

THE PROBLEM

This course assists students to develop deep knowledge of media and communication technologies used in their discipline specific practice. It helps students address the problem: 'how can we know and contribute to future applications and uses of these technologies?'.

THE PATH TAKEN

Eschewing narrow and misleadingly 'direct' answers borrowed from individualistic, discipline specific and/or futurology voices, it first builds knowledge of the current, contingently formed, actualities of media and communication technologies—because these provide the pathways, limits, models and opportunities for future invention.

HOW IT IS WALKED

Thus attention is paid to the characteristics and affordances of media and communication technologies; how these technologies have been and are being assembled and used; how they are and have been of social, cultural, political and economic consequence. Throughout, technologies are assumed to be socially embedded, materially embodied, and culturally communicated; thus requiring specification of the social groups, geopolitical, organisational and institutional locations, and rhetorics and frameworks involved. Guided by the problem of future applications and uses of these technologies, this work builds to a focus on how media and communication technologies futures are currently being negotiated and/or struggled over.

ENABLING STUDENTS' ANSWERS THROUGH LOCATING THEMSELVES

To locate themselves in relation to the current negotiations and/or struggles over future uses and applications of media and communication technologies, students are helped to identify the kinds of plans/predictions/strategies/assumptions (scenarios, for short) being made for and about these technologies and circulating in industry communication, government policies, academic writing, popular culture. The tools introduced and practiced in considering the social embedding, material embodying, cultural communication and socio-cultural-political-economic consequences of existing and older media and communication technologies are again used to consider these scenarios.

NOTE: Technologies are not just the technical inventions but the knowledges and practices entailed first in the inventions, and then in their development and use. Knowing about them requires knowing the empirical details of their varied invention, introduction, development, use, consequences.