

HUAS 7305-001
Soylent Green: Readings in New Media Art and Theory
Fall 2012
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
University of Texas at Dallas
Arts & Humanities
Monday 4:00-6:45
Class Location: JO 4.112
Office Location: JO 3.920
Office Hours: Wed. 3:00-5:00/by appt.
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The relationship between the humanities, science, and technology has been a matter of consternation for some time. C. P. Snow's famous 1959 lecture, "The Two Cultures," epitomizes this anxiety. Snow gave primacy to science and technology, shaming British society and government for not supporting the sciences to the degree it had traditionally supported the humanities. In the 21st century, the confusion continues. While the positions seem simply stirred and jogged by time, there tends to be an overarching consensus that the humanities are useless and out-of-date while technology can do no wrong. This course returns to Snow's essay in order to look for the gray area of indetermination between the humanities, science, and technology. Our goal is to understand the relationship between art, science, and technology by way of questions of sustainability, population, and apocalyptic collapse.

Named for the 1973 dystopian science fiction film, HUAS 7305 *Soylent Green*: Readings in New Media Art and Theory focuses on the existential relationship between humans, art, and technology. Students engage the seminal texts in history and in our current moment that explain and describe the opportunities, fantasies, and failures of experiments in art and technology. Themes include embodiment, extensions, prosthetics, consciousness, over-population, decline, failure, states of exception, and *homo sacer*.

Goals:

- Knowledge of seminal hybrid works of art and technology
- Knowledge of seminal texts on art, technology, and philosophy
- Improvement of critical writing skills
- Improvement of research skills
- Improvement of broad skills of critical interpretation



Requirements:

Students are required to attend every scheduled seminar meeting, complete the assigned reading prior to class, and participate with verve and gusto in seminar discussions. Students are allowed one unexcused absence after which every unexcused absence will result in a deduction of ½ grade in the computation of the final mark.

Readings:

All readings are available through DOCUTEK, at the following website:

<http://utdallas.docutek.com/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1355>

password: explosion

Course Documents and Images/Presentations:

The slides presentations for each lecture will be posted at www.charissaterranova.com after each class.

Grades:

Class Leadership Exercise = 30 %

Class Presentation of Final Project = 30 %

Final Written Assignment = 40 %

Total = 100%

Assignments:

1.) Class Leadership Exercise

Each student is required to lead the seminar in discussion of the readings. PowerPoint presentations are optional. Students should submit an outline at the end of seminar as evidence of preparation.

2.) Class Presentation of Final Project

Each student will present the thesis statement of and research toward his/her final written assignment in a 30 to 45-minute presentation at the end of the semester. PowerPoint presentations are optional. Students should assign short readings prior to class and submit upon completion of the presentation a five-page written paper, annotated bibliography, or annotated outline as evidence of preparation.

3.) Final Written Assignment Due Friday, December 14

The final written assignment is a research paper based on a philosopher, critic, artist, film, or work of literary fiction. Your paper should have a thesis statement – an argument – based on your research. I encourage you to meet with me during office hours (or otherwise) to discuss your interests and passions in relation to this topic. The requirements for the research paper are as follows:

- title page, 10-12 pt. font, standard margins
- thesis statement in the body of text on the first or second page
- 20 pages
- pagination
- foot- or endnotes
- bibliography with 8 sources, of which 2 can be websites

Tips: In terms of writing style, please avoid the passive voice, hyperbole and cliché. Simplistic and unfounded descriptions of art, such as “it is beautiful,” “he is a genius,” or “this is an amazing masterpiece,” are banned from this writing assignment. It is the voice and stance of the critic (art, architecture, film and book) that you will

assume for this writing. Remember that plagiarism is grounds for expulsion from the university. The written assignments must be submitted in paper: I do not accept late or electronic documents.

Standard UTD policies regarding classroom behavior, religious holidays, withdrawals, etc.:

<http://www.utdallas.edu/deanofstudents/conductguidelines.html>

<http://provost.utdallas.edu/>

<http://www.charissaterranova.com/syllabi/utd-policies.htm>

Schedule:

Monday August 27 Introduction

Introduction, sign-up for class leadership exercises and final presentations

Monday September 3

Labor Day No Class

Monday September 10 Population Explosion and Beyond

- Screening of *Soylent Green*
- Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, 129.237.201.53/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf.
- Paul R. Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb*, 18-44

Monday September 17 The Humanities and Science/Technology: Between Two Cultures

- C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures, and a Second Look*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 1-100. RESERVE OR AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT AMAZON
- Stefan Collini, Introduction, *The Two Cultures, and a Second Look*, vii-lxxiii.
- Peter Weibel, "Forward," *Beyond Art: A Third Culture*, 4-6
- Michael Stöltzner, "Formal Intuition Beyond and Within Art," *Beyond Art: A Third Culture*, 7-11

Monday September 24 A Fusion of Art and Technology

- Jack Burnham, "Systems Esthetics," *Artforum*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (September 1968) 30-35.
- Jack Burnham, "Art and Technology: The Panacea that Failed," *The Myths of Information*, ed. Kathleen Woodward (New York: Coda Press, 1980) unpaginated
- Woody Vasulka, "Experiments in Art and Technology: A Brief History and Summary of Major Projects," www.vasulka.org/archive/Writings/EAT.pdf
- Margit Rosen, "The Art of Programming: The New Tendencies and the Arrival of the Computer as a Means of Artistic Research," *A Little-Known Story about a Movement, a Magazine, and the Computer's Arrival in Art: New Tendencies and Bit International, 1961-1973* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011) 27-42

Monday October 1 Mediation and Extensions

- Edward A. Shanken, "From Cybernetics to Telematics: The Art, Pedagogy, and Theory of Roy Ascott," *Telematic Embrace: Visionary Theories of Art, Technology, and Consciousness* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007) 1-96. RESERVE OR AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT AMAZON
- Roy Ascott, "Behaviourist Art and the Cybernetic Vision," (1966-67), *Telematic Embrace*, 109-156
- Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press) 3-76. RESERVE OR AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT AMAZON

Monday October 8 Techne, Time, and Technology

- Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, intro and trans. William Lovitt (New York: Garland Publishing, 1977) 3-35.
- Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 2: Disorientation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008) 97-244. RESERVE OR AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT AMAZON

Monday October 15 Technesis and Embodiment

- Mark B. N. Hansen, *Embodying Technesis: Technology Beyond Writing* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000) 1-148. RESERVE or AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT AMAZON

Monday October 22 Darwin in the Tower

- J. G. Ballard, *High-Rise: A Novel* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2011). AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FROM AMAZON

Monday October 29 Apocalypse and Scarcity

- Paul Auster, *In the Country of Last Things* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988). AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE FROM AMAZON

Monday November 5 The Biopolitical State

- Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998) 71-112 RESERVE or AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT AMAZON

- Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France 1978-1979* (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2008) 1-25; 239-289. RESERVE or AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT AMAZON

- John Berger, "Why Look at Animals?" *About Looking*, (New York: Vintage International, 1980) 3-30.

- Eduardo Kac, "The Emergence of Biotelematics and Biorobotics: Integrating Biology, Information Processing, and Robotics" (1997), *Telepresence & Bio Art: Networking Humans, Rabbits & Robots* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008) 217-235.

Monday November 12 Final Presentations

Monday November 19

Fall Break/Thanksgiving No Class

Monday November 26 Final Presentations

Monday December 3 Final Presentations

Monday December 10 Final Presentations