

**Time: Mechanism and Measurement
Course Syllabus**

STS 161, Winter 2016

107 Cruess Hall

1:40 – 3:00 PM Tuesdays and Thursdays

Instructor: Owen Marshall – omarshall@ucdavis.edu

Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday 3-4 PM or by appt. in Social Sciences 260

Description:

“Time” may be the most commonly used noun in the English language, but it is also one of the most difficult to define. We make, keep, mark, buy, spend, take, tell, give, do, bide, waste, kill, find, and lose track of time. It flies. It’s money. More than a thing, it’s a practice: timing (which is, of course, everything.) Going beyond these proverbial understandings, how can we account for time as a social and historical phenomenon?

In this course we consider the various ways time is accomplished and experienced, the concepts and technologies by which we seek to shape and understand it. Drawing on historical, anthropological, and philosophical sources, we will aim to better understand how various forms of temporality come into being and change across cultural contexts and over, well, time. We will examine the social lives of clocks and calendars, the politics of labor time and projects of chronological standardization. We will look at how sociotechnical systems like the railroad, the cinema, and the stock market have recast how we think about and experience time. We will consider how the multiple rhythms of industrial and ecological life shape our everyday experience. Coursework will consist of critical responses to readings, as well as original investigations into temporal forms of life.

Course Materials:

We’ll be reading Sharon Traweck’s book *Beamtimes and Lifetimes*. It can be purchased online and is also available as an ebook. Most other readings are available electronically through the library or will be provided through the course website. In addition to discussion we will show several films and attempt some hands-on time-reckoning activities.

Grading:

Weekly reading responses, 1-2pp (due Thursdays in-class):	20%
Participation in discussion:	20%
Midterm Paper (due March 9th):	30%
Final Paper (due March 24th):	30%

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Ritual and Rational Time

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Jan 10 – Introduction, go over the syllabus

Jan 12 – (Cushman 1953; Le Goff 1980)

Week 2: Naturalizing Time

Jan 17 – (Elias 1992, pp 38-43 102-133; Drake 1975)

In-class viewing: Excerpt from *Longitude* (2002)

Jan 19 – (Galison 2000)

Week 3: Labor Time Pt. 1

Jan 24 – (Thompson 1967)

In-class viewing: Excerpt from Chaplin's "*Modern Times*" (1936)

Jan 26 – (Marx 1867)

Recommended: David Harvey's lecture on Capital chapters 10 and 11:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EP7N2VtFz0

Week 4: Time Travel

Jan 31 – (Schivelbusch 1986; Ingold 2000)

Feb 2 – (Gleick 2016; Borges 1962)

In-class viewing: *La Jetee* (1962) 29 mins

Week 5: Time and Language (and Squids)

Feb 7 – (Spinney 2005; Whorf 1956; Lakoff and Johnson 1980 [ch 2-3, 9-13, 18-19, 27])

Feb 9 – (Chiang 1998; Flusser 2012)

Week 6: Temporal Ethnography Pt. 1

Feb 14 – (Evans-Pritchard 1939; Geertz 1973)

Feb 16 – (Postill 2002; Adam 2002; Munn 1992)

Week 7: Temporal Ethnography Pt. 2

Feb 21 – (Traweek 1992 - 1st half)

*** *Share ethnographic material for midterm paper* ***

Feb 23 – (Traweek 1992 - 2nd half)

Week 8: Labor Time Pt. 2

Feb 28 – (Sanger 2015; Treas 2009)

Mar 2 – (Glucksmann 1998; Lock 2004)

Week 9: Speed Up and Breakdown

Mar 7 – (Wajcman 2008; Jackson 2016)

In-class viewing: *Wall Street - The Speed Traders* (2010) 14 mins

Mar 9 – (Tsing 2015; Lefebvre and Regulier 1999; Greenwood 2016)

In-class viewing: Excerpt from *The Creeping Garden* (2015)

*** **Midterm Paper Due at Beginning of Class** ***

Week 10: Deep Times

Mar 14 – (Miyazaki 2012)

Recommended viewing: Nicolas Collins – Tickling The Clock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TjbGSGCopNk>

*** *Share preliminary ideas for final paper* ***

Mar 16 – (Zalasiewicz et al. 2011)

In-class viewing: *Containment* (2016) 80 mins

*** **Final Paper Due by 3:30 PM March 24** ***

Statement on University Policies and Regulations:

The course instructor respects and upholds University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired students; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor. You will be expected to understand and comply by the UC Davis code of Academic integrity

Statement for Students with Disabilities:

In compliance with university policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Statement on Academic Integrity:

All of the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content with all the contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.

Readings:

- Adam, Barbara. 2002. "Perceptions of Time." In *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, edited by Tim Ingold, 503–26. London and New York: Routledge.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. 1962. "Funes, The Memorious." In *Ficciones*, 107–15. New York: Grove Press.
- Chiang, Ted. 1998. "Story of Your Life." *Starlight 2*.
- Cushman, Robert E. 1953. "Greek and Christian Views of Time." *The Journal of Religion* 33 (4): 254–65.
- Drake, Stillman. 1975. "The Role of Music in Galileo's Experiments." *Scientific American* 72: 98–105.
- Elias, N. 1992. *Time: An Essay*.
http://www.umlaufoviny.com/Liberec/CAD/texty/Elias_Time.pdf.
- Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1939. "Nuer Time-Reckoning." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 12 (2): 189–216.
- Flusser, Vilem. 2012. "Vampyroteuthian Existence." In *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*, 71–80. New York: Atropos Press.
- Galison, Peter. 2000. "Einstein's Clocks: The Place of Time." *Critical Inquiry* 26 (2): 355–89.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Person, Time, and Conduct in Bali." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 360–412. New York, N.Y.: Basic Books.
http://hypergeertz.jku.at/GeertzTexts/Person_Time_Conduct.htm.
- Gleick, James. 2016. "A Nonlinear History of Time Travel." *Nautilus*, September.
<http://nautil.us/issue/40/learning/a-nonlinear-history-of-time-travel>.
- Glucksmann, Miriam A. 1998. "'What a Difference a Day Makes': A Theoretical and Historical Exploration of Temporality and Gender." *Sociology* 32 (2): 239–58.
- Greenwood, Veronique. 2016. "How Sunflowers Follow the Sun." *The Atlantic*, August.
<http://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2016/08/why-sunflowers-follow-the-sun/497711/>.
- Ingold, Tim. 2000. "Work, Time and Industry." In *The Perception of the Environment*, 323–38. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jackson, Steven J. 2016. "Speed, Time, Infrastructure: Temporalities of Breakdown, Maintenance, and Repair." In *Sociology of Speed*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Le Goff, Jacques. 1980. "Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages." In *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, edited by Arthur Goldhammer, 29–42. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lefebvre, Henri, and Catherine Regulier. 1999. "The Rhythmanalytical Project." *Rethinking Marxism* 11 (1): 5–13.
- Lock, Margaret. 2004. "Living Cadavers and the Calculation of Death." *Body & Society* 10 (2–3): 135–52.
- Marx, Karl. 1867. "The Working Day." In *Capital, Volume 1*.
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch10.htm>.
- Miyazaki, Shintaro. 2012. "Algorhythmics: Understanding Micro-Temporality in Computational Cultures." *Computational Culture*, no. 28 September.
- Munn, Nancy D. 1992. "The Cultural Anthropology of Time: A Critical Essay." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 93–123.
- Postill, John. 2002. "Clock and Calendar Time: A Missing Anthropological Problem." *Time & Society* 11 (23): 251–70.
- Sanger, Eva. 2015. "Obstetrical Care as a Matter of Time: Ultrasound Screening, Temporality and Prevention." *HPLS* 37 (1): 104–20.
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. 1986. "Railroad Space and Railroad Time." In *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century*, 33–44. University of California Press.
http://www.daaq.net/folio/bibliography/b_schivelbusch.html.
- Spinney, Laura. 2005. "How Time Flies." *Guardian Unlimited*, February 24.
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2005/feb/24/4>.
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- Traweek, Sharon. 1992. *Beamtimes and Lifetimes: The World of High Energy Physicists*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Treas, Judith. 2009. "Age in Standards and Standards for Age: Institutionalizing Chronological Age as Biographical Necessity." In *Standards and Their Stories: How Quantifying Classifying and Formalizing Practices Shape Everyday Life*, edited by Martha Lampland and Susan Leigh Star, 65–87. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2015. "Arts of Noticing." In *The Mushroom at the End of the*

World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins, 17–25. Princeton: Princeton UP.

Wajcman, Judy. 2008. “Life in the Fast Lane? Towards a Sociology of Technology and Time.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 59 (1): 59–77. doi:10.1111/j.1468-4446.2007.00182.x.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee. 1956. “The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language.” In *Language, Thought, and Reality*, edited by John B Carroll, 134–59. New York, N.Y: MIT Press and John Wiley & Sons.

Zalasiewicz, Jan, Mark Williams, Alan Haywood, and Michael Ellis. 2011. “The Anthropocene: A New Epoch of Geological Time?” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, no. 369: 835–41.