

INF 1501H: Culture & Technology

Time: Mondays, 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Location: Bissell 538

Instructor: Dr Alan Galey, Faculty of Information

Email: alan.galey [at] [university of toronto domain name]

Response time: usually by end of next business day, Monday–Friday

Office: Bissell 646

Office hours: Mondays after class and Thursdays, 11:00–noon

Course website: q.utoronto.ca (login required)



Radiohead on stage at the Air Canada Centre, Toronto, July 2018. Photo by A. Galey. For context, Google "Radiohead Toronto moment of silence."

Overview

This course is an introduction to various approaches that will help students understand and intervene in the culture-technology nexus. It is intended primarily as an orientation for students in the Culture & Technology concentration of the Masters of Information program, but it endeavours to provide knowledge and skills to any graduate student exploring Science & Technology Studies (STS), Critical Media Studies, or Digital Humanities. In the course, we explore diverse approaches that have been brought to bear on this rich and densely-populated intersection. Philosophical, sociological, anthropological, historical, and literary questions will be examined relying on a series of themes with broad resonance for students interested specifically in information and technology. Throughout the course, our goals will be:

- to challenge normative conceptions of the objects of study (science, technology, culture, information) and consider how the readings help us to come to more nuanced, complex, and effective understandings of these things;
- to acquire a rough map of the theoretical and methodological approaches that converge on "culture and technology," and understand how different approaches reinforce, complement, and contradict each other;
- to ask how these analyses can be used as tools to intervene effectively in debates about how culture and technology are co-constructed in the information age.

Course Learning Outcomes

As a core course in the *Culture & Technology* concentration, INF1501 is particularly concerned with:

- helping students become conversant with fundamental concepts, theories, and practices in the social and cultural studies of technology, including basic familiarity with core concepts in STS, media studies, digital humanities, and cultural studies;
- helping students cultivate a variety of research skills associated with these fields;
- helping students begin the process of understanding themselves as active participants in the intellectual conversations around information technology and its relationship to cultures.

In conjunction with the C&T concentration's other core courses, INF 1501H should provide a solid foundation for future professional and intellectual development in the broad spectrum of careers at the intersection of culture and information technology. Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- confidently discuss topical issues at the intersection of culture and technology (e.g. algorithmic life and automation; information infrastructure; the attention economy);
- bring new research skills (e.g. ethnography; usability studies) to bear on their future work;
- and understand how these skills and ideas apply to a range of careers that require broad knowledge of how information, culture, and technology relate to each other.

These outcomes will be assessed through the different deliverables of the course's Implosion assignment and through in-class and other activities covered by the Participation grade (detailed below).

Relationship Between Course Learning Outcomes and Program Learning Outcomes

Students in the MI program should familiarize themselves with the MI student learning outcomes. Carrying out and reviewing cultural and technology research requires students to be able to apply concepts, theories, and practices derived from a range of information-related disciplines (Program Outcome 1). Understanding and developing the skills necessary to translate the insights gained from this work will facilitate access to knowledge, particularly for those in decision-making roles in information institutions (Program Outcome 2). Finally, in determining and producing knowledge translation objects, students will engage both pragmatically and theoretically with emerging information technologies, thereby developing both insight and skills that can contribute to extended intellectual growth beyond graduation. (Program Outcomes 4 & 5).

Evaluation

- 15% Participation (incl. in-class activities and discussion prompts)
- 25% Implosion Assignment, Part 1: First Report
- 25% Implosion Assignment, Part 2: Second Report
- 35% Implosion Assignment, Part 3: Reconstructing the Object

Details on these assignments will be provided in a separate handout, and we will discuss assignment expectations and strategies regularly in class. It will be difficult to complete these assignments successfully without regularly attending classes.

The following guidelines will form the basis for grading in the course:

- Grade Interpretation Guidelines: <https://ischool.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/grade-interpretation.pdf>
- the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/grading.pdf> (note if nothing will be handed back before the final date to drop without penalty, that should be stated in the syllabus.)
- guidelines on the Use of INC, SDF, & WDR: <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/facultyandstaff/Pages/INC-SDF-WDR.aspx>

Late Policy. Written assignments must be submitted via Blackboard by **noon** on the due date. (The reason this deadline is set at noon, not midnight, is so that the instructor has time to help students with any technical problems with the submission system.)

Extensions will only be granted in the event of illness or emergency, and then only once appropriate documentation has been submitted to Student Services. Late assignments will be penalized by **one full letter grade per week** (e.g. from A to A-), for a maximum of two weeks. After that point, late assignments will no longer be accepted. Furthermore, late papers will not receive detailed feedback or comments. Written assignments that do not meet a minimum standard (in terms of legibility, formatting and proofreading) will be returned for re-submission, with late penalties in full effect.

Assignment Referencing and Formatting

The American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is the most commonly used one in academic writing in the social sciences, while Chicago and MLA (Modern Language Association) are the most common in the humanities (at least in North America). For this course, you will be expected to use **Chicago's notes + bibliography format**, as it is the referencing system most suited to the course topic. The *Chicago Manual of Style Online* is also an excellent writing reference for our course on matters of grammar, usage, and other writing conventions apart from citation. You can find it here: go.utlib.ca/cat/6662347. A bookmarkable quick reference can be found here: www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Written assignments must be submitted in double-spaced 12-point serif font (such as Times New Roman) with 1-inch margins. Assignments at the graduate level should be free of writing errors. Be sure to proofread your work carefully before submitting, and refer to the Chicago Manual of Style on questions of grammar, punctuation, and usage.

Images. The fields that study culture and technology often rely heavily upon images in their publications. Students are welcome—encouraged, in fact—to make use of images in their written assignments within the following guidelines:

1. Images may be included as appendixes or integrated into the body of the text, whichever you prefer; all images must be accompanied by a caption that includes the image's source. It's a good idea to number your images (e.g. "Figure 1") for ease of reference in your text.
2. Assignments will be read digitally, not printed, so students are welcome to use colour images. However, please be sure to use an image editing program such as *Gimp* (www.gimp.org) to reduce the image file sizes so that the PDF files you submit **don't exceed 10MB**.
3. Students may include copyrighted images in their assignments without acquiring permission as long as they follow the Canadian Copyright Act's current exceptions for fair dealing, in that the images must only be used for the purposes of criticism or review, and each image must be accompanied by: 1) the source; and 2) the name of the creator (if given in the source).

Assignment Details

Any interesting being in technoscience, like a textbook, molecule, equation, mouse, pipette, bomb, fungus, technician, agitator, or scientist can—and often should—be teased open to show the sticky economic, technical, political, organic, historical, mythic, and textual threads that make up its tissues.

—Donna Haraway, *Modest_Witness
@Second_Millennium*, p. 68

This course has one connected assignment, split into various parts. To carry it out, you will need to select a technological artifact that you will study in-depth over the course of the semester. You will examine this object in three stages: two short papers, each worth 25% of the final mark, and a final project worth 35% of the final mark. To prepare for this assignment, you should read and re-read one of our articles from Week 2: Joseph Dumit, "Writing the Implosion: Teaching the World One Thing at a Time," *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 2 (2014): 344-362. [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7700630> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.]. You will also need to attend class regularly.

Note: page counts below exclude title pages, bibliographies, and images.

First Step: Choose an Object

Due: by noon on Tuesday, September 25, via email

Choose your object carefully. You are not required to select a "digital" or "information" technology, but you are strongly encouraged to consider your direction in the MI program. Ask yourself: by studying this artifact, will I explore issues that help me clarify and attain my

objectives in the MI? You will want something that relates to your intellectual interests. The more specific your technological artifact, the better. Making the most of the ongoing assignment will require you to choose an artifact with socio-cultural histories, materialities, and/or contexts that interest you. Over the course of the semester we will collectively work a series of transformations on the objects selected by you and your peers, culminating in an individual document that is an accretion of your coursework. The richness of your analysis will be in part determined by the highly specific connections you can draw between your object and other parts of the world.

Part 1: First Implosion Report

Length: 8 pages, double-spaced 12-point serif font

Due: by noon on Tuesday, October 16, via Quercus

Each week, you will write approximately one page of text to summarize specific dimensions of your object. These dimensions may include the object's material specificity (e.g. what materials were involved in its production) or its political operations (e.g. what kinds of local, national, and international bodies claim jurisdiction over it). Detailed instructions will be given in the second half of each class as we engage in pair and group discussions to examine the objects. What you write is expected to be descriptive and reflexive. It will not be turned in weekly, but a rough, iterative draft should be prepared throughout (and after) each class. This will provide a foundation for your first analytical document, a short paper of approximately 8 pages. In this paper, you will deconstruct your object. Your task will be to describe it, situate it in a context where one might encounter it, and discuss it in relation to themes that have come up in the course. In order to do this, you might choose to focus on multiple themes, or select a small number (2 or 3) to read your object through. Something that might guide you in this process will be to think about how your artifact participates in a larger network of objects.

For this assignment, it will likely be useful to include charts or diagrams that visualize the object's relations. This first report should also summarize the relative importance of different dimensions (i.e. which dimension is most important for understanding the object, and which is least important) that have been discussed up to this point.

Part 2: Second Implosion Report

Length: 8 pages, double-spaced 12-point serif font

Due: by noon on Tuesday, November 13, via Quercus

Continue the work started in the previous assignment. Using the reflexive documents that you should have been preparing weekly as a foundation, describe your object in more nuanced detail than in your first assignment. Think of additional vectors to read it through/along, and then bring your object to bear on the more recent themes that have been discussed in class. Something that might guide you in this assignment will be to think about who the human actors are who build, interact with, control, repair, or destroy your object. For this assignment, it might be useful to include maps, images, gifs, or short videos. This second report will require you to put the various dimensions into relation (i.e. by constructing a dimensional matrix).

Part 3: Reconstructing the Object

Length: 15 pages, double-spaced 12-point serif font

Due: by noon on Tuesday, December 11, via Quercus

Prior to beginning the final assignment, you may find it useful to think about where you have gaps in knowledge with respect to your object. To fill these gaps, think first about the dimensions of the object that you are most familiar with. What interest, passion, or experience has led you to acquire this familiarity? Then, consider what you don't know and how you might go about acquiring new knowledge about your object (recall some of the methods discussed in week 3). The final assignment entails writing up the process of "taking apart" and "putting together." You are allowed to make as much use of the previous assignments as necessary.

Up to this point, you have mostly been deconstructing your object - taking it apart; reverse-engineering the black box in which you discovered it; possibly undertaken some sort of media archaeology. For this assignment, you must reconstruct it, but from an entirely speculative perspective. Construct an alternative world in which it might reside. Create a scrapbook from the future. Build an alien user interface for it. Situate it in a game. Treat a dimension of the object as a kind of pivot point for how the object is situated in society, then swap out some aspect of this dimension. Upon changing it, think about how all of the other dimensions change. Finally, ask yourself: what is the one great thing you want to say about this technological artifact you've been thinking about all semester that nobody else has? What tools and styles of writing can you use to communicate this story?

Create additional visual or material resources for this final exercise to go alongside the text, but don't neglect the discursive aspect of this assignment. Even if you present a strong material or visual argument, you must also present a textual one. Your goal should be to sketch out a thematic matrix and understand how your speculative object might reside within it. This will require a cogent and well-developed narrative.

This assignment will be marked on argument, creativity, coherence, and style.

Course Texts and Secondary Sources

You do not have to purchase any textbooks for this course. All required readings and many optional readings will be available digitally via links from the course website. The website will also include a list of books on reserve at the Inforum and other recommended resources that can be accessed through the UTL system.

As graduate students, you are expected to rely upon scholarly (which usually means peer-reviewed) sources in your written assignments. The course schedule and seminar discussions will include many suggestions for secondary sources on various topics related to the course. However, students are strongly encouraged to track down those resources that are best suited to their specific area of interest or inquiry, rather than rely too heavily on those provided in class. Media texts (books, comics, television episodes, films, videogames, websites, etc.) can be used and referenced as needed, but should always be treated as artifacts of study and analyzed accordingly.

Writing Support

As stated in the iSchool's Grade Interpretation Guidelines, "work that is not well written and grammatically correct will not generally be considered eligible for a grade in the A range, regardless of its quality in other respects." With this in mind, please make use of the writing support provided to graduate students by the SGS Graduate Centre for Academic Communication. The services are designed to target the needs of both native and non-native speakers and all programs are free. Please consult the current workshop schedule <http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/currentstudents/Pages/Current-Years-Courses.aspx> for more information.

Academic Integrity

Please consult the University's site on Academic Integrity <http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/>. The iSchool has a zero-tolerance policy on plagiarism as defined in section B.I.1.(d) of the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppjun011995.pdf>. You should acquaint yourself with the Code. Please review the material in Cite it Right and if you require further clarification, consult the site How Not to Plagiarize <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/how-not-to-plagiarize.pdf>.

Cite it Right covers relevant parts of the U of T [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters \(1995\)](#). It is expected that all iSchool students take the Cite it Right workshop and the online quiz. Completion of the online Cite it Right quiz should be made prior to the second week of classes. To review and complete the workshop, visit the orientation portion of the iSkills site: <https://inforum.library.utoronto.ca/workshops/orientation>

Accommodations

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or a health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach Student Services and/or the Accessibility Services Office <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as> as soon as possible. The Accessibility Services staff are available by appointment to assess needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Related Event Series and Workshops

McLuhan Centre Events: <https://www.mcluhancentre.ca/events>

The Culture & Technology concentration is a close cousin of the McLuhan Centre for Culture & Technology, directed by Prof. Sarah Sharma. The McLuhan Centre also continues the long tradition of Monday Night Seminars at the McLuhan Coach House, near St Michael's College. This year's seminars are united under the theme of *The Mechanical Bro* (a riff on the title of

McLuhan's book *The Mechanical Bride*). INF 1501H has been scheduled to encourage students to attend these seminars if they can, though attendance is by no means a requirement or expectation for the course. A listing of the Monday Night Seminars can be found here: <https://www.mcluhancentre.ca/mondaynightseminars>.

Orientation Workshops: <https://inforum.library.utoronto.ca/workshops/orientation>

In an effort to ensure your success at the iSchool, key information and skills that all iSchool students must possess, regardless of program or concentration, are covered in these online orientation workshops.

iSkills Workshops: <https://inforum.library.utoronto.ca/workshops/iSkills>

Together with the MMSt and MI curricula, these academic, professional, and technical iSkills workshops provide a robust information and heritage graduate educational experience.

Colophon

Parts of this syllabus are based on an earlier version of this course taught by Matt Ratto and Gabby Resch in Fall 2017, especially the Implosion Assignment, which in turn is based on Joseph Dumit, "Writing the Implosion: Teaching the World One Thing at a Time," *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 2 (2014): 344-362.

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INF 1501H Schedule at a glance (see course website for details and updated version)

Week 1	10 Sept	Introduction
Week 2	17 Sept	What are Culture and Technology? <i>Event:</i> McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)
Week 3	24 Sept	Methods of Interpretation and Analysis <i>Deadline:</i> email Sarah your choice of Implosion Object by noon on Tuesday
Week 4	1 Oct	Epistemologies <i>Event:</i> McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)
	8 Oct	Thanksgiving holiday (no class)
Week 5	15 Oct	New Media in the Cultural Imagination I: Reading the Tech Demo <i>Deadline:</i> submit your Implosion Assignment, Part 1, by noon on Tuesday
Week 6	22 Oct	Materiality and Immateriality <i>Event:</i> McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)
Week 7	29 Oct	Interface, Embodiment, and Performance
	5 Nov	Reading Week (no class) <i>Event:</i> McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)
Week 8	12 Nov	New Media in the Cultural Imagination II: Reading Media Fictions <i>Deadline:</i> submit your Implosion Assignment, Part 2, by noon on Tuesday
Week 9	19 Nov	Film Screening: <i>Her</i> (2013, dir. Spike Jonze) <i>Event:</i> Class meets at the Media Commons screening room, Robarts Library <i>Event:</i> McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)
Week 10	26 Nov	Identity, Authenticity, and Liveness
Week 11	3 Dec	Standards, Formats, and Algorithms <i>Event:</i> McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)
Week 12	10 Dec	Conclusion <i>Deadline:</i> submit your Implosion Assignment, Part 3, by noon on Tuesday

Detailed Schedule and Reading List

Week 1 / Sept 10: **Introduction**

Follow-up materials from class:

- [week 1 slides.pdf](#) (11 Mb)
 - try searching for "Radiohead Toronto moment of silence" on Google and YouTube and compare the different accounts and recordings you find of the band's concert at the Air Canada Centre on 19 July 2018
 - the first Radiohead concert video we watched is linked from this story: <https://indie88.com/radiohead-moment-of-silence-toronto/>
 - the second one is linked from this story: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/radiohead-stage-collapse-thom-york-toronto-show-1.4754627>
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Week 2 / Sept 17: **What are Culture and Technology?**

McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)

Read for class:

- Langdon Winner, "Technologies as forms of Life," in *The Whale and the Reactor: a Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology* (University of Chicago Press, 2010) [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11567178>]
- Bruno Latour, "Crisis," in *We Have Never Been Modern* (Harvard University Press, 2012), 1-12 [[Latour - crisis.pdf](#)]
- Joseph, Dumit, "Writing the Implosion: Teaching the World One Thing at a Time," *Cultural Anthropology* 29, no. 2 (2014): 344-362 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7700630>]

Follow-up materials from class:

- [week 2 slides.pdf](#)
 - Nicole Starosielski, *The Undersea Network* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015) [<https://read-dukeupress-edu.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/books/book/227/The-Undersea-Network>]
 - Marshall McLuhan and Franke Kermode, "My Definition of Technology," *MarshallMcLuhanSpeaks.com*, <http://www.marshallmcluhanspeaks.com/understanding-me/1965-my-definition-of-technology/>
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Week 3 / Sept 24: **Methods of Interpretation and Analysis**

Email Sarah your choice of Implosion Object by noon on Tuesday

Read for class:

- Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 2006) [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7961551>]

- Trevor J. Pinch and Wiebe E. Bijker, "The Social Construction of Facts and Artefacts: or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology Might Benefit Each Other," *Social Studies of Science* 14, no. 3 (1984): 399-441 [<https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/285355>]
- John Law, "Scientific Practices," in *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 18-43 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7827054>]

Follow-up items from class:

- [week 3 slides.pdf](#) (18 Mb)
- "[How the Internet Works](#)," a brief educational video from the Ballybeg Post Office
- Andrew McLuhan's blog, inscriptorium.wordpress.com, where he discusses Marshall McLuhan's annotation and reading practices, and shows images from his library (now held at the Fisher Rare Book Library)
- on Robert Boyle's air-pump experiments, like the one depicted in [the Joseph Wright painting](#) we discussed in class today, see Steven Shapin, "Pump and Circumstance: Robert Boyle's Literary Technology," *Social Studies of Science* 14, no. 4 (1984): 481-520 [<https://journals-scholarsportal-info.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/browse/03063127/v14i0004>]

Week 4 / Oct 1: **Epistemologies**

McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)

Read for class:

- Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575-599 [<https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/3178066>]
- Sandra Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What Is 'Strong Objectivity?'," *The Centennial Review* 36, no. 3 (1992): 437-470 [<https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/23739232>]

Follow-up items from class:

- [week 4 slides.pdf](#)
- Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007) [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/6259027> and <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/9158631>]
- Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003) [eBook: <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/8110963>; print: <http://go.utlib.ca/cat/4836400>]
- the reading of Raphael's *School of Athens* which I went through in class is largely based on Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, ch. 28 "Space for Fiction," in *Anachronic Renaissance* (New York: Zone Books, 2010) [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7131999>]
- the New York Public Library image which we discussed this week, along with the Carpaccio painting of Saint Augustine in his study from our second class, are both discussed in detail, with notes pointing to related work, in my chapter "The Human Presence in Digital Artifacts," posted here: <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/72445>
- the Renaissance book wheel image which we discussed in comparison with the NYPL image mentioned above is one I've written about in "Reading the Book of Mozilla: Web Browsers and the Materiality of Digital Texts," in *The History of Reading, Vol. 3: Methods, Strategies, Tactics*, ed. Rosalind Crone and Shafquat Towheed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 196-214 [[Galey - Book of Mozilla \(published\).pdf](#)]

Oct 8: Thanksgiving holiday (no class)

Week 5 / Oct 15: **New Media in the Cultural Imagination, Part 1: Reading the Tech Demo**

Submit your Implosion Assignment, Part 1, by noon on Tuesday

Read for class:

- Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka, "Introduction: an Archaeology of Media Archaeology," in *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications*, ed. Huhtamo and Parikka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 1–21 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11368195>]
- Lisa Gitelman, "New Media Publics," in *Always Already New: Media, History, and the Data of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 25–57 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11346067>]
 - Note: the e-book version linked above has a page restriction for downloading, and the Gitelman reading + endnotes exceeds the limit. You can read the chapter online, or download it as different PDF files on consecutive days to get around the limit, or download this slightly lower-res PDF file with the full chapter and endnotes: [Gitelman - new media publics.pdf](#).
- The Wikipedia entry for Douglas Engelbart's 1968 "[Mother of All Demos](#)"; also watch at least some of the video of the demo, available here: <https://thedemoat50.org/the-demo/>

Follow-up items from class:

- [week 5 slides.pdf](#)
- Videos:
 - The videos from the Engelbart demo are available at the link just above; we watched parts 1, 2, and 4.
 - The Apple "1984" tv ad, including the transition from the Superbowl game during which it aired: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIE-5hg7FoA>
 - The video of the January 22, 1984 Macintosh demo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIE-5hg7FoA>
 - The backstage clip from the film *Steve Jobs* (2015, dir. Danny Boyle): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya0uliWzUTI>
 - We didn't watch this one, but you might be interested in a full Steve Jobs Macintosh demo, filmed on January 30th, just a few days after the demo linked above, and posted by the Computer History Museum in Boston; the video includes an interesting panel discussion with some of the Mac's designers after the demo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tQ5XwvjPmA>
- The lecture for this class drew from some of my own publications on the cultural history of tech demos:
 - The material in the first half was mostly from chapter 5 of my book *The Shakespearean Archive: Experiments in New Media from the Renaissance to Postmodernity*, "Inventing Shakespeare's Voice: Early Sound Transmission and Recording" [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/9925568>]. The images we looked at can be found in the book along with more detailed discussion and references.
 - Unfortunately, the tech problems meant that we didn't have time to watch part of Steve Jobs's demo for the iPad from 2010. However, I've written about different aspects of that demo in two publications: one is a chapter called "The Tablets of the Law: Reading Shakespeare with Scriptural Technologies" in a collection called *Shakespeare, the Bible, and the Form of the Book: Contested Scriptures* [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/8775562>]; and the other is a journal article called "The Enkindling Reciter: E-Books in the Bibliographical Imagination," in *Book History*, vol. 15 (2012): 210:247 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7690636>]. References to video of the 2010 demo itself can be found at the beginnings of both articles.

Week 6 / Oct 22: Materiality and Immateriality

McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)

Read for class:

- Bill Brown, "Materiality," in *Critical Terms for Media Studies*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell and Mark B.N. Hansen (University of Chicago Press, 2010), 49–63 [[Brown - materiality.pdf](#)]
- Jonathan Sterne, "'What do we want?' 'Materiality!' 'When do we want it?' 'Now!'", in *Media Technologies: Essays on Communication, Materiality, and Society*, ed. Tarleton Gillespie, Pablo J. Boczkowski, and Kirsten A. Foot (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), 119-128 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/10049979>]

Follow-up items from class:

- [week 6 slides.pdf](#) (10 Mb)
- For the full story behind the Canadian engineers' ring tradition, see Henry Petroski's chapter "The Obligation of an Engineer" in *To Forgive Design: Understanding Failure* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2012), pp. 175-98 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/11384736>]
- The image of the first (known) English book to use the word *computer*, which we considered briefly in class today (and which happened to include the photographer's thumbs), came from a digitization project called [Early English Books Online \(EEBO\)](#). For an example of the kind of thinking we're doing in the implosion assignment applied to EEBO, I recommend Bonnie Mak's article "Archaeology of a Digitization," *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 65, no. 8 (2014): 1515–26. [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7727687>]

Week 7 / Oct 29: Interface, Embodiment, and Performance

Read for class:

- N. Katherine Hayles, "Contesting for the Body of Information: The Macy Conferences on Cybernetics," in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (University of Chicago Press, 2008), 50–83 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7949488>]
- Terry Harpold, "'A Future Device for Individual Use,'" in *Ex-foliations: Reading Machines and the Upgrade Path* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 15–44 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/8840395>]

5 Nov: Reading Week (no class)

McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)

Week 8 / Nov 12: New Media in the Cultural Imagination, Part 2: Reading Media Fictions

Submit your Implosion Assignment, Part 2, by noon on Tuesday

Read for class:

- at least two of these three short stories:
 - Arthur Conan Doyle, "A Case of Identity," *The Strand Magazine* 2 (September 1891): 248–59 [[Doyle - A Case of Identity.pdf](#); full issue: <https://search-proquest-com.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/publication/1984>]
 - (optional) Cory Doctorow, "The Adventure of the Extraordinary Rendition," in *Astro Noise: a Survival Guide for Living Under Total Surveillance* [collection published in conjunction with the exhibition *Laura Poitras: Astro Noise*] (New York: Whitney Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 38-57 [[Doctorow - extraordinary rendition.pdf](#)]
 - Stephen King "Word Processor of the Gods," in *Skeleton Crew* (New York: Putnam, 1985), 271–87 [[King - word processor of the gods.pdf](#)]
 - Christopher Keep, "The Cultural Work of the Typewriter Girl," *Victorian Studies* 40, no. 3 (1997): 401-26 [<https://www-jstor-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/stable/i294012>]
 - Matthew G. Kirschenbaum, "North of Boston," in *Track Changes: a Literary History of Word Processing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 74–91 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/10792142>]
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Week 9 / Nov 19: **Film Screening: *Her* (2013, dir. Spike Jonze)**

Class meets at the Media Commons screening room, Robarts Library

McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)

Read for class:

- Daniel Southwick and Matt Ratto, "*Blade Runner 2049* Misses Rise of Creative Artificial Intelligence," *The Conversation* (19 October 2017): <https://theconversation.com/blade-runner-2049-misses-rise-of-creative-artificial-intelligence-79821>
 - If you've already seen the film, feel free to skip ahead to the Kornhaber reading assigned for next week. Otherwise, if you haven't seen the film, try to *avoid* reading about it in advance. There are a few mild spoilers!
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Week 10 / Nov 26: **Identity, Authenticity, and Liveness**

Read for class:

- Donna Kornhaber, "From Posthuman to Postcinema: Crises of Subjecthood and Representation in *Her*," *Cinema Journal* 56, no. 4 (2017): 3–25 [<http://muse.jhu.edu.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/issue/36735>]
 - Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 217–42 [[Benjamin - Work of Art.pdf](#)]
 - Philip Auslander, "Digital Liveness: a Historico-Philosophical Perspective," *PAJ: a Journal of Performance and Art* 34, no. 3 (2012): 3-11 [<https://muse-jhu-edu.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/article/483962>]
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Week 11 / Dec 3: **Standards, Formats, and Algorithms**

McLuhan Monday Night Seminar this week (sign up early!)

Read for class:

- Jonathan Sterne, "The MP3 as Cultural Artifact," *New Media and Society* 8, no. 5 (2006): 825–42 [<http://go.utlib.ca/cat/7738507>]
 - Ian Bogost, "The Cathedral of Computation," *The Atlantic* 15 (2015): <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/01/the-cathedral-of-computation/384300/>
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Week 12 / Dec 10: **Conclusion**

Submit your Implosion Assignment, Part 3, by noon on Tuesday

No readings this week.