All history courses work towards actively building and sustaining an inclusive community of learners and contributors. This class fully subscribes to Lafayette College's commitment to promoting diversity including (but not limited to) race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and place of origin.

ASSIGNMENTS

Homework: These are short exercises that, with the quizzes, provide checks on reading comprehension and help students prepare for class discussions.

Podcast Reports: Throughout the semester, students review audio podcasts about various episodes in the history of technology. Each student produces a brief report about it for the benefit of the other students, including a written summary, list of related references, and visual accompaniment to the podcast contents. These are digests—shorthand documents formatted as summative, portable, visually appealing pdf files.

Paleofuture Project: Students identify material or visual culture predating the 1980s and imagining a future at least half a century hence. Your focus can be an advertisement, a piece of art, a film or some other expression of future imagery. The project is an essay, one reflecting on the context in which the future prediction was created and indicating the manner in which it connects to course themes.

Course project: The final project examines a current technology that advocates claim will have a large influence on the future. In a report framed by a heavily visual format (tumblr, wordpress, slidecast, e.g..) the project will take those technologies, provide their historical background and place them into our current historical context. I will provide more details about all projects and their milestones throughout the semester in class and at Moodle.

Copley Square, Boston in the Future.
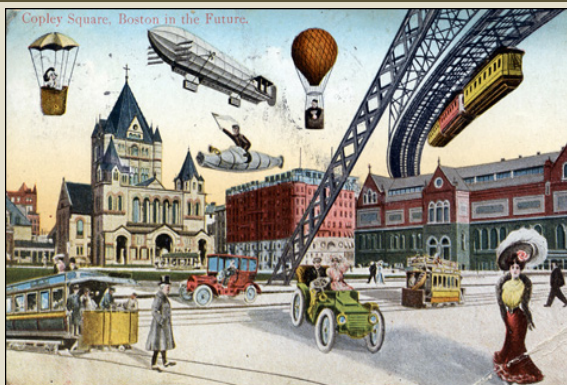
PROF. B.R. COHEN

cohenb@lafayette.edu

610.330.3058

CLASS MEETS: MWF, 11-11:50 AM, 103 RAMER

MY OFFICE: 304 ACOPIAN

OFFICE HOURS: 10-10:50 AM + 1-1:50 PM, MW
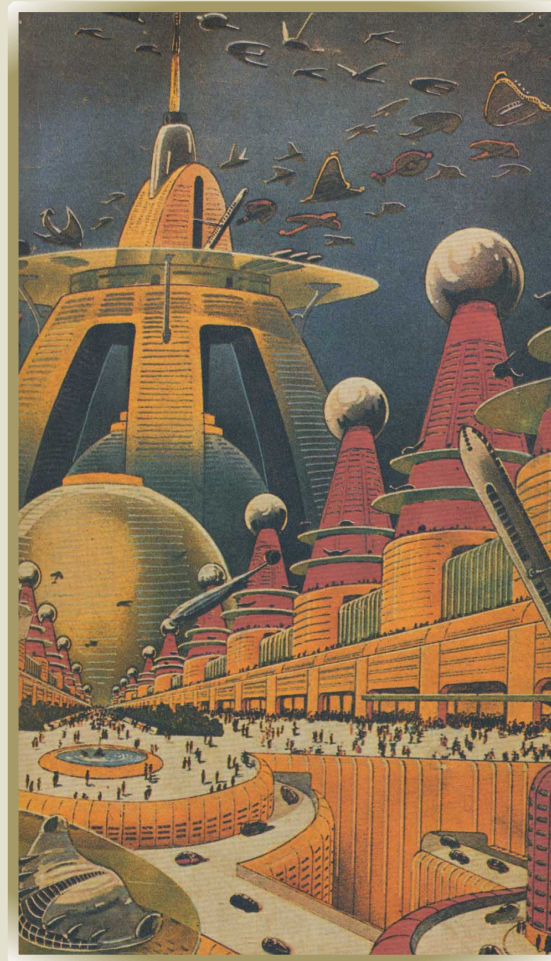
Course Requirements	
Class participation	20%
Podcast reports	10%
Paleofuture project	15%
Mid-term exam	15%
Quizzes and HW	20%
Final project	20%

REQUIRED TEXTS

* Dava Sobel, *Longitude*
* Thomas Misa, *Leonardo to the Internet*
* Smith and Clancey, eds., *Major Problems in the History of American Technology*
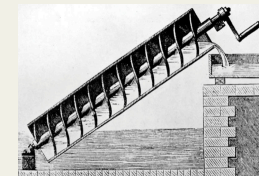* Other required readings available as *.pdf files or hyperlinks via Moodle

History 215

THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY SURVEY

SPRING 2014

Course Infrastructure

Specific Student Outcomes

1. Understand key moments in the historical development of technologies.
2. Understand the cultural basis of technological development.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of historical methods of evidence gathering and argument.
4. Recognize the historically changing relationship between technology and progress.
5. Assess how different values and needs influence perceptions of technological success.
6. Use a background knowledge in the history of technology to place current technologies into their on-going historical trajectory (not to be confused with 'predicting' future technologies).

Overview This is a survey course in the history of technology. It has two goals: to understand the history of technological development by examining select cases and to develop historical skills in analyzing evidence about the past while becoming familiar with arguments in the field of the history of technology. The first of those goals has us reviewing various technologies in their historical-cultural contexts, with examples from military, urban, domestic, energy, transportation, and communication settings. The second leads us to study the question of technology itself: what do we talk about when we talk about technology? How have the answers to that question changed over time? The course in sum stresses the important roles played by cultural influences in determining the nature, extent, and direction of technological development while asking how we, as students of history, can gain access to those factors.

|	
Week 1	**Part 1: An introduction to the study of technology in history**
	Case study: Archimedes Screw
Week 2	**Part 2: From Greece to modernity**
	The medieval world: artisans, cathedrals & "filthy cities"
Week 3	The Asian Connection + *[Interlude #1: Concept and Theory]*
Week 4	**Part 3: from craft to industry (1600s-1800s)**
	Case study: Longitude, *authority, and time*
Week 5	Commerce, industry, production: on quantification, Enlightenment, factories
Week 6	*[Interlude #2: Progress]*
Week 7	The American System of Manufacturing + Mid-term exam
Week 8	**Part 4: the makings of a technological society, 1800s to the present**
	Case study: Railroad
Week 9	*[Interlude #3: The History of the Future]*
Week 10	*Case study*: domestic technology, households & family
Week 11	*Case study*: automobiles & consumer society
Week 12	*Case study*: computers, digital networks & the Cold War
Week 13	Alternatives in energy, transportation & communication
Week 14	**Part 5: Historicizing the future of technology**
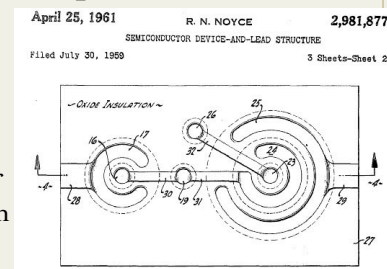
[Students should always consult Moodle for specific reading assignments, files and links; quiz, HW, and other assignment due dates; and details about 4th hour activities such as film screenings and evening events.]