

Technology, Body & Work
Course # 175
Program in Science, Technology & Society
Stanford University

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Lecture: 4:15-5:30 PM (MW)
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When you call your bank in the US, the phone may ring in India. This course will explore a changing relationship between the body, technology, location and work. We will also try to uncover a changing power structure and globalization of work. How do technologies shape work experience and work organization on a global level? Conversely, how do social and political rationalities lead to particular work technologies? Some of our management principles, production systems and related technologies result from such rationalities. We will focus on information technologies and their relationship with our body in today's offices and factories. This course will have three underlying themes: conditions of work (social, economic, political, technological prerequisites), mechanisms of work (different processes of work) and experiences of work (i.e., how the body must adapt to different work technologies). We will also watch three films that deal with issues of technologies and work. The course will have a very contemporary focus, but without losing sight of history.

Required Books

Zuboff, Shoshana. 1988. *In the Age of the Smart Machine: the future of work and power*. Basic Books, Inc.

McCullough, Malcolm. 1996. *Abstracting Craft: The Practiced Digital Hand*. The MIT Press.

The above books are available at the Stanford Bookstore. There are some additional articles mentioned in the course calendar that are available online at <http://www.Stanford.EDU/class/sts175>.

Course Requirements

Class Participation: I expect you to have completed the readings outlined for the day before we meet in the classroom. This will help you participate in class discussions in a more informed way. Your classroom participation and attendance will count toward 10% of the grade.

Surprise quizzes: There will be three surprise quizzes (yes, you can handle them) (15%).

Mid-term Exam: a 5 page take-home (30%)

Final Exam: a 10 page take-home (45%)

Sundry Details

I am always happy to chat about the class, the assignments or life in its annoying and exhilarating complexity. I hope that by the time class starts we will have a course website and a listserv to discuss the materials, but in addition you can reach me at 725-0123 in my office (Rm 212, Bldg 370) or more reliably by email (aneesh@stanford.edu). Also, feel free to just drop by on MTW in my office.

Course Calendar

Week 1: Introduction

January 9

Course Introduction

FILM: *Manufacturing Miracles* (30 minutes)

Week 2: Conditions of Work

January 14: *The Technological Condition of Work*

1. Kit Sims Taylor: Capitalism's Crises and Critics (online)
2. Karl Marx: Division of Labor & Machinery (online)
3. Negroponte: Being Digital (online)
4. Castells: The Information Technology Revolution (online)

January 16: *Socio-Cultural Conditions of Work and Technology*

1. Max Weber's thesis of The Protestant Ethic (online)
(The enthusiast can read the full text of Weber's The Protestant Ethic at http://www.ne.jp/asahi/moriyuki/abukuma/weber/world/ethic/pro_eth_frame.html)
2. Max Weber's thesis of Bureaucracy (online)
3. Rationalization (online)
4. Taylorism (online)

Week 3: Industrial and Post-industrial Processes of Work

January 21: *NO CLASS (Martin Luther King's Day)*

January 23

1. Harvey: Fordism and Post-Fordism (online)

Week 4: Transformations of Work Structures

January 28

FILM: *Modern Times* (Charlie Chaplin, 85 minutes)

January 30

1. Zuboff: Introduction (pages 3-16)
2. Aneesh: Rethinking Labor Migration (online)

Week 5: The Body at Work

February 4

1. Foucault: Docile Bodies (online)

2. Zuboff: Chapter 1: The Laboring Body (pages 19-57)

February 6

1. Zuboff: Chapter 2: The Abstraction of Industrial Work (pages 58-96)
2. McCullough: Chapter 1: Hands (pages 1-30)

Week 6: Seeing and Doing

February 11

1. McCullough: Chapter 2: Eyes (pages 31-58)
2. McCullough: Chapter 3: Tools (pages 59-82)
3. Zuboff: Chapter 3:

February 13

FILM: *Secrets of Silicon Valley* (60 minutes)

Week 7: Alienation, Exile and Work Skills

February 18: NO CLASS (Presidents' Day)

February 20

1. Marx's Theory of Alienation (online)
2. Zuboff: Chapter 4: Office Technology as Exile and Integration (pages 124-173)

Week 8: Power and the Smart Machine

February 25

3. Zuboff: Chapter 5: Mastering the Electronic Text (pages 174-218)
4. Zuboff: Chapter 7: The Dominion of the Smart Machine (pages 245-284)

February 27

1. Aneesh: Action Scripts (online)
2. Zuboff: Chapter 9: The Information Panopticon (pages 285-310)

Week 9: Experiencing the World of Programming

March 4

1. Ullman: Out of Time (online)
2. Lakoff: Body, Brain & Communication (online)

March 6:

1. McCullough: Chapter 4: Symbols (pages 85-112)
2. McCullough: Chapter 5: Interfaces (pages 113-154)

Week 10: The Electronic Medium: Work and Play

March 11

1. McCullough: Chapter 6: Constructions (pages 155-190)
2. McCullough: Chapter 7: Medium (pages 193-220)

March 13

1. McCullough: Chapter 8: Play (pages 221-242)
2. Aneesh: Skill Saturation (online)

March 20: Final Papers Due

Put your papers in my mailbox next to Room 109 in Bldg 370.