

UNIV 200-10 Time/Machine - Syllabus

Welcome to *UNIV 200-10 "Time/Machine"*, an Integrated Perspectives course taught by instructors from English (Prof. Michael Drexler) and Computer Science (Prof. Felipe Perrone). The learning objectives of this course are centered at the idea of looking at the interactions between society and technology in past and in the future. We will be studying material from literary and academic sources with the overarching goal of furthering our understanding of how our cultural mindsets evolve over time.

Course description

At the end of the 19th Century, the discovery of the laws of thermodynamics had a profound impact on western culture. It changed how people thought about labor, sexuality, and the psyche. Humans had "operating systems" that could be programmed to resist fatigue, perform at optimum efficiency, and work together to perform complex tasks quickly. Since the mid-20th century, the computer revolution once again has proven transformative. New levels of efficiency, productivity, and cost containment even led to the replacement of human beings, who were contrastingly slow, inaccurate, and costly. New means of production, though, were hardly the only things to change in response to these technologies. In both cases, new models for thinking about mind and body emerged. New ethical dilemmas sprung up as well. In this course, we will study both moments using humanist methods of cultural study and scientific knowledge to explore these issues.

The course is structured as three complementary modules: work, ethics, and memory. In each of the modules, we will present students with a variety of readings, both fiction and non-fiction.

We expect that students will visit this site and the course site on Moodle every day in order to stay up to date with reading and writing assignments.

Instructional Materials and Sources

We will read, reflect upon, and discuss five novels (available in print at the University Bookstore). The course schedule specifies the dates when students are expected to start reading these books, as well as dates for the completion of sections of each title.

- A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Mark Twain. (Also available as free electronic book at Apple's iBook store, Amazon, and on our Moodle site.)
- Red Badge of Courage, Stephen Crane
- The Caves of Steel, Isaac Asimov
- Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand, Samuel Delany
- The Buried Giant, Kazuo Ishiguro

Additional reading materials will be made available our Moodle site and on our course schedule. The course schedule specifies the dates by which students are expect to have read the articles listed.

Method of Instruction and Evaluation

Class periods are designed to include a variety of activities, which include short lectures, small group discussions, debates, videos, student presentations, and short writing. Most of these activities are student-centered and therefore require advance preparation and participation.

15% Class Presentations and Quizzes

10% Professionalism

10% Reflection journals

45% Papers

20% Project poster presentation

Grades to individual assignments will be posted on Moodle's grade book throughout the semester.

Class presentations and Quizzes: Over the course of the semester students will make presentations for the class. Presentations may be the result of in-class work or of out-of-class work. In addition to presentations, there may be quizzes to evaluate the students' engagement with reading material in preparation for class meetings and/or the students' engagement with activities carried out during a class period.

Professionalism: Because much of the learning in this course will happen during our class periods, student attendance is required. If a student cannot attend a class period due to an unavoidable circumstance, communicating the reason for absence to the instructors is a sign of responsibility and professional attitude. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on a student's professionalism grade. Additionally, active participation in class activities is a sign of student engagement and will count positively toward a student's professionalism grade. (Students are encouraged to become familiar with the rubric that we will use to determine their professionalism grade.)

Reflection Journals: The course schedule specifies dates when students will turn in written work that demonstrates their exploratory, evolving reflections on material from assigned readings and class discussions. In general, journals will be due on Fridays.

Papers: In addition to the less formal writing activities such as journals, students will write traditional papers based on summative analyses of course material. These papers will demonstrate the students' ability to deepen the knowledge acquired in class through independent research work and also develop their mastery of writing mechanics.

Poster presentation: Throughout the semester, students will work on a research project developed around a theme of their choosing. The first product of this work will be a conference-style poster to be presented at a student symposium. The poster presentation will give students an opportunity to get formative feedback on their work, which will inform the writing of the final paper in the class.

Letter grade assignments: At the end of the semester, we will determine the students' letter grades according to the typical scale: 93-100 A, 90-92 A-, 87-89 B+, 83-86 B, 80-82 B-, 77-79 C+, 73-76 C, 70-72 C-, 60-69 D, 0-59 F.

Access Statement

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see the instructors and Heather Fowler, Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources at hf007@bucknell.edu, 570-577-1188 or in room 212 Carnegie Building so that such accommodations may be arranged.

Student-Athletes

If you are a student-athlete, remember that you are a student first and an athlete second. This means that academic work is your first priority. As per University rules, you will not be penalized for being away to take part in athletic events. It is your responsibility, however, to manage your time wisely so that you can do well in this and in your other classes. Please make sure to notify the instructors well in advance of your travel schedule and plan ahead to meet the deadlines for your assignments.

Academic Responsibility

We will take very seriously the principles of Academic Responsibility. Proper credit must be given to any sources used in journals, posters, papers, and presentations whether the sources are on-line or in-print. Unsolicited reading or copying of other student or faculty files is as wrong as looking at or removing papers from a student or faculty member's desk. It constitutes plagiarism to appropriate content from sources in print or online and submit it as being of the student's authorship; this is one example of academic misconduct. It is the faculty's role to report acts of academic misconduct to the Board of Review on Academic Responsibility. Students are expected to read and abide by the principles explained in the Student Handbook.

Bucknell University Honor Code

As a student and citizen of the Bucknell University community:

1. I will not lie, cheat or steal in my academic endeavors.
2. I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.
3. I will let my conscience guide my decision to communicate directly with any person or persons I believe to have been dishonest in academic work.
4. I will let my conscience guide my decision on reporting breaches of academic integrity to the appropriate faculty or deans.

Academic Engagement

Courses at Bucknell that receive one unit of academic credit have a minimum expectation of 12 hours per week of student academic engagement. Student academic engagement includes both the hours of direct faculty instruction (or its equivalent) and the hours spent on out of class student work. Half and quarter unit courses at Bucknell should have proportionate expectations for student engagement.