

**City University of Hong Kong**

**Information on a Course  
offered by School of Creative Media  
with effect from Semester A in 2012 / 2013**

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**Part I**

**Course Title:** Philosophy of Technology and New Media

**Course Code:** SM6325

**Course Duration:** One semester (13 weeks)

**No. of Credit Units:** 3 units

**Level:** P6

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites:** NIL

**Precursors:** NIL

**Equivalent Courses:** NIL

**Exclusive Courses:** NIL

**Part II**

**1. Course Aims:**

This course seeks to understand how new media technologies are embedded and constituted in our everyday practices and to examine the artistic potential of human-technology relations. It posits practices involving new media technologies into a framework of philosophy of technology and critically interrogates the promises and expectations about around new media. More specific topics include examining the ways in which technologies are (re-)shaped in their culturally situated use-contexts. Special attention is paid to the mundane but intimate human-technology relations we enter into on everyday basis and the ways in they modify our understanding of the world and our ability to operate in it. Relevant questions, to be dealt with in both scholarly and artistic fashion, include: Do technologies have purposes? Where does the human body stop and the technology begin? Do technologies make us more/less free? What is the balance of power like in a particular human-technology relation? Upon completion of the class, students should be able to apply post-phenomenological

insights in their own research projects and artistic practice, and subject new media artworks to critical analysis as technologies.

## 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

*Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:*

No.	CILOs
1.	To identify the key theoretical positions and concepts concerning the nature of technologies and their role in constituting human experience of the world
2.	Articulate how technologies are created in human practices and how they mediate and transform human experience of the world; identify artistic uses for existing technologies
3.	Differentiate between and critically discuss new media artworks based on the involvement of technology
*4.	Apply post-phenomenological theory in independent research and critical writing, and artistic practice (if applicable)

\*Negotiated Learning Outcome (NLO) explicitly articulating the elements of Discovery oriented learning.

## 3. Teaching and learning Activities (TLAs)

*(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)*

TLAs	ILO No
Lectures explaining theories, including works of Heidegger, Haraway, Hayles, Ihde, and Verbeek	CILO 1
Group discussions on assigned readings	CILO 1
In-class quizzes on assigned readings	CILO 1
Field research on technologies leading to in-class student presentations followed by group discussions	CILO 2
"Technological deprivation" exercise, scholarly/artistic examination the effects of living without a particular technology	CILO 2
Discussions and reaction paper writing on technologies and new media artworks based on screenings and demonstrations	CILO 3
Independent research leading to final paper/project	CILO 4

## 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities

*(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)*

Type of assessment tasks/activities	Weighting (if applicable)	ILO No	Remarks
Presentation on a technology based on field research	20%	CILO 2	
Presentation/paper on the technological deprivation exercise	20%	CILO 2	
Reaction writings on assigned readings, and in-class screenings/demonstrations	15%	CILO 1,3	
Final paper / project	35%	CILO 4	
In-class participation and discussion (incl. reading groups)	10%	CILO 1-3	

## 5. Grading of Student Achievement:

Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate

Degrees.

100% coursework and in-class participation

Grading pattern: Standard (A+AA-...F)

Grading is based on performance in assessment tasks / activities

## **A. Presentation**

This assessment will grade on content and fluency of presentation. Students should show their co-operation to conduct a well-organized presentation with their own argument and evidence from readings and notes. The threshold of 'discovery' lied in a student's self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Rich, informative content, excellent grasp of the material with in-depth and extensive knowledge of the subject matter</li><li>– Rigorous organization, coherent structure, and systematic exposition with a strong sense of narrative</li><li>– Superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management</li><li>– Critical analysis with insightful comments opening up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize</li></ul>
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Adequate content with firm grasp of the material that informs the audience on a subject matter</li><li>– Reasonable organization, balanced structure and composition</li><li>– Good verbal communication: comprehensible pronunciation, fluent expression and diction, fair time-management</li></ul>
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Adequate content with comprehensive grasp of the material demonstrating basic knowledge of the subject matter</li><li>– Fair organization, weak structure and composition</li><li>– Fair presentation skills: acceptable pronunciation, expression and diction, fair time-management</li></ul>
D	1.0	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Weak content, loose grasp of the general ideas with some knowledge of the subject matter</li><li>– Poor organization, structure and composition</li><li>– Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, poor time-management</li></ul>
F	0.0	Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Inadequate content, fail to identify the general ideas with knowledge of the subject matter</li><li>– No organization, structure or/and composition</li><li>– Poor presentation skills: marginal pronunciation, expression and diction, minimal time-management</li></ul>

**Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.**

## **B. Reaction Paper**

This assessment will grade on rationality, clarity and fluency of argument and comment. The threshold of 'discovery' lies in a student's ability to negotiate a position that is informed, defensible, and standing on personal insight.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Rich content, excellent ability to interpret and integrate various resources</li> <li>– Rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition</li> <li>– Precision in argument, well defined and reasoned points of view grounded in insightful interpretation of existing literature</li> <li>– Readiness to respond to peer opinion and other views initiated in class discussion</li> <li>– Discussion shed light on new dimensions of the issue</li> </ul>
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>– Reasonable organization with balanced structure and composition</li> <li>– Clear elaboration of ideas that sticks to the point, with clearly differentiated issues, ability to interpret opinions independently</li> <li>– Sufficient responses to peer comments to sustain a discussion</li> </ul>
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>– Fair organization with adequate structure and composition</li> <li>– Relevant points made to the subject matter in question</li> <li>– Ability to respond to other statements and engage in class discussion</li> </ul>
D	1.0	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Weak content, limited use of resources</li> <li>– Poor organization, structure and composition</li> <li>– Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>– Ability to respond to other comments in simple terms</li> </ul>
F	0.0	Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources</li> <li>– No organization, structure or/and composition</li> <li>– Irrelevant points to the subject matter, no ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>– Fail to respond to other comments</li> </ul>

**Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.**

### **C. Final Project/ Paper**

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, build up argument and analysis. The threshold of ‘discovery’ lied in a student’s self initiatives to conduct additional research and to personalize theories for her/his personal daily experience.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Excellent grasp of research material, able to explain key concepts, assumptions and debates</li> <li>– Rigorous organization, coherent structure, distinct thesis, properly argued with strong narrative</li> <li>– Insightful interpretation of the subject matter with distinct themes and thesis</li> <li>– Critical analysis with insightful comments opening</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– up new issues, or suggesting the ability to theorize</li> <li>– Ability to approach a text or a theme using a variety of theories and analytical tools</li> <li>– Strong bibliography suggesting breadth and depth of coverage and informed insights</li> </ul>
B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Firm grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts and assumptions</li> <li>– Reasonable organization, balanced structure, adequate content, sufficient ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>– Clear ideas which keep to the point, clear-cut subject, ability to interpret opinions independently</li> <li>– Organized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic</li> </ul>
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Comprehensive grasp of materials, able to explain key concepts</li> <li>– Fair organization, weak structure, adequate content, fair ability to integrate various resources based on demand</li> <li>– Relevant points to the subject matter, fair ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>– Unorganized bibliography which can be utilized in accordance with the topic</li> </ul>
D	1.0	Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Loose grasp of materials, cannot explain key concepts</li> <li>– Poor organization and structure, weak content, limited use of resources</li> <li>– Relevant points to the subject matter, marginal ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>– Insufficient and/or unorganized bibliography</li> </ul>
F	0.0	Failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Poor grasp of materials</li> <li>– No organization and structure, inadequate content, no/ irrelevant use of resources</li> <li>– Irrelevant points to the subject matter, minimal ability to interpret opinions</li> <li>– Irrelevant bibliography</li> </ul>

**Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.**

#### **D. Class Participation and Performance**

This assessment task reviews students' participation and performance in discussions, debates and peer critique during the tutorial sessions. The evidence of 'negotiation', the sign of discovery, lies in students' pre-class preparation and interpersonal sensitivity to his/her peer members.

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	Description
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Active in-class participation, positive listening, strong ability to stimulate class discussion and comment on other points</li> <li>– In-depth pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials</li> <li>– Interpret others' views with an open mind and ready to negotiate</li> <li>– Readiness to share personal insight via analysis and synthesis with informed views</li> <li>– Constructively critical, thus facilitating the discovery of new issues</li> </ul>
B+	3.3	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Active in-class participation, positive listening,</li> </ul>

B B-	3.0 2.7		ability to initiate class discussion and comment on other points – Adequate pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials – Interpret opinions effectively
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate	– Attentive in in-class participation, listening with comprehension, but only infrequently contributing – Adequate pre-class preparation but little familiarity with peer reports and other materials – Fair ability in interpreting opinions
D	1.0	Marginal	– Unmotivated to participate in class discussion or comment on other people's views – Little pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials – Poor ability in interpreting opinions
F	0.0	Failure	– Unwilling to participate in class discussion and comment on other points, even when requested by the teacher – No pre-class preparation and familiarity with peer reports and other materials – Minimal ability in interpreting opinions

**Note: All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of Discovery-oriented learning.**

### Part III

#### Keyword Syllabus:

Philosophy, phenomenology, new media theory, experience, technology, tool, intentionality, technological artefact, human-technology relations, body, virtuality, cyborg, post-humanism, Heidegger, Hayles, Haraway, Ihde, Verbeek

#### Recommended Reading:

Text(s):

Dreyfus, H.: An existential critique of Second Life In: *On the Internet. Thinking in Action*. (2nd Edition). New York: Routledge, 2009

Harman, G: *Tool-being: Heidegger and the metaphysics of objects*. London: Open Court Publishing, 2002

Haraway, D. J.: Chap. A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in 1980's. In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991, 149—181

Hayles, N. K.: *How we became posthuman: virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature and narrative constructions*. University of Chicago Press, 1999

Ihde, D.: *Technology and the lifeworld: from garden to earth*. Indiana UP, 1990

— *Postphenomenology: Essays in the Postmodern Context*. Chicago: Northwestern

University Press., 1995

Moran, D.: *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London & New York: Routledge, 2000

Scharff, R. C. and Dusek, V. (eds.). *Philosophy of Technology. The Technological Condition. An Anthology*. Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2003

Verbeek, P.-P.: Cyborg intentionality: Rethinking the phenomenology of human/technology relations. *Phenom Cogn Sci*, 7 2008, 387—395

— Don Ihde: The Technological Lifeworld. In H. Achterhuis (ed.). *American philosophy of technology: the empirical turn*. Indiana UP 2001

— *What Things Do. Philosophical reactions on technology, agency, and design*. The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005