

Instrumentality

Instructor: Jonathan De Souza

Course Description

Hammers, spoons, pianos, microscopes, ballpoint pens, knitting needles, compasses, laptops, and machine guns... Humans are surrounded by instruments. How do we use such objects? And how do they use us? This course will examine varied instruments in art, science, and everyday life, with help from phenomenology, organology (the study of musical instruments), history of science, media theory, and cognitive anthropology. Attending to the interplay of technology and technique, we will ask how instruments can affect not only human action but also perception and knowledge.

Selected Texts

Ahmed, Sara. *What's the Use?: On the Uses of Use*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.

Baudrillard, Jean. *The System of Objects*. Translated by James Benedict. London: Verso, 1996.

De Souza, Jonathan. *Music at Hand: Instruments, Bodies, and Cognition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.

Heidegger, Martin. *Basic Writings*. Edited by David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

Hutchins, Edwin. *Cognition in the Wild*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Rheinberger, Hans-Jörg. *An Epistemology of the Concrete: Twentieth-Century Histories of Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Schramm, Helmar, Ludger Schwarte, and Jan Lazardzig, eds. *Instruments in Art and Science: On the Architectonics of Cultural Boundaries in the 17th Century*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008.

Stiegler, Bernard. *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*. Translated by Richard Beardsworth and George Collins. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Tresch, John, and Emily I. Dolan. "Toward a New Organology: Instruments of Music and Science." *Osiris* 28 (2013): 278–98.