Instructor: Dr. Peter Atterton  
Location: Pepper Canyon Hall 246  
Office Hours: 11-11:45 WF  
atterton@ucsd.edu

Course Description

OEDIPUS: Born thus, I ask to be no other man  
Than I am, and will know who I am  
—Sophocles, Oedipus Rex

What can art and technology tell us about ourselves? How are we to understand the interaction of art and technology with human nature and moral ideals? This course focuses on the remarkable transitional period in Western history known as the Renaissance, in which artistic and technological innovations helped to usher in the modern age and create who we are in the West today. Taking as our point of departure the tragic story of Oedipus, a man whose almost supernatural knowledge was nevertheless powerless to direct the course of his life, we will attempt to show how the exceptional powers of intellectual penetration and insight associated
with Renaissance culture, while nourishing our highest hopes in the idea of scientific progress, have also raised questions about the very technology we have produced, and our ability to control and direct it.

Required Course Texts

- Sophocles, *Antigone / Oedipus the King / Electra* (Penguin)
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*
- Christopher Marlowe, *Dr. Faustus* (Signet)
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus* (Penguin)
- Course Reader (CAT 2) available at Cal Copy, located on Villa La Jolla Village Drive, one block south of La Jolla Village Drive, behind Mobile gas station, across from El Torito restaurant. The telephone number is (858) 452-9949. See also www.calcopy.net.

Goals

- Understand what it is to be human, in terms of human physical, mental, social and cultural characteristics, and in terms of their relationship to the larger world in which they have developed and lived.
- Understand how human beings use culture to express themselves and their nature, as well as how they use culture both to solve, and, inadvertently to generate problems concerning their relations to nature and to each other.
- Understand art and technology as particular instances of culture, with similarities and commonalities as well as differences.
- Understand culture, art, and technology in terms of their interactions, development over time, uses in different societies, and their effect on human characteristics and capacities.
- Understand the ways that art and technology shape how people think about, and act upon what it means to be human.

CAT is also intended to help you learn how to take an interdisciplinary approach to complex issues. This includes enabling you to

- Learn to read more acutely.
- Gain an understanding of how and why scholars in different fields formulate questions and problems as they do, and how they go about assembling, assessing, and analyzing evidence as they make and test claims; understanding the main purposes of scholarly argument, and appreciating the inquiry-driven nature of scholarly work.
- Learn that your work in this sequence, like that of professional scholars, is not mainly about memorizing information and giving back pre-formulated answers, but about first crafting and pursuing thoughtful, fruitful questions to see where they might lead, and then seeking out meaningful answers to such questions.
- Learn to examine problems and subjects from more than one disciplinary perspective in order to gain a more complete and deeper understanding of it.
- Bring appropriate and critical questions to bear on your own thinking and writing through a process of writing and revision, so that your writing and composition in other media become a means of discovery as well as communication.
Finally, CAT is intended to empower you start taking charge of your own education, as well of your own life. It does this by helping you to exercise

- Self-reliance and responsibility.
- Reflexivity, so that you learn to apply your questions and what you are learning to yourself and your situation in the world.
- Collaboration, in teams and across cultures.

**Organization**

Classes will be held from 2:00 to 2:50 MWF in HSS 2250.

**Grades**

You must satisfy ALL course requirements to pass the course. You must complete all three essays, the special assignment, and take the final exam. If you do not satisfy all of these course components, you will fail the course.

Exams and papers will be graded by section leaders (TAs) under the supervision of the instructor. Alternate exams will only be available in the case of valid excuses (such as documented medical problems). If you have a schedule conflict, come and see me early.

Attendance at lecture is vital as we will cover material that is not in the readings but will be on the exams. Section participation is also required and will be graded. Attendance will be taken.

- **Section** 10%
- **Midterm** 15% In-class multiple choice exam, 1/24
- **First Paper**
  - **First Draft** Peer review in section, 2/2
  - **Revision** 20% Due in section, 2/4
- **Section Project on Heidegger** 5% Week 8
- **Second Paper (Essay)**
  - **First Draft** 10% Due in section, 2/25
  - **Revision** 20% Due in section, 3/9
- **Final Exam** 20% Date: 3:00–6:00 3/14

**Policy on Missed Exams and Late Assignments**

- Unexcused late assignments will be docked 1/3 (one-third) of a letter grade for each day late (e.g. A becomes A- the first day late, B+ the second day late, etc.).
- Make-up exams must be arranged as soon as possible after illness, injury, or family emergency.
- The policy on make-up finals follows UCSD policy, since there are strict calendar deadlines established by the University for the submission of grades at the end of a quarter.
- There will be no opportunity to rewrite your paper. There will be no opportunity to retake the final exam. There are no opportunities for extra-credit. Grades are based solely on the student’s performance.
• Sudden long-term illness, injury, or family emergency may necessitate an incomplete for the course, or withdrawal from it. Excuses and incompletes must be negotiated with your TA and the course instructor(s) prior to the final exam.

Academic Integrity

UCSD has a university-wide Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, published annually in the Catalog (pp. 62-64 for 2002-3), online at http://registrar.ucsd.edu/records/grdbk3.html. All students must read and be familiar with this Policy.

Receipt of this syllabus constitutes an acknowledgment that you are responsible for understanding and acting in accordance with UCSD guidelines on academic integrity.

• Academic stealing refers to the theft of exams or exam answers, of papers or take-home exams composed by others, and of research notes, computer files, or data collected by others.

• Academic cheating, collusion, and fraud refer to having others do your schoolwork or allowing them to present your work as their own; using unauthorized materials during exams; inventing data or bibliography to support a paper, project, or exam; purchasing tests, answers, or papers from any source whatsoever; submitting (nearly) identical papers to two classes.

• Plagiarism refers to the use of another’s work without full acknowledgment, whether by suppressing the reference, neglecting to identify direct quotations, paraphrasing closely or at length without citing sources, spurious identifying quotations or data, or cutting and pasting the work of several (usually unidentified) authors into a single undifferentiated whole.

Students with Special Needs
Students with physical or learning disabilities should first work with UCSD’s Office for Students with Disabilities to obtain current documentation, then contact instructor and TA’s to arrange appropriate academic accommodations. This should be accomplished as soon in the quarter as possible. To be fair to all students, no individual accommodations will be made unless the student first presents the proper documentation.

E-mailing
This is not a distance learning class, so please do not ask me to explain the reading via e-mail. Please keep your e-mail(s) short, and e-mail me only when it is absolutely necessary. If you need help, consult with your section instructor or see me during office hours.

Schedule
The schedule given below is divided according to topics. It is vitally important that the reading be done in the order assigned, and that it be done BEFORE arriving at the class.

WEEK 1
THE GREEK TECHNĒ: ART AND TRAGEDY

Wed 1/5 “I must unlock the secret of my birth”
Sophocles: Oedipus the King
Reader: Freud, Outline of Psychoanalysis (selection)

Fri 1/7 Dialectic and Technē
Reader: Plato, Republic (selection)

WEEK 2

Mon 1/10 Critique of Imitative Art and Inspiration
Reader: Plato, Republic (selection)
Plato, Ion (selection)

Wed 1/12 Two Types of Human Activity: Making and Doing
Reader: Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics (selection)

Fri 1/14 Tragedy and Entertaining Possibilities
Reader: Aristotle, The Poetics (selection)

WEEK 3

Mon 1/17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: No Class

Wed 1/19 Dionysian vs. Apollonian
Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, sec. 1-6

Fri 1/21 Tragedy; Socratic Aestheticism
Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy, sec. 7-15

RENAISSANCE CULTURE

WEEK 4

Mon 1/24 Midterm (in-class multiple choice exam)

Wed 1/26 Renaissance Humanism
Reader: Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, On the Dignity of Man (selection)

Fri 1/28 High Renaissance Art
Freud, “Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood”

WEEK 5

Mon 1/31 The Birth of the Modern Self
Reader: Montaigne, Essays, “To the Reader,” I:8, I:20, I:39, II:1

Wed 2/2 Paper 1 draft due in section for peer review
“His waxen wings did mount above his reach, / And, melting, Heavens conspir’d his overthrow”
Marlowe: Dr. Faustus

THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

Fri 2/4 Paper 1 due in section
The Scientific Study of Nature
Reader: Bacon, Novum Organum (selection)

WEEK 6

Mon 2/7 Special Guest Lecture by Professor Linda Strauss
“Automata and the Renaissance”
Reader: Bacon, The New Atlantis (selection)

Wed 2/9 A Feminist Critique of Bacon
Reader: Merchant, “Mining the Earth’s Womb”

Fri 2/11 Science and Religion

WEEK 7

Mon 2/14 A New Beginning
Reader: Descartes, Meditations (“First” and “Second Meditation”)

HEIDEGGER’S CRITIQUE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

Wed 2/16 Introducing Heidegger
Reader: Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology”

Fri 2/18 Heidegger’s Critique of Modern Technology
Reader: Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology”

Note: Heidegger’s influential essay is very difficult, and needs to be read more than once. Do not give up. It does make sense if you persevere!

WEEK 8

Mon 2/21 President’s Day Holiday: No Class
THE AUTONOMY OF CULTURE, ART, AND TECHNOLOGY

WEEK 9

Mon 2/28 Men (Not Women!) Creating . . . Men?
Shelley: Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus

Wed 3/2 Shelley: Frankenstein: Or the Modern Prometheus

Film: Ridley Scott (Director): Blade Runner (time and location TBA). IT IS A COURSE REQUIREMENT THAT YOU VIEW THIS FILM, BUT YOU MAY RENT IT AND VIEW IT AT HOME, OR VIEW IT IN THE LIBRARY

Fri 3/4 Blade Runner and the Renaissance
Reader: Deutlebaum, “Memory and Visual Design: The Remembered Sights of Blade Runner”

WEEK 10

Mon 3/7 Is Technology Autonomous?
Reader: Ellul, “The ‘Autonomy’ of the Technological Phenomenon”

Wed 3/9 Paper 2 revision due in section
Art and Technology—and Capitalism
Reader: Marx, “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy” (selection)

Fri 3/11 Technology and the Other
Reader: Levinas, “Secularization and Hunger”

Mon 3/14 Final exam 3:00-6:00 PM

Course Requirements
CAT 2 and CAT 3 are part of the UCSD writing program and each are 6 credit hour courses instead of the usual 4 credit hour courses. Sections meet twice per week and 50% of the grade is determined by writing assignments. This enhanced writing is associated with the content of the course in order to develop skills in writing expository prose, analysis of ideas, formulation of theses, use of evidence, organization of arguments, and expression of thought.

Please note: For the year 2003-2004, UCSD is requiring every first-year student to maintain a
portfolio containing copies of all completed **written assignments** (in every course: not just writing courses) that have been commented on and/ or graded and returned by instructors or TAs. The portfolio would not include exams except for essay exams. Students must have portfolios complete and available for selection by the Writing Director of their respective colleges at the end of the academic year. If selected, the work in these portfolios will not be returned; keep copies for your personal files separately.

**Midterm: Multiple Choice**
Roughly 50 questions on lectures and reading. **Bring # 822 Scantron and # 2 pencil.**

**Two Essays**
Each essay must be typed, 4-6 pages in length, using double space and Times Roman (12pt), with one inch margins all around. Four criteria will be used to judge the quality of your essays: Cogency of argument, depth of analysis, synthesis of course material (readings, lectures, discussion, documentary, so forth), and the quality of your writing (in particular: spelling, punctuation, diction), grammar, and conciseness.

**Section Project**
Students are asked to show and discuss in the context of the discussion sections concrete examples of the central ideas in Heidegger’s essay from either movies, music videos, video games, and other non-literary portions of popular culture. For example, the idea of technology as an ordering of, or setting upon, both nature and human beings is nicely suggested in images and clips from movies such as *Metropolis* and *The Matrix*, or the Borg episodes of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Alternatively, the pop art of Andy Warhol might suggest the utter availability and sheer manipulability of things that Heidegger calls “enframing.” The basic idea behind the project is to encourage students to appreciate the relevance of Heidegger’s critique of contemporary culture. The project will be graded as part of section discussion. Further details will be given in section itself.

**Final Exam**
In-class essay.