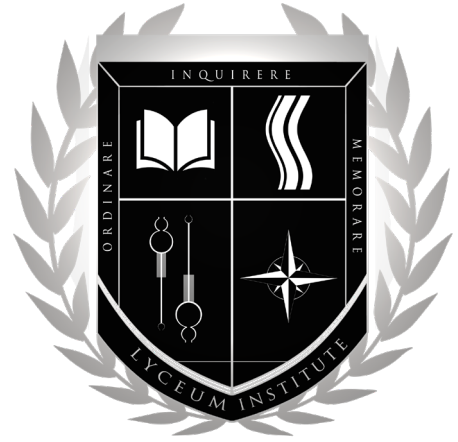


THE OPPORTUNITIES OF TECHNOLOGY

SEMINAR SYLLABUS

[2025 Q4]

AN INITIATIVE OF THE HUMANITAS TECHNICA PROJECT

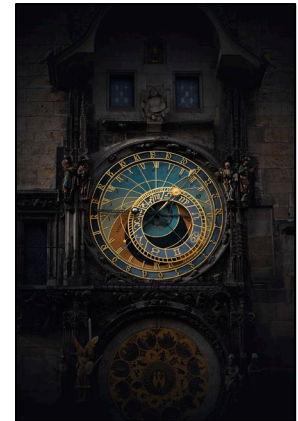


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DESCRIPTION

Has the conduct of human life become inescapably entangled in a technological paradigm over which we, the individuals who can make choices to perform actions, no longer have control? Or can technology itself be restored to a conception and practice resolved to the goods of human life?

In the Fall of 2024, the Lyceum Institute conducted the first seminar of our Humanitas Technica project, “The Difficulties of Technology”. There, across eight weeks, we discussed 1) the concept of technology; 2) its relation to the psyche; 3) the constitution of natural and artificial environments; 4) technology’s entanglement with the biological; 5) the notion of culture as a technological system; 6) the role of governments in technological development and application; 7) the effects of technology on communication; and 8) the influence of technological paradigms on the whole human person.



Here, in this seminar, we aim to show—while recognizing these difficulties not as problems to be solved but persistent issues with which we must always wrestle—technology can truly resolve to a properly human way of life. While there are some obvious areas in which this is true, such as medical interventions or improvements in construction to make buildings more stable and secure against weather, we wish to draw out the less-obvious ways in which technology might *integrate* into our living without concomitant *dehumanization*. To this end, we will spend the first three weeks of the seminar laying the foundations of technology in **ποίησις (poiesis)**, before turning our attention to 4) communication and information; 5) production and economy; 6) education; 7) memory; and finally 8) time.

METHOD

The seminar is 8 weeks long, with one recorded lecture and one discussion session each week. Most discussion sessions are structured around selected topics, motivated through primary and secondary readings, and key questions raised through the lectures. Participants are expected to have read the required reading and listened

to the lecture prior to the session, so that they may engage in a semi-structured discussion directed and moderated by the instructor. *Continual discussion* via textual chat throughout each week will foster that participation and engagement. Participants will be expected to partake in these discussions on a regular basis and will be challenged to do so directly.

It is expected that participation in this advanced seminar will require a minimum of **5-10+ hours per week** of reading, listening, discussing, and reviewing material. Because the amount of secondary material is quite extensive, however, one can easily spend much more time deeply engaging, not only in examining that material but in conversing about it—and participants are encouraged to dive deeply into this multifaceted discussion!

READING AND MEDIA

The **required** and **recommended** texts for this seminar will be made available in PDF, taking from the very wide range of sources which provide the stimulus for the lectures and discussion sessions. A tertiary group of texts—named below as **background** readings—will be suggested as relevant as well, where pertinent. In addition, other forms of media such as videos, lectures, podcasts, etc., may be suggested in the post for each week. All offerings aside from required texts are intended to stimulate consideration from diverse perspectives on each of the topics. A comprehensive bibliography of all texts, including assigned readings as well as background materials that are generally related to the course as a whole and grouped according to topic (but not suggested with any corresponding week), will be provided. Note that this bibliography will comprise thousands of pages of material—no one is, of course, expected to read this all. **Readings are subject to change.**

LECTURE

Each week there will also be an audio lecture (approximately 30-60 minutes in length), posted to Teams at the beginning of the week. This lecture will be based upon the assigned reading, but will also stray into related topics—such as may be drawn from recommended or background readings—and may use the reading as a launching point for addressing related issues. The purpose of these lectures is to help orient participants to questioning how we struggle with and resolve the difficulties of technology which structure thinking through this seminar, as well as to raise specific questions that should help structure and guide our discussion sessions. As highly-technical in content and discussion, it is recommended that one listens to these lectures carefully, pausing and re-winding as necessary, while taking notes.

DISCUSSION

The heart of the seminar is the discussion session (**Saturdays 1:00pm-2:00+pm ET/10:00-11:00am PT**): where all the thoughts emergent and encountered throughout the week—via the reading, lecture, and on-going textual conversations in the Teams channel—are brought into explicit conversation. This allows us to attempt a concerted effort at bringing resolution to our difficulties, and—failing such a resolution—to direct our inquiry further.

Each discussion session will begin with a brief synopsis of the week's material and focal questions on whichever aspects of technology center the conversation. Beyond the direction provided by the instructor, participants are encouraged to bring their own concerns explicitly into view and to engage with the instructor and one another in civil debate and collective inquiry.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Though no one is required to produce any contribution from out of this seminar, it is hoped that—as part of the Humanitas Technica project—participants will discover their thoughts coalescing into a verbal form, in essays, articles, dialogues, or short videos. We hope to publish a collection of works derived from this project by 2028.

SCHEDULE

<p>Week I</p> <p>09/21–09/27</p>	<p>Ποησις as the Rule of Τεχνη</p> <p>Lecture 1: The Root of Human Technology</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aristotle c.335BC: <i>Poetics</i>, c.1–9. Heidegger 1951: “Building Dwelling Thinking”. <p>Recommended Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aristotle c.335BC: <i>Poetics</i>, c.10–26. Kemple 2024: “A Primer on Thomistic Psychology”.
<p>Week II</p> <p>09/28–10/04</p>	<p>Pattern-Recognition and Resolution</p> <p>Lecture 2: The Nature and Importance of Patterns</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexander 1979: <i>The Timeless Way of Building</i>, c.1, “The Timeless Way”; c.2, “The Quality Without a Name”; c.3, “Being Alive”; and c.4, “Pattern of Events”. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexander et al. 1977: <i>A Pattern Language</i>, “Using This Book” and “Towns: Introduction”. McLuhan and Nevitt 1972: <i>Take Today: Executive as Dropout</i>, c.1, “Postures and Impostures of Managers Past” and c.2, “Tribal Community to Magnetic City: Irresistible Force By-passes Immovable Object”. <p>Background Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aristotle c.335BC: <i>Poetics</i>, c.1–9. Heidegger 1951: “Building Dwelling Thinking”.
<p>Week III</p> <p>10/05–10/11</p>	<p>Environment and Place</p> <p>Lecture 3: Technological Mediation of Surroundings</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexander 1979: <i>The Timeless Way of Building</i>, c.5, “Patterns of Space”; c.6, “Patterns Which Are Alive”; and c.7, “Multiplicity of Living Patterns”. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexander et al. 1977: <i>A Pattern Language</i>, “Using This Book” and “Towns: Introduction”. Giedion 1941: <i>Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition</i>, “Part I: History a Part of Life”. <p>Background Reading:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deely 2002: “Umwelt” in <i>What Distinguishes Human Understanding?</i>
<p>Week IV</p> <p>10/12–10/18</p>	<p>Communication and Information</p> <p>Lecture 5: Knowing in the Digital Age</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donati 2021: “How the Digital Technological Matrix Redefines Human Identities and Relations” in <i>Changing Media in a Changing World</i>. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Salingaros 2006: “Architectural Memes in a Universe of Information” in <i>A Theory of Architecture</i>. <p>Background Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maçães 2025: <i>World Builders: Technology and the New Geopolitics</i>. Arafat and Ashoori 2019: <i>Search Foundations: Toward a Science of Technology-Mediated Experience</i>. Brier 2008: <i>Cybersemiotics: Why Information is Not Enough</i>. Watzlawick, Bavelas, Jackson 1967: <i>Pragmatics of Human Communication</i>.
<p>Week V</p> <p>10/19–10/25</p>	<p>Production and Economy</p> <p>Lecture 4: Relations of Design and Exchange</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benkler 2006: <i>The Wealth of Networks</i>, “Introduction” c.1, “The Networked Information Economy”. <p>Recommended Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norman 2013: <i>The Design of Everyday Things</i>, c.1 “The Psychopathology of Everyday Things”. Devin and Austin 2012: <i>The Soul of Design: Harnessing the Power of Plot to Create Extraordinary Products</i>, “The Component Parts of Form”. <p>Background Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maçães 2025: <i>World Builders: Technology and the New Geopolitics</i>.
<p>Week VI</p> <p>11/02–11/08</p>	<p>Education and Habits of Technology Use</p> <p>Lecture 6: Questioning and Ordering</p> <p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2021: <i>Education and Digital Life</i>. <p>Background Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McLuhan 1977: <i>City as Classroom</i>, selections. Aydin 2021: <i>Extimate Technology: Self-Formation in a Technological World</i>. Romele 2024: <i>Digital Habitus: A Critique of the Imaginaries of Artificial Intelligence</i>.
<p>Week VII</p> <p>11/09–11/17</p>	<p>Memory and Resilience</p> <p>Lecture 7: Resolving the Operations of Memory</p> <p>Required Readings:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas Aquinas, Selections. • Carruthers 2008: <i>The Book of Memory</i>, c.1, “Models for the Memory”. <p>Recommended Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pseudo-Cicero c.80BC: <i>Rhetorica ad Herennium</i>, selections.
<p>Week VIII</p> <p>11/16–11/22</p>	<p>Time and Human Action</p> <p>Lecture 8: Returning to Motion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aristotle c.353–47BC: <i>Physics</i>, Book V, c.11; c.335/34BC: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>, Book VI, c.4–5. • B.-C. Han 2009: “Profound Boredom” and “<i>Vita Contemplativa</i>” in <i>The Scent of Time</i>.