ENGL 437: LITERATURE AND TECHNOLOGY   2/2: 2007

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This paper will explore issues in the relations between literature and technology, specifically information technology and communications media. Literature as a technology, the representation of technology in literature, reading as detection, and the implications of the development of electronic or digital textuality will be foregrounded.

The class will meet on **Tuesdays at 9.00 am** in VZ808. Please note that the meetings may take up to three hours.

Set Texts

Italo Calvino, *If on a winter's night a traveller* (Vintage); Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (Michigan); Philip K Dick, *Simulacra* (Gollancz); Neil Gaiman, *The Sandman: Dream Country, Vol 3* (Vertigo); Russell Hoban, *Angelica's Grotto* (Bloomsbury); Pat Cadigan, *Tea from an Empty Cup* (Tor Books); Neal Stephenson, *The Diamond Age* (Signet); William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, *The Difference Engine* (Bantam); ENGL 437 *Literature and Technology Readings* and *E-text Readings* (Student Notes).

2007 Programme

Date	Session Topic	Readings
July 10	Intro: E - Text	E-Text Readings
July 17	<u>Writer as Machine</u>: Calvino and Doyle	Calvino, "Cybernetics and Ghosts"; Bolter, "Writing Space"
July 24	<u>Reader as Detective</u>: Calvino and Doyle	Poster, "Mode"; Burbules, "Rhetorics"
July 31	Dick	Ryan, "Cyberspace"
August 7	<u>Word and Image</u>: Baudrillard	Luke, "Touring"
August 14	Gaiman	Leed, "Voice and Print"
RECESS		
September 4	Hoban	Benjamin, "Work of Art"
September 11	<u>Writing and Technology</u>: Cadigan	Haraway, "Cyborg manifesto", Christie, Tragedy"
September 18	Stephenson	Lanham, "Extraordinary Convergence", Mitchell, "City of Bits", Hayles "Virtuality"
September 25	Gibson and Sterling	Adams, "Education"
October 2	Gibson and Sterling	Grusin, "Electronic Author"
October 9	Re-vision	

PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST MEETING, JULY 10

Please read Marie-Laure Ryan, "Cyberspace, Virtuality and the Text", and Katharine Hayles, "The Condition of Virtuality", in *E-text Readings*.

Identify what you think are several key concepts and issues in these discussions about texts and writing, prepare brief comments on them, and bring your comments to the first meeting.

Structure and Aims of the paper
This paper is designed to encourage enquiry into the evolving relations between literature and other media, specifically digital media. Aspects of the theoretical and historical enquiries into the social and cultural implications of human technologies will be considered together with literary fictions representing similar issues.

By the end of the paper, you should:

1. employ key concepts effectively in the discussion of literary and other texts, including representation, technology, virtuality, media, and textuality;
2. understand key similarities and differences between literary texts and texts in other media;
3. analyse literature as a technology through the representation of technology in literature;
4. be able to compare and contrast the print book and the computer as information and communications technologies; and
5. have reflected upon and advanced your capabilities in the medium of writing.

Experiencing the subject
All encounters with information/texts/media are productive of matter for the course if reflected upon. I strongly encourage you to keep a journal.

Seminars
Preparation before each seminar will require more than a first reading of the material. To help get done the work of focussing your thinking about what you are reading, I strongly encourage you each week to prepare a summary in note form (no more than one page of legible, reflective notes) of the main ideas/issues which you have formulated from the reading for that day. This material should be kept in a portfolio or journal.

Members of the class will be expected to make a brief presentation of no more than 20 minutes duration to introduce each seminar's discussion. The presentations should aim to identify several key issues deriving from the readings for that meeting, and to provide a direction for the discussion. These presentations will be collaborative, and I expect them to be professionally done. A model to consider is a presentation to a group of professional people, each with different but related kinds of expertise, on a shared problem requiring input from everyone in order that the best solution (or policy) is achieved. We should aim to achieve a summary of the discussion at the end of each session.

Assessment

Term work (50% of the final grade)
1. Due on 1**7 August**. Length: 2000 words.[40%]

A critical analysis of one from a selection of passages chosen from the set texts and focussed by a theoretical issue.

OR The electronic text project. [See below]

2. Due on **5 October**. Length: 3000 words maximum.[60%]
Writing on a theoretical topic or problem to be agreed in discussion with me, drawing evidence from the theoretical literature and at least TWO of the fictional texts.

All in-term work must be presented in accordance with the minimum standards outlined in *Guidelines for SEFT Students*.

Final examination (50% of the final grade)
Part 1 - 40%: A critical analysis of one extract from a small selection from the set texts.
Part 2 - 60%: Writing on a general topic chosen from a selection of topics.

The E-Text Project

The overall project is the design and preparation of a digital edition of the poetry of one of the first settlers in Wellington, William Golder (1810 – 1876). The web address is http://www.nzetc.org/projects/golder/index.html

His second volume, *The New Zealand Minstrelsy* (1852), was the first volume of poetry published in New Zealand. All four volumes which he published between 1852 and 1871 are now available on the web, together with a variety of contextual material included with the aim of assisting the interpretation of the poetry.

There is considerable editing and research work still to be done. Work for the first assignment for the paper could take the form of engagement with the processes of translation of a print text into a digital environment, and research into several poems which would lead to proposals for inclusion in the edition of other textual materials, web sites etc which are relevant to the interpretation of specific poems. This work does not require prior knowledge of nineteenth century literature. The outcome would be a project report which would include interpretation of the selected poems and consideration of theoretical and practical issues related to the digitising of print materials.

Alternatively, it could take the form of a critical evaluation of the project, including its editorial apparatus and approach to contextualization of the poetry, and its merits with regard to the dual objective of making the works of Golder available and preserving them in digital form.

Either way, a key issue is the differences between electronic and print text, and the implications of those differences in the light of discussions of these matters in the SN readings (especially in the E-Text Readings).

General information

Extensions and penalties
The deadlines for term work must be strictly observed. If you need an extension beyond the due date for any piece of work, you should apply to the paper convener *before* the due date. A simple request will suffice for extensions of a week or less; for longer or additional extensions you will need to provide supporting documentation (eg a medical certificate). Work submitted with an extension will be graded in the normal way.

Late work submitted without an extension will be counted, as long as it is received before **Friday 12 October**. It will however be penalised by the deduction of a grade (e.g. A- to B+), and will receive minimal comments. Make sure you plan your work in advance to deal with competing deadlines—the final three weeks of the trimester are particularly at risk in this respect.

Extensions will not be granted beyond the final day of lectures, **Friday 12 October**, without the permission of the Head of School, Professor Robert Easting.

Mandatory Requirements:
In order to satisfy the paper's requirements, you must:
6. Attend at least **8 of the 12** seminars;
• complete both of the internal assessment pieces by **Friday 12 October**;
• sit the final examination.

Workload
You should expect to spend, on average, about **20 hours per week** on work for this paper, apart from the seminars. Note that this is a rough guideline only, which will vary from student to student and from week to week.

Additional Information
Additional information can be found on the notice boards adjacent to VZ808.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:
See the handout on General University Policies and Statutes. In addition, consult the *SEFT Style Guide* for valuable guidelines on proper handling of source material.

Special Needs:
See the handout on General University Policies and Statutes. The contact person for students with disabilities enrolled in English papers is Helen O'Sullivan, VZ 809, 463 6800.

University Requirements and Academic Grievance Procedures
See the handout on General University Policies and Statutes. If you have any academic problems with this paper, you should talk to the lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School, Robert Easting, or the Associate Dean (Students) of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.