

**FALL/Winter 2010 COMN 2312**  
**Exam Review Sheet:**

I. **Fall Term, Overview Statement:** (see red titles for readings which go with each section of the course as described in this summary)

Our study of Information & Technology & Society for the Fall 2010 term has been exploratory, critical and preparatory for a more traditional exploration of our subject - coming in the winter-spring term. Our study this term perhaps can be described as coming in through the back door of popular western culture. We have come to look at our subject arena and areas via cultural icons and forms which connect to powerful veins and sub-mechanisms of meaning, order and value. Our inquiry has been aesthetically oriented, meaning we have examined form and formation as means of analyzing information in its connections and complicated relationships with technology and society. In trying to read such "forms" as we find when we connect information + technology + society, we have been following the disciplinary leads of archeology, anthropology, art history, film studies, cultural studies, media studies and discourse studies - which try to decipher cultures that have become mysterious through the process of time: These disciplines share an interest in reading a culture's texts alongside its detritus: i.e. it's trail of left objects, images, rituals, dramatic forms, and cultural flows. Though we have been using texts- in class we have been trying to read our own culture's detritus.

We have come in through the back door to our own cultural site because information + technology have strong mantras in our time- mantras which affect these the relationships of these arenas to society. Especially as "information and technology" function as discourses which dominate economies of knowledge, finance, institution - they align themselves with our culturally cultivated longings for "logic," "order," "progress" - they connect with our hope that we could navigate the world through some "mathematic and scientific neutrality and certainty," Thus we need to deconstruct our history with "reason," "rationality," and cultivate a means of seeing ourselves in relationship to these as cultural longings (and thus also then available to the cultural forms which access, use, direct, and even manipulate such longings). As well "information and technology" are often affiliated with those fields that have a part in cultivating our long cultural love affair with "the clear and straight forward world of the object and data." For this reason have started with "the object" - as that form which our society has tried to align itself hopefully - and with varied results - used to order - its data.

In particular we have begun our study by have looking at two objects - ones which have ancient roots, but ones which also connect in sometimes surprising ways to the "data" of our own identities as we navigate a complicated and technologized culture. We have thus examined the doll and the gun: which while presenting as clear and culturally discern-able objects -when analyzed seem to function as complicated reservoirs of meaning. We have looked at these as forms as they work within present cultures as means of transmitting "meaning structures". We used binaries (another form which is

embedded in our culture as a meaning structure) to analyze these two objects and examine their capacity to address and function as objects which work with social ordering and the mechanisms connected. For this reason, we have read articles that connected these objects to learning sites, looking at their relationships with gender, racism, and violence as learned. We have found that these sites are potent - and somewhat illusive in terms of clear definitions of their function - it is this illusiveness that seems to add to their potency - as they gather meanings yet do so with out a sort of direct justification reserved for discourse passing through the channels reserved for legitimization by scientific discourse. *Barbie: Girls vs Sea Monsters; Kimmel & Mahler: Adolescent Masculinity, Homophobia and School Violence, see also Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference; Extra credit: The Holocaust and Rodney King, Memory and Silence: Cliffs Notes in the Age of Historical Reproduction.*

We have begun to look at the screen as another object - which though more clearly identified with the world of "information and technology" has itself a bewildering set of resonances - and a capacity to function as a means of connection to the rich history affiliated with the image - and its square containers in the frame, the window, the picture. We have talked about how the screen developed - as resources which managed to "contain world" - thus connect to emotive and power structures that manage world through the line of sight, converting us most recently through the advent of film, television and then computers - from readers into watchers. We looked at some of the dynamics where the screen becomes the bounding box for cultural projects of memory and forgetfulness, memory being marked by that which is allowed to be at the center of the screen, or functions to defining its boundaries by being marked as the edge of the screen. We discussed the problem where by some "information" participates in forming the meaning space of the screen by being forgotten or "abjected" - abjection being that which participates in creating meaning through amnesias or other "curious absences." *Introduction to The Virtual Windowz; Chapter 1:1 Expectations from Digital Ground: Architecture, Pervasive Computing and Environmental Knowing by Malcolm McCullogh and also Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference; Extra credit: The Holocaust and Rodney King, Memory and Silence: Cliffs Notes in the Age of Historical Reproduction.*

In this light we have begun to talk about lines of sight - as they evolved as a means of managing the flow" logic of earlier cultures. Line is that first simple form in which "flow could be thought" and then transferred through imagistic means into a stable form - in order to be "thought about." Line emerged as a simple form, as a architectural image with which to reconstruct more organic, body oriented cultures with the idea of logical form in western culture, and we looked at it as it began to construct the squares of public and private spaces, how it appeared connected to the technology of the alphabet, sentence, book, and televisual/cinematic frame. We will look at it as connected to the hope of burden-bearing (the hope of many technologies) in which the problem of body and its relationship with gravity (and pain) could be overcome through a text oriented mode of knowing that as we became industrialized became manifest in industry, school and screen. We looked at line as that which as affiliated also with the rise of

perspective, -as connected to the image-logic which came to the West through the aesthetics of paintings, maps and architectures which allowed the eye to become primary as a level to organize and to transcend the body which was an ecology/ economy much more deciduous ( looking at the sensorium and its variations as they connect the cultures organized by sound, hand and foot (and their connection to the burden of body and pain). We will continue to examine the means in which this came together with the technology of language - allowing the organization of the economies of alphabets first phonetic, written, printed then translated into electronic forms (including the most recent advent of the digital alphabet and its economies of forms.) We will look at word - as that image which acquires a sort of object (objective) presence and then look at what happens to it as it makes its way through cultural changes which come via industrialization and then electrification. We will (prior to the exam) also look at the impact of word's consort - i.e.number) and examine count and value as impacted and impacting these transitions.*Chapter 3, The Burden of Linearity and Donkey Urbanism from: Architecture and the Burden of Linearity; The Body in Pain, the Making and Unmaking of the World, Some Dynamics of Textuality selection from Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word*

When we examined gun, doll and screen - we looked at these objects in their capacity to function as iconic: iconic forms being those forms which are condensed an image/ object/multi-sensual packets - forms which become thick and agile for use as currency for bearing cultural meaning. The iconic form is that form which becomes cultural identified to bear a complex of meanings, a form which is simple enough, yet is still not simplistic: which retains its power through its capacity to be multifaceted; a form able to maintain enough agility to work as a complex - a form able to acquire and distribute layers of social "data"(and to do this "distributing" sometimes directly but more often working most most powerfully- through sub-direction). Iconic form are thus also able to function as a collection site for this complex web or tissue of meanings - and thus enable a web of social addresses to these. Thus iconic form is the kind of form that is rhetorically rich and potent: one identified as culturally rich and resonant for these (rhetorical) purposes. Rhetoric is that realm of discourse which is works in public and private realms to create modes of address to its performative interests: it is often identified with the persuasive interests of a culture. We will talk a little bit before the class end about the problem of virutality as it accumulates through the multiplicity of screens, how artifacts and objects accumulate in this scenario and become part of how meaning composts - (or decomposes) particularly as interactions take place between screens and body, and as they come to "count." We will digest the idea of gathering "information" about culture through using potent objects as done in your observing in the field using the potent object. *Chapter 1:1 Expectations from Digital Ground: Architecture, Pervasive Computing and Environmental Knowing; Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference; Extra credit: The Holocaust and Rodney King, Memory and Silence: Cliffs Notes in the Age of Historical Reproduction.*

Before the end of this term we will discuss advertising as an industry that has long history of understanding "information + technology + society" from its rhetorical side. We will look at their use of the rhetorical force of images and objects and their history of exploiting the icon to address the performative and persuasive connections often under

admitted to in a culture that wishes to address themselves through objective discourses.

<sup>1</sup> We will continue to use binaries to discuss their use of icons, understanding binaries as pairs which come to be powerful in social meaning structures. We have begun to look at the binary as western technology of meaning - in which pairs are created as oppositions, and then ranked (men/women, white/black, straight/gay, foreground/background, object/subject). We will continue to look at the way in which dualisms function in our culture to create meaning, value and count. We will also play with other means of working with dualisms (binaries) than hierarchy or opposition - ideas which have come to us most often from the world of the arts. *The Mediated Sensorium and see also Chapter 1:1 Expectations from Digital Ground: Architecture, Pervasive Computing and Environmental Knowing: Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference; Extra credit: The Holocaust and Rodney King, Memory and Silence: Cliffs Notes in the Age of Historical Reproduction.*

Form of the Exams: **You will have 1 hour and 50 min to this exam.**

Question forms: Fill in the blank; matching, multiple choice, short answer, short essay

*Version A:* (6 credit for 20 %) : 30 questions: 4 of which are short essay questions.

*Version B:* (9 credit): 30 questions: 5 of which are short essay questions.

Both exams will have at least 1 question from every lecture and 1 question from every reading - these may be combined together in one question.<sup>2</sup>

We will watch two videos before the class ends. There will be a question on the exam relevant to each.

Some concepts which received a lot of lecture time and are intertwined with the reading. These will likely receive some coverage on the exam

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<sup>1</sup> As an example one could analyze, (as has been analyzed from one angle, in the reading from the Virtual Window), this logo-image configuration connects to a conscious desire to explore the world with an less conscious desire to contain the world. It connects to a conscious desire to map and order the world into a clear navigational system (connected to the realm of maps - as order by the view from the window) and thus gives a cartographic image to create a portal into thorny world of computer protocols. The idea of the window - thus translates this nest of computer programming into an accessible image, one our bodies can resonate with. It thus appeals to our desire to organize the world cognitively while sub-appealing to the body we need to do this. In thus finding the icon of the window; a window logic that was sub-governing computer screen and software was addressed, and this world was able to merge through this address with the world of the marketing. Thus though Apple had for quite sometime created this cartographic interface for their computers, they but had not figured out how to market this....they had not figured out how to make it iconic - and thus it was Microsoft who won this particular battle for the computerized public which then became embedded as a metaphor in private homes as well as public sites of business.

<sup>2</sup> Questions from the lecture might be covered by slide notes - but not necessarily (they will likely be answerable if you have attended the lecture). Questions from the readings will cover material as it connects to the lectures.

Icon ( and/or Iconic form)  
Binaries (especially as a tool of Western analysis)  
Potent Object  
Flow  
Aesthetic analysis  
Window/Frame/Screen  
Line of Sight/Lines of Power  
Alphabet  
Perspective (or perspectivism)  
Digital  
Spectatorship  
Sensorium  
Count  
Value

**Guidelines for Study:**

*General:*

*Do the readings - if you have missed any - as outlined by the website (Directions for readings for this class)*

*Do not miss anymore lectures*

*Though lectures all have slides - they are not the kind of slides that translate well with out notes. Figure out how you are going to fill in the gaps for lectures you have missed and seem not to get through the slides on line.*

*Consider offering your precis and question sets to your tutorial friends - and maybe they will give you copies of the precis for readings you have not done question sets for -use these to assist your review of the article*

The short essay questions will give you an opportunity to intertwine the readings with the lecture materials.

*Specific:*

I would be ready to discuss doll, gun and screen as icons, objects and cultural artifacts - I would be ready to look at their relationship of icon and information + technology + society. I would be ready to discuss them through the use of binaries.

The screen emerges as the technology we have analyzed the most, comparing it to the doll and gun (the world of objects and artifacts) and then tracing its history as a technology influenced by a relationship with image/frame/window + line + alphabet. I would be ready to discuss the evolution of the screen, and its means of creating

systems of order, count and value. Its relationship to information + technology + society as discussed in several lectures.

One essay question on the exam will likely be to describe your field note observations, using your potent object and connecting it to the themes discussed in class. I would be able to describe your potent objects and how it works culturally to order information. I would be ready to connect it to readings and to lecture materials.