History 866
Seminar in the Social History of Modern Europe:
Technologies and Cultures
Semester I, 2003-04
Instructor: Rudy Koshar

The rationale for this seminar is to study how technologies were experienced, used, and represented in thought and practice in several important instances in late modern European history. Not the internal history of specific technologies but the sociocultural effects, mediations, and determinants of technological change constitute the core of the present inquiry. Although there is a thriving cultural-historical scholarship on technology, as reflected in the important journal *Technology and Culture*, the history of technology still too often remains marginal to the concerns of "mainstream" social and political history. Why? Part of our purpose is to discuss possible answers and/or solutions.

Assignments include required readings, class discussion, class presentations, and a final research paper. All students are expected to complete all required readings and are advised to acquaint themselves with as much of the supplementary reading as possible. Each week two or three students will make a brief presentation of the key concepts and questions of the required reading and pre-circulate by e-mail several discussion questions. In the last weeks of the semester, each student will make a short oral presentation based on a research topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. A research paper of 20-25 pages is due on the last class day (December 10). The paper will be worth about 50 percent of the total grade.

Required and supplementary reading are listed below. In addition to the books by Smith & Marx, Rabinbach, Schivelbusch, Headrick, Herf, and Fritzsche, there will be a required course packet with 9 selections, marked below with an *. There is also a single required selection (the Adas excerpt, on 9/17) that students can access through the Electronic Library on Madcat. All required books are available for purchase at the Underground Textbook Exchange; the course packet is available for purchase at the Humanities Copy Center. The required books and packet will also be available at College Library reserves. Some supplementary reading selections are on reserve (marked with #) or identified as electronic resources.

9/24 Nature, Technology, Society
Required:

Supplementary:
#Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic* (London, 1976)
Mark Seltzer, *Bodies and Machines* (New York, 1992)

10/1 Industrialization of Space and Time
Required:

Supplementary:

10/8 Imperialism and Technology
Required:

Supplementary:

10/15 Reactionary Modernism
Required:


11/5 Technology under Communism
Required:

Supplementary:
#Charles Maier, *Dissolution: The Crisis of Communism and the End of East Germany* (Princeton, 1997)

11/12 No class: reading/research week
11/19, 11/26, 12/3, 12/10 Student presentations