT. For your critique you should move beyond merely summarizing the main points of the text and thing about what its implications, limitations, significance, etc. are. You may also think about how a particular text interprets, revises, builds upon, argues with, or otherwise engages with another text. You may also apply one or more of the theoretical readings in a critical interpretation of one of the literary texts we are reading. Your critique should be 1100-1200 words long and be prepared according to MLA style.

Choose Your Own Project: You will prepare a project (formal essay, website, video, audio essay, documentary, animation, etc.) that explores in depth some aspect of the topic of the course: technologies of representation. You will prepare a prospectus for the assignment in which you lay out the general idea, media (or technology of representation) you will be using, why you think that media will be effective, and other aspects of the project. You will also prepare a reflective essay in which you reflect upon the affordances and constraints imposed by your choice of representational technology and other aspects of the project. You may choose to imbed this discussion in the project itself, but it should be clear to me that you have done so.
**Reading Responses/Online Discussion Board:** You will post a brief reading response to the Online Discussion Board on WebCT for the dates noted on the daily schedule. These responses should be roughly 250 words long and should respond in some substantive manner to the day’s reading. These reading responses must be posted to the Online Discussion Board before the start of class. If you fail to post your reading response before the start of class, you have missed the reading response. In addition to posting these reading responses each of you will be responsible for responding to the postings of your peers at least **THREE** times over the course of the semester. These responses only need to be roughly 150 words in length and **must** be posted within a week of the original posting. You should strive to enter into a conversation with your peers, prod them for more information, challenge the assumptions they are making, question their interpretation of a text or concept, or even extend or broaden a point they’ve made. It goes without saying that you must be civil and respectful of your peers at all times, this is not the time to engage in “flame” wars or to personally insult your peers—we’ll leave that to the cable talk shows.

**Course Policies:**

**Plagiarism and/or Academic Dishonesty:** Plagiarism is the use of another’s ideas and/or words without properly citing that person. Attempting to pass off another’s ideas and/or words as your own is an act of plagiarism. All cases of suspected plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students. Students found guilty of committing an act of plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty are subject receiving a failing grade for the assignment and/or the course. We will talk about how to cite and use the ideas and words of others in an honest manner. Students should familiarize themselves with the Academic Honor Code, <http://www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/integrity/policies/honor_code.php>.

**Software/Computing Resources and Requirements:** Occasionally, we will meet in a multimedia computer lab, and we will make use frequent use of Internet applications in the lab and from remote locations (i.e. your home or dorm room). I assume all students enrolled this quarter will meet the technology requirements for incoming freshmen at GaTech. **You must have access to your own computer with Internet capabilities to complete the work in this class.** We will use e-mail applications, Web browsers, and online conferencing applications (WebCT, etc.) as a means of communicating both in- and out-of-class. These tools will enable you to meet with classmates in "chat" rooms, to engage in electronic "bulletin board" discussions and to participate in collaborative hypertext discussions to complete coursework. Students will receive detailed instructions within the first few weeks of the semester about accessing these applications. Previous knowledge of Internet research, e-mail, and conferencing software is not a prerequisite for this course, but those students who have had exposure to at least some of these technologies may have an advantage over those who are completely new to the Internet and/or to electronic forms of communication. If you have doubts about your abilities, consult with me ASAP.

Additionally, many of the course’s formal assignments include a “multimedia” component. We will use presentation software like PowerPoint, Web authoring tools, image manipulation software, and/or audio and video editing tools to complete many of the assignments. While we
will cover the basics of these tools, this is not a course in using them. I will assist students in mastering these tools to the best of my ability, but you should be prepared to learn them on your own, with the help of your peers, and other resources available on campus. We will spend time critically reflecting on the use of these computer resources on the writing process and the way we think about the course’s subject matter.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. We will be discussing the course readings, expanding on issues raised in our WebCT discussion board postings, learning to respond orally to texts and to our peers, and working collaboratively on our own and our peers’ writing. You cannot participate in these activities if you are not here. If you miss more than five classes your grade will be docked ONE FULL letter grade. If you miss more than ten classes you WILL receive a failing grade for the course. The only absences that will be excused are those that are result of your participation in an Institute sanctioned event or those excused by the Dean of Students. In other words, you have five “freebies.” Use them wisely. Keep in mind that if you are not in class you won’t be participating and your class participation grade WILL suffer. You are responsible for all work due or assigned, whether or not you are in class. I recommend you make it a habit to attend class on a regular basis. While I make every attempt to record students who arrive to class late as present, I make no guarantees about doing so. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to ensure that you are marked as present. If you arrive excessively late, I may not mark you as present. If you make a habit of arriving late, I may not mark you as present. If you are late to class on a regular basis, it WILL have a negative effect on your class participation grade. Make it a habit to come to class and to arrive on time. Remember, education is a participatory activity.

**Late Work:** You are responsible for turning in all work on the date indicated on the syllabus. If you know in advance that you will not be in class on day that an assignment is due, you need to make arrangements with me to ensure that I receive the work. Late work will be docked ONE letter grade for each day it is late and may result in a delay in your receiving feedback and a grade. It is highly unlikely that I will grant you an extension on any assignment so plan on turning all work on time. The only exception to this rule is the online discussion board postings. If you DO NOT post your reading responses prior to class you have missed the posting—the moment has passed.

**Grading:**
- Précis #1: 10%
- Précis #2: 10%
- Critique: 20%
- Choose Your Own Project: 25%
- Reading Responses: 20%
- Class Participation: 15%

**Daily Schedule:**
All assignments and readings are due the day they are listed in the schedule below. That means if it says read pp 1-40 then you should have read those pages and be prepared to discuss them in class on the day listed. That means if it says write a reading response you should have it written and posted to the online discussion board on that day. **N. B. The daily schedule is subject to**
change. You need to come to class to stay up to date. If you must miss a class it is your responsibility to inform yourself of any changes in assignments, meeting places, readings, etc.

Week One
Tuesday, May 15
Introduction to the Course

Thursday, May 17
Powers—“Being and Seeming”
Ong—“Writing Restructures Consciousness”
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT

Week Two
Tuesday, May 22
Ong—“Literacy and Orality in Our Times”
Chappell & Brinburch—“Prologue to Discovery”
McLuhan—“Understanding Media”

Thursday, May 24
Brooks—“Gadamer and the Mechanics of Culture”
Ayers—“Materialism and the Book”
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT

Week Three
Tuesday, May 29
Linley—“Conjuring the Spirit: Victorian Poetry, Culture, and Technology”
Horton—“Were They Having Fun Yet?” in Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination, Eds. Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan—available via Tech’s Library ebook program
Stoker—Dracula

Thursday, May 31
Précis #1 Due
Stoker—Dracula

Week Four
Tuesday, June 5
Lightman—“Visual Theology of Victorian Popularizers of Science”
Stoker—Dracula

Thursday, June 7
Kitzmann—“Pioneer Spirits and the Lure of Technology”
Stoker—Dracula
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT
Week Five
Tuesday, June 12
Armstrong—“Victorian Poetry Party”
Stoker—Dracula

Thursday, June 14
Stoker—Dracula
Otis—“The Metaphoric Circuit”
Précis #2 Due

Week Six
Tuesday, June 19
Benjamin—“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
Benjamin—“The Author as Producer”
Benjamin—“On the Mimetic Faculty”

Thursday, June 21
Bolter & Grusin—“Remediation”
“Curling up with a good ebook”
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT

Week Seven
Tuesday, June 26
Adorno-Horkheimer—“The Culture Industry”

Thursday, June 28
Gibson & Sterling—The Difference Engine
Critique Due

Week Eight
Tuesday, July 3
“Vannevar Bush—“As We May Think”
Gibson & Sterling—The Difference Engine

Thursday, July 5
Gibson & Sterling—The Difference Engine
Aarseth—“Cybertext”
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT

Week Nine
Tuesday, July 10
Gibson & Sterling—The Difference Engine
Best—“Interfacing the Environment”
Thursday, July 12
Gibson & Sterling—*The Difference Engine*
Clayton—“Hacking the Nineteenth Century”
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT

*Week Ten*
Tuesday, July 17
Gibson & Sterling—*The Difference Engine*
Kendrick—“Interactive Tech. and the Remediation of the Subject of Writing”

Thursday, July 19
Gibson & Sterling—*The Difference Engine*
Sussman—“Cyberpunk Meets Charles Babbage”
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT

*Week Eleven*
Tuesday, July 24
Gibson & Sterling—*The Difference Engine*
McHale—“A Poetics of Cyberpunk”
Write a Reading Response and post it to WebCT

Thursday, July 26
Gibson & Sterling—*The Difference Engine*
Sussman—“Machine Dreams: The Culture of Technology”

*Exam Week*
Tuesday, July 31—Choose Your Own Project Due by 5PM