

Great Ideas of the West in the Modern Era: "The Computer Age"

Instructors: Dr. Eric Swedin and Dr. David Ferro
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Office Hours: 2:00-3:30 on Tuesday and 2:00-5:30 on Thursday (Swedin).
9:30-10:30 on Monday through Thursday (Ferro).
Other office hours are available by appointment.

Texts: Thomas L. Friedman, *The World is Flat 3.0: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (Further Updated and Expanded, 2007). ISBN-13: 978-0312425074

Eric G. Swedin and David L. Ferro, *Computers: The Life Story of a Technology* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007). ISBN-13: 978-0-8018-8774-1

Class Description: How did Google get so big? What does your neighbor's job moving to India or China have to do with fiber optics? Why are computers so hard to use? Only one class has the answers. Only one class lets you in on the secrets. Only one class will give you the intellectual tools to live in the future that is now.

Class participation and discussion is expected.

Grading Policies: Grades will be determined on the following basis:

Quizzes	70%
Term Paper	30%

Grades: A: 90 - 100% B: 80 - 89% C: 70 - 79% D: 60 - 69% E: 0 - 59%

Quizzes: There will a short quiz every day at the beginning of class. Each quiz will be based on the readings that you were given for that day, or will be given on the content of the previous class's presentations. You may miss two quizzes; if you take extra quizzes, they will count as extra credit.

Term Paper: A ten page paper on any topic covered in the course is required. You may turn in an early draft for the instructors to critique and we will return the critiqued draft two weeks later. The final draft is due on the final day of class. You must use at least six sources, only half of which may come from the Internet, and you must cite all quotations. The following web sites are useful:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Evaluate.html>

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/Guides/Internet/Style.html>

Class Survey: There will be a short survey assigned that will count as a quiz.

Cheating Policy: Cheating and deceit are not accepted at Weber State University. Cheating on an quiz or assignment, or turning in someone else's work as your own, will result in an E for the class. You may work together on your assignments and papers, but you must turn in your own work. If you quote from a book, article, or web site, you must properly quote and cite your work. Avoid even the appearance of cheating or plagiarism.

Cell Phones, Texting, and Laptops:

Put your cell phones on vibrate. Try to avoid leaving class to take a call, but an occasional emergency is understandable. There will be NO texting in this class. Laptops or other personal digital tools may be used to take notes or look up material relevant to class discussions. No other uses of laptops will be tolerated.

Students with Disabilities:

Any student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in Room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

Campus Closure:

In the event of an extended campus closure, please look at your Weber State email in order for instructions on how we will continue the class via email and the Blackboard online course system.

Readings:

A Logic Named Joe:

- "A Logic Named Joe," a science fiction short story published in 1946 can be found online at: http://www.baen.com/chapters/W200506/0743499107___2.htm.

World is Flat Critics:

- Review of the World is Flat from 2005, "Falling Flat: Thomas Friedman's Recycled View of Globalization" can be found at:

<http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2005/0505.drum.html>

- A review of the World is Flat from 2005 by John Gray, "The World is Round," can be found at Weber State's eReserve.

- Jack Welch, "Who Will Rule the 21st Century?" can be found at:

<http://www.kurzweilai.net/meme/frame.html?main=/articles/art0713.html>

The Singularity:

- A scientific paper from 1993, "Vernor Vinge on the Singularity," can be found at: <http://mindstalk.net/vinge/vinge-sing.html>.

- A presentation from 2007 by Vernor Vinge on "What If the Singularity Does NOT Happen?" can be found at:

<http://www.kurzweilai.net/meme/frame.html?main=memelist.html?m=1%23696>.

- Wired Magazine article from 2004 on "Futurist Ray Kurzweil Pulls Out All the Stops (and Pills) to Live to Witness the Singularity," can be found at:

http://www.wired.com/medtech/drugs/magazine/16-04/ff_kurzweil

- A 2002 article with by Ray Kurzweil, "We Are Becoming Cyborgs," can be found at: <http://www.kurzweilai.net/meme/frame.html?main=/articles/art0449.html>.

- A 2005 commencement address by Ray Kurzweil, "What the Future Will Bring," can be found at: <http://www.kurzweilai.net/meme/frame.html?main=/articles/art0622.html>.

A Contrary Future:

- An article in 2000 from computer pioneer Bill Joy, "Why the future doesn't need us," can be found online at: http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.04/joy_pr.html.

Revised Schedule:

Week	Tuesday	Thursday
August 24	Introduction to class (no quiz)	Readings: Swedin & Ferro 1
August 31	Readings: Swedin & Ferro 2	Readings: Swedin & Ferro 3
September 7	Readings: Swedin & Ferro 4	No class (instructor sick).
September 14	Readings: Swedin & Ferro 5	Computer Museum Photo Presentation (no quiz)
September 21	Readings: Swedin & Ferro 6	Readings: Swedin & Ferro 7
September 28	No class today.	Readings: A Logic Named Joe
October 5	Readings: Friedman (pages ix-77)	No class today.
October 12	Readings: Friedman (pages 66-136)	Readings: Friedman (pages 137-199).
October 19	Readings: Friedman (pages 200-259).	Readings: Friedman, chapter 5.
October 26	Readings: Friedman 6 & 7.	Readings: Friedman 8 & 9.
November 2	Readings: Friedman 10.	Readings: Friedman 11.
November 9	Readings: Friedman 12, 13, & 14.	Readings: Friedman 15 & 16.
November 16	Readings: Friedman 17.	Readings: World is Flat Critics
November 23	Readings: The Singularity	Thanksgiving
November 30	Readings: A Contrary Future	Spare day
December 7	NO Final Exam	