

Technology and Society

SYP 4421

Fall 2004

Dr. Marsha S. Rose

Office: SO 391

(561) 297-3272

msrose@fau.edu

Office Hours:

T/TH 12:30-3:30 pm

& by appointment

TEXT: Eileen B. Leonard, *Women, Technology and the Myth of Progress*. Prentice-Hall, 2003

Additional readings on reserve at the Library.

The life of every American has long been immersed with webs of technology. For example, persons born during the 1930s and 1940s spent summers heeding warnings about polio, only to see that threat eradicated by the Salk vaccine. Most among that generation also remember the day a television arrived in their home; and many recall driving at high speeds with parents on an expressway, a highway without stop lights and cross-traffic.

Today, technological change occurs in mind-boggling rapid succession. The computer, camera, PDA, and television we purchase today will be replaced with a more technologically sophisticated, less expensive model within a year. These highly visible areas of technological change can mask the less apparent, albeit equally important technological shifts in other areas. In this class, we will focus on three of these less obvious topics: technologies of self-presentation, technologies of leisure, and technologies of shopping. Within each area, we will direct our attention to the issues of historical change, gender, race, and class.

For example, following World War II, dramatic changes in the cosmetics industry were reflected in the new emphasis on make-up and femininity encouraged during the post-War years. The social movements that dominated the 1960s and 1970s focused less on artificiality and more in internal harmony. Cosmetic companies altered their technology to accommodate the new demands. Hair products also responded to the changes. The beauty shop industry, particularly within the African American community, experienced a precipitous decline as more women rejected the elaborate hair styles of their mothers, and instead sought a "natural" look. By the 1980s, technologies of beauty centered on the dramatic increase in plastic or cosmetic surgery. Throughout this period, men, too, experienced changes with the desirable body image and technology used to achieve these changes.

GRADING: There will be three exams and a group project:

Exam 1	September 21	250 points
Exam 2	October 18	250 points
Exam 3	December 9	250 points (1:15 pm)
Group Project	Varies	100 points
Political Extra Credit		50 points

EXAMS: The exams will cover the classroom material, (including the presentations) and the readings. The exams will include short answer questions. You will be given a list of possible questions from which I will select the ones for the exams.

GROUP PROJECT: Information about the group project will be distributed on September 2.

POLITICAL EXTRA CREDIT: On November 2, millions of Americans will vote for the next president. To encourage you to participate in this election process, I am offering extra credit work. On August 31, I will provide additional information, including the contact people.

Other important information that will help you receive the highest grade possible: Your grade will also be affected according to your attendance record. Attendance is mandatory. Students who do not attend regularly may have their grade lowered. Class will begin promptly at 3:30pm and conclude at 4:50pm. Tardiness is very disruptive for your fellow students and is not looked upon kindly by your gentle professor. Please be on time and remain for the entire class. There will not be any make-up exams.

READING SCHEDULE:

Part 1 – Technologies of Self-Presentation

Tuesday, August 24	<i>A General Introduction to the Sociology of Technology</i>
Thursday, August 26	<i>What is technology?</i> Leonard – Chapter 1 <i>Introduction</i>
Tuesday, August 31	<i>Reproductive Technology</i> Leonard – Chapter 2 <i>Social Construction of Technology</i>
Thursday, September 2	Leonard – Chapter 3 <i>Wonders of Technology</i>
Tuesday, September 7	Leonard – Chapter 5 <i>Reproductive Technology</i>
Thursday, September 9	<i>Cosmetic Surgery</i> Leonard – Chapter 4 <i>Broken Promises</i>
Tuesday September 14	Selected reading – Library reserve
Thursday, September 16	Study Day, no class
Tuesday, September 21	Selected reading – Library reserve
Thursday, September 23	EXAM #1 Leonard – Chapters 1-5 and selected readings