

Political Design & Futuristics

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POLS 342 (Spring 2015)

I. Course Description

What do you think the future will look like? Do you think it will be drastically different than today? How so? By “drastically different” do you mean the landscape/environment/eco-systems will be unrecognizable to people today? Do you mean the technologies we use will look, feel, taste different? Or do you believe we will have much of the same environment, technologies, etc. in the future? Whatever your view of the future, bring it to class and explore an array of “images of the futures” by reading articles and texts about existing images of the futures, creating your own images of the futures and then sharing your preferred futures through class presentations and a written manifesto.

We live in a world of unprecedented rapid change and increasing uncertainty. What generations took as ‘normal’ or ‘business as usual’ is no longer the only way systems and processes work. Constant, rapid change has come to be expected and with it an accompanying industry to ‘predict’ or ‘tell’ what we should expect in the future of tomorrow has developed. Many of the professionals within the diverse field of Futures Studies are artists, engineers, architects, strategists, consultants: an assortment of characters. The overarching goal of these theorists is to lead the way into futures full of uncertainty with a sense of confidence which the masses will decipher as understanding the change in a way they (the masses) do not or cannot. The world of tomorrow is not yet upon us, which means there are many opinions about what is to come and what we should expect. Academia is rampant with courses teaching about the past, but have you ever been a part of a course dedicated to thinking about the future? What expectations do you have for the future? There are a few images of the future which governments, corporations and pillars of influence tout as THE future. In this course we will examine these dominate images and create our preferred images, then we will overlay these two discourses and determine what needs to be done to marry these images. Is it even possible to merge these multiple visions of the futures? Students will engage in individual research assignments which task them to think critically about the various images of the futures via Futures research methods and oral presentations.

The course has an Oral Communication (O) Focus Designation. The lectures, class discussions, course reading materials, and student presentations will facilitate in meeting the requirements for these designations. It is imperative that students participate daily in class and come ready to discuss the readings. In order to emphasize the (O) focus, each student will have an opportunity to lead a class discussion during the semester as well as present two of their written assignments and an oral presentation of their final project.

Course Learning Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate foundational knowledge about the field of Futures Studies
2. Critically examine trends and visions for preferred futures
3. Develop arguments grounded in critical thinking
4. Clearly and effectively express ideas in written and oral forms

II. Important Course Information

Students are expected to follow the UH Manoa campus student policies as described in the course catalog which can be referenced online here <http://goog.g/GrySI>. Students are required to be respectful of their classmates and refrain from disruptive behavior in the classroom and on campus. Here are some additional things you need to know about this course:

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student's language and style; paraphrasing a passage so closely that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructor involved. If you can find it online, so can I. If you have questions regarding what does and does not constitute plagiarism, please talk to me. If you engage in cheating or plagiarism, you will receive an F (0.0) grade for this course and I will be forced to report you for academic dishonesty.

Services for Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities, including reasonable accommodation or their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please let me know AND contact the KOKUA Program in *Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services* or call them at (808) 956.7511.

Electronics in Class: If your phone rings in class, I will answer it for you. To prevent me from speaking to your family and friends, please make sure all your electronic devices are on silent (NOT VIBRATE) when you enter the classroom. You should never text during class. No one can see better who is texting, nor is more distracted by texting, than the person at the front of the room. You may bring a laptop or tablet to class for reading or taking notes, but your internet connection must be turned off during class. Time and again, I have found that students who use the internet in class do worse than other students and invariably receive lower grades. More importantly, looking at pictures of your friends on Facebook or googling a synopsis of the reading you neglected to read is distracting to others. If you bring a laptop or tablet to class, please sit in the desks forming the perimeter of the room so no one else is distracted by your screen.

Email Communications: Please note that you should give at least 24 hours between your email to me and your expectation of a reply. You should not expect emails to be answered in the evening or on weekends. Please ensure that your email has an appropriate subject line, such as 'POLS 342 Assignment

Question' and include your full name at the close of the email. Please do not write emails as though they are texts-you should consider all email communication with instructors as business correspondence. Please use your UH email account to be certain your email arrives without delay in my inbox and not a spam folder. For more suggestions on composing professional emails in corresponding with faculty please consult <http://goo.gl/TnmX6g>.

Computer Labs: Computer labs are available in both the Sinclair and Hamilton libraries for all students. The College of Social Sciences has additional computer labs in Saunders and Crawford Halls, where declared majors can print a certain number of pages for free. You can find the exact locations and hours on their websites: <http://goo.gl/5Kp0mp>, <http://goo.gl/yf303z>.

Writing Center: One of the best open secrets on campus is that the English Department has a Writing Center dedicated to doing nothing but helping students improve their writing, but be sure to plan in advance because their available appointments can fill up quickly. For more information you can check out their website: www.english.hawaii.edu/writingcenter/

Syllabus Changes: Throughout the semester, the course schedule and required readings may change. Changes will be announced in class, by email, as well as an always up-to-date version of the course syllabus will be posted on Lualima. It is your responsibility to keep up with the changes to the course schedule, though any changes will be announced in class.

III. Course Requirements

Required Reading

Reading is absolutely necessary for this course. When there is a particularly long reading, I will suggest sections you should read closer for the next meeting. **You must always bring a copy of the text we will be discussing to class with you.** Reading these texts can be very difficult, so you should engage in active reading by taking notes on what you read and underlining important passages. You may share texts with a classmate, though I specifically chose the best (and cheapest) editions of these texts so that everyone could have a copy with them in class without a heavy financial burden. In either event, you should always have quick access to the texts during class as we will be reading/discussing passages aloud.

All the course books are available at Oliver's bookstore. This is the Political Science bookstore and is located in Saunders Hall at 632. It is open most afternoons from 2pm-5pm, but the best way to secure your books is to email Oliver directly at olee@hawaii.edu. You may buy used versions online, but make sure the copies are the same edition and that they'll arrive with enough time for you to read them before we discuss them in class.

The required books are:

- Schmidt, J. E., & Cohen, J. (2013). *The new digital age: Reshaping the future of people, nations and business*.
- Lanier, J. (2013). *Who owns the future?*
- Galloway, A. R., & Thacker, E. (2007). *The exploit: A theory of networks*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Additional readings will be made available via Lualima

Attendance and Participation (O)

Class attendance is mandatory- your presence and participation are a vital part of everyone's learning. This is not an introductory level course, so please take this opportunity to discipline yourself into regularly attending class without me having to keep track. I will be taking attendance periodically and without notice. However, be aware that if you do not regularly attend class, it is impossible for you to do well in this class. If you know you will be absent, make sure to get discussion and lecture notes from fellow students. Never ask me whether you missed anything in class the day you were absent or ask me to reproduce a missed class especially for you. Walking in late disrupts the entire class and it isn't fair to distract everyone else who made it on time. If you have good reasons for being late then talk to me after class. Everyone is required to participate in class. You can participate by making comments or asking questions during class, speaking up in small group discussions, asking questions via email, speaking with me during office hours, and being an active attentive listener. Please note that failure to complete the reading assignment before coming to class essentially disqualifies you from participation-you may sit in class and take notes, but you may not participate in the discussion if you have not done the work. If I call on you when you are not prepared you can take a "pass" meaning that your participation grade will not be affected. Each student gets one "pass" before their participation grade is affected. Finally, you will receive two participation grades, one for the first half of the semester and another for the second half. Each half semester grade is worth 15 points for a total of 30 possible points toward your final grade.

Reading Launch (O)

Early in the course, you will sign up to present an *immanent critique* of one of the readings we will discuss in class (aim for a 5 minute presentation) and launch the class discussion by asking specific questions related to the text. Immanent critique is a philosophical method most developed by Karl Marx. It basically means that you should analyze and engage with a text by looking for internal inconsistencies, historical inaccuracies, or giving judgment based upon contemporary criticism.

This is your chance to experience what it is like to teach and facilitate a discussion on difficult subjects. You will sign up for a specific reading and be responsible for setting the agenda for the rest of that day's discussion. Your presentation may include additional supportive materials like handouts, charts, visuals, video clips, music clips, or web-based materials. Additionally, before making your presentation, you (depending on the size of the course you may have a co-presenter in which case you will both need to meet with me together) must schedule time to meet with me to do a quick practice dry-run of your presentation no later than the day before the class meets. Presenting in front of me will alleviate some of your anxiety about public speaking and also give you a chance to improve your presentation skills.

Writing and Presentation Assignments (O)

There will be periodic writing assignments throughout this course. Normally these assignments would be given using bluebooks, but it's 2014 so instead you will be required to complete them electronically. You will be expected to bring a copy of these assignments with you to class. You will be responsible for signing up to present **two** of these assignments in class on the day they are due. I will expect either electronic or a physical copy of these assignments on the day you present. I will not accept any handwritten copies of your writing assignments. Your writing assignments must be **sent to me in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx)** format and should be as polished as you can get them within the given time. If you do not have MS Word, you may use the free alternative Open Office (www.openoffice.org) and export your paper in Word format. *No late assignments, no Google Docs, and no Apple Pages files will be accepted.*

Final Project (O)

By the end of this course, you will have been introduced to several of the major schools of thought within the field of Futures Studies. Your final project will be to create a 10 page manifesto of your preferred future (not including your citations pages), double spaced, with 1" margins and no larger than 12pt. font. Your Futures manifesto will utilize the driving forces presented throughout the course and will depict your personal world view. We will be reading other manifestos over the course of the semester, so please take good notes and begin brainstorming the structure of your manifesto as soon as possible. The overall format of the manifesto is your prerogative; I will not be giving structure outlines or content guides, though we will talk about language and the voice in which manifestos are typically written. The writing assignments leading up to the final project will help you work out the issues and concerns you will address in your Futures manifesto. Rather than waste the final class by saying tearful goodbyes, we will use the final two weeks to workshop drafts of your manifesto by presenting your findings in their current format and then breaking into groups for detailed feedback. Please bring (4) physical copies of your draft, in whatever state it may be, printed out to class with you. The final project is due to me by email in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) format.

IV. Grading

There are 100 possible points in this course. The breakdown of the point is as follows:

Participation: 30 points (O)

Imminent Critique Practice with Instructor: 5 points (O)

Imminent Critique Presentation & Discussion: 5 points (O)

Writing Assignments: 5 points for each written assignment and 5 points per accompanying oral presentation. 20points total. (O)

Final Project: 15 points for finished manifesto & 25 points for presentation (40 points total) (O)

At the end of the course, I will add your points and assign a letter grade as shown below. Your letter grade will be converted to a four-point scale as listed on the UH Manoa *Credit and Grades* section of the course catalog found here <http://goo.gl/Xruryj>.

93-100=A 90-92=A- 87-89=B+ 83-86=B 80-82=B- 77-79=C+
73-76=C 70-72=C- 67-69=D+ 63-66=D 60-62=D- 59-0=F

Oral Communication Assignments (O): Each student will present an individual interpretation of a selected reading at the beginning of a class session during the semester. These presentations will contribute to improving public speaking skills and help the student develop a better grasp of the key arguments of the texts by organizing concepts and ideas and then sharing their observations and critiques with the class as a whole. To facilitate growth in presentation skills, students will meet with me before and after their initial individual presentations to talk about their strengths and the areas where they can improve for subsequent presentations.

V. Course Schedule

Week 1- Course Introduction

Readings: Dator "How to be a Good Futurist"

Dator "Dator's Laws of the Futures"

Write & Present: A Day in my Life in 50 Years (O)

Week 2- Foresight, Creating Futures and the Core Issues and Drivers of Change

Reading: Gutting: "Foucault: A Very Short Introduction" Chapter Four

Dator "The Unholy Trinity, Plus One"
Dator "Assuming Responsibility for our Rose"
Write & Present: Prioritizing Drivers of Change (O)

Week 3 Alternative Futures and Images of the Futures in the Present

Reading: Dator "New Normal for Futures"
Dator "Alternative Futures at the Manoa School"
Dator "Futures Studies, Futures Research"
Write & Present: My Images of the Futures (O)

Week 4-6 Demystifying "the" Future(s)

Reading: Who Owns the Future by: Jaron Lanier
Write & Present: Chapter review of "Who Owns the Future" (O)

Week 7 Writing Futures

Reading: Dator "Writing Preferred Futures"
The Futurist Manifesto
Communist Manifesto (selections)
Write & Present: 3 page-single issue manifestos (O)

Week 8-10 Theory of Networks

Reading: The Exploit: A Theory of Networks by: Galloway and Thacker
Write & Present: Chapter review of "The Exploit: A Theory of Networks" (O)

Week 11-14 Mainstream Discourses

Reading: The New Digital Age: Reshaping the Future of People, Nations and Business.
By: Schmidt and Cohen
Write & Present: Chapter review of "The New Digital Age"

Week 15&16 Present Personal Manifesto. (O)