

Fall 2020

HIST 214-101: Technology and Culture in American History

Florencia Pierri

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.njit.edu/hist-syllabi>

Recommended Citation

Pierri, Florencia, "HIST 214-101: Technology and Culture in American History" (2020). *History Syllabi*. 57.
<https://digitalcommons.njit.edu/hist-syllabi/57>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the NJIT Syllabi at Digital Commons @ NJIT. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Syllabi by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ NJIT. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@njit.edu.

HIS 214: Technology and Culture in American History - Fall 2020

Syllabus

Professor: Florencia Pierri, fpierri@njit.edu

Classroom: Cullimore Lecture 3 and online, Webex link on Canvas

Time: Mondays, 6:00-8:50 pm

Course Description:

This course examines the relationship between technology and society throughout the history of the United States. We will analyze the roles and impacts of major technological innovations within their cultural and historical contexts seeking to understand how these contexts shaped and were shaped by technologies like electricity, railroads, computers, nuclear weapons, and others. In doing so, we will highlight the ways in which various technologies articulated, exacerbated, and undermined social identities and relationships of power.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Identify, analyze, and deploy secondary sources to make historical arguments
- Practice the skills necessary to analyze, discuss, and write about primary and secondary sources related to the study of American culture and technology
- Identify, analyze, and differentiate key terms and ideas in the history of technology
- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between technology and American society at various points in US history

Course Materials:

- All course materials are available on Canvas

Grading :

1. **Weekly responses: 15%** Each week (starting week 2), you will be asked to post a response (minimum 250 words) to that week's readings. Rather than a summary, your response should address the following questions for a secondary source reading: What is the central argument? What evidence supports that argument? There will be 12 opportunities to respond, and I will count your 10 best answers towards your grade.
2. **Assignments: 10%** There will be 5 short assignments throughout the semester that will form the basis of class discussion.
3. **Quizzes 15%** There will be a series of reading and lecture quizzes throughout each lecture to gauge your understating of historical context gleaned from lectures and readings.
4. **Midterm Exam 25%:** The midterm will be administered during class on October 12, and students will use Lockdown Browser to complete the exam.
5. **Final Exam 35%:** The final exam will be administered during the scheduled final exam period for this class, and students will use Lockdown Browser.

A note on the Midterm and Final exam

NJIT policy requires that all midterm and final exams must be proctored, regardless of delivery mode, in order to increase academic integrity. Note that this does not apply to essay or authentic based assessments. Effective beginning Fall semester 2019, students registered for a fully online course section (e.g., online or Hyflex mode) must be given the option to take their exam in a completely online format, with appropriate proctoring.

In this course you will be required to use the Respondus LockDown proctoring method to ensure academic integrity for exams. Please see NJIT's response to questions about online proctoring [here](#). Respondus LockDown Browser is a locked browser for taking assessments or quizzes in Canvas. It prevents students from printing, copying, going to another URL, or accessing other applications during a quiz. If a Canvas quiz requires that LockDown Browser be used, students will not be able to take the assessment or quiz with a standard web browser. Respondus Lockdown Browser does not work with Linux and Chromebooks at this time. Please visit the [Respondus Knowledge Base article on computer requirements](#) for additional information.

The LockDown Browser integration with *Classic Quizzes* still requires students to (1) manually start LockDown Browser, (2) log into Canvas, and (3) navigate to the quiz that requires LockDown Browser.

1. Download and install LockDown Browser from this link: <http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=264548414>
2. Once your download and installation has finished, locate the "LockDown Browser" shortcut on your desktop and double-click it. (For Mac users, launch "LockDown Browser" from the Applications folder.)
3. You will be brought to the Webauth Authentication Service page, where you can log in with your NJIT UCID and password.
4. From your Dashboard or under "Courses", click on the course in which you have to take the exam that requires LockDown Browser.
5. After you enter the course, find the exam and click on it.
6. Click the "Take the Quiz" button. Once a quiz has been started with LockDown Browser, you cannot exit until the "Submit Quiz" button is clicked.

Grading Scale (for assignments only, course grades will not include: A+, A-, B-, C-, D+):

A	100 %	to 94.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%

F

< 61.0 %

to 0.0%

Academic Integrity: An essential part of NJIT's policy of academic integrity is that students demonstrate honesty and integrity in their courses. It is also a policy that will serve you in good stead in the rest of your personal and professional life. Turning in a paper that includes plagiarism, was written by someone else and passed off as your own work, or cheating on an examination will result in a 0 for that assignment. All cases of suspected plagiarism/cheating will be reported to the office of the Dean of Students for investigation. If you're unclear on what constitutes an honor code violation, please see the university policy on academic integrity at: <https://www.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>

Students with Disabilities or Special Needs:

Students who have disabilities or special needs should contact NJIT's Student Disability Services to help procure accommodations in completing coursework. The center can be found at <http://www.njit.edu/counseling/services/disabilities.php>

Other Resources:

There are several small writing assignments for this course, and if you need them, the Writing Center can provide you with help on every part of the writing process. Also, please don't hesitate to drop by my office hours or send me an email if you're having difficulties.

We all need a support network. If you need them, the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services (C-CAPS) is available to listen and to help. Contact them at (973) 596-3414 and leave a message with your phone and email contact information. C-CAPS will contact you to schedule an initial phone consultation.

Lecture 1: Introduction + Early America – Sept 8

Reading:

- [Optional] Cowan, "The Land, the Natives, and the Settlers"

Lecture 2: Colonial America – Sept 14

Reading:

- Shammass, Carole. "How Self-Sufficient Was Early America?" *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13, no. 2 (1982): 247-72
- Cowan, Chapter 2

Lecture 3: Farms and Factories – Sept 21

Reading:

- Cowan, Chapter 3
- Merritt Roe Smith, "Eli Whitney and the American System of Manufacturing"
- Sections 1 and 2 read: "A Week in the Mill" Anonymous, *Lowell Offering*, Volume V 1845
- Sections 2 and 3 read: "An Account of a Visitor to Lowell," (1836) - *The Harbinger*, November 14, 1836

Assignment 1 due BEFORE class

Lecture 4: Transportation Revolutions + Manifest Destiny – Sept 28

Reading:

- Cowan, chapter 4
- Albert Gallatin, “Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the Subject of Public Roads and Canals,” introduction

Lecture 5: Technological Systems + Labor in the Mechanical Age – Oct 5

Reading:

- Cowan, chapter 5
- Cowan, chapter 6

Assignment 2 due BEFORE class, 15 pts

Lecture 6: Labor II + Midterm – Oct 12

- No reading – Study for the exam

Lecture 7: Radio and Television -- Oct 19

- Cowan, chapter 10
- Michele Hilmes, “NBC and the Network Idea: Defining the American System,” in *NBC: America’s Network*.
- Christopher H. Sterling, “NBC and the FCC Network Inquiry, 1938-43,” in *NBC: America’s Network*.
- Optional: watch: *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio*

Lecture 8: Inventors and Invention– Oct 26

Reading:

- Cowan, chapter 7
- Carroll Pursell, “Lewis Latimer and the Role of Black Inventors”
- Reese Jenkins, “George Eastman and the Coming of Industrial Research in America”

Assignment 3 due BEFORE class, 20 pts

Lecture 9: Automobiles and Metropolitanization – Nov 2

Reading:

- Cowan chapter 8
- James J. Flink, “Henry Ford and the Triumph of the Automobile”
- Heather Barrow, “The American Disease of Growth”: Henry Ford and the Metropolitanization of Detroit, 1920–1940”

Lecture 10: World War II -- Nov 9

Reading:

- Carroll Pursell, “Arsenal of Democracy”
- Lawrence Badash, “Enrico Fermi and the Development of Nuclear Energy”
- Watch “A is For Atom” (1953), <https://archive.org/details/isforAto1953>

Assignment 4 due BEFORE class, 20 pts

Lecture 11: Aerospace and the Cold War – Nov 16

Reading:

- Cowan, chapter 9
- Carroll Pursell, "The Atom and the Rocket"

Lecture 12: Computers -- Nov 23

Reading:

- Cowan, chapter 11
- Paul Ceruzzi. "From Scientific Instrument to Everyday Appliance: The Emergence of Personal Computers, 1970-77"
- Bill Gates, "An Open Letter to Hobbyists," Homebrew Computer Club Newsletter, 1976

Lecture 13: Mass Production, Mass Consumption – Nov 30

Reading:

- Cowan, chapter 12
- Carroll Pursell, "It's Fun to Live in America"

Lecture 14: Biotechnology + Algorithms – Dec 7

Reading:

- Cowan, Chapter 13
- Ruha Benjamin, "Engineered Inequality: Are Robots Racist?"

Assignment 5 due