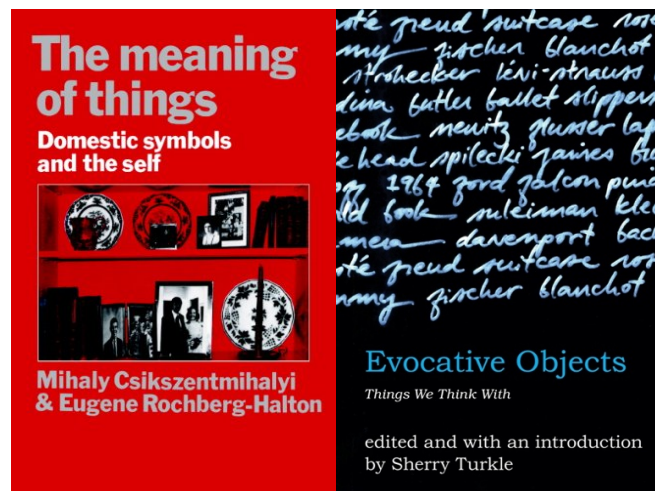# SOCIAL THEORY & DESIGN THINKING
(2410302)

Politics & Global Studies (PGS)

1st Semester 2025 (1/2025-26)
Tuesday: 1–4 p.m.
Building POL3, Room M08

Week 5: Design & Self's Group Exercise

Part I: Theories and Concepts

Task: With your group members, choose only ONE from TWO items/questions below.

You may go back to the assigned readings if you have not read them before coming to class.

Then, try to answer them in your own words in a clear and concise bullet points or short paragraphs that could be put on the Microsoft PowerPoint or any other presentation computer software's and mobile phone applications' pages. You answer should be only 4 pages.

1. From *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi & Eugene Rochberg-Halton (C&R)

   Explain the relationship between people and things. What have C&R done conceptually before coming up with such relationship? (You can mostly find an answer in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 gives a more detailed discussion of what things are for.)

2. From *Evocative Object: Things We Think With* Edited by Sherry Turkle

   How does Turkle categorize technology? How many categories she differentiate and how they all relate to each other?[1] (This is mentioned in the chapter, *The Archive* by Susan Yee) How does her categorization/differentiation of technology relate to her conception of "evocative objects"? (You can find the answer in *Introduction: Things that Matter* and *What Makes an Object Evocative?* Both Written by Turkle)

Part 2: Applications

Task: *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (C&R) and *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With edited* by *Sherry Turkle* both provide fundamental philosophical and deep psychological discussions of the relationship between <u>design and the self</u>. <u>How material objects, artifacts, physical things, or technologies in everyday life help constructing our identities, selfhood, and personhood</u> is the central claim of this week's theme.

In addition, Turkle's work also gives us numerously fascinating examples of <u>how objects matter to our thought and emotion</u>. Her edited volume puts together different vignettes (or epigraphs) about "evocative objects" from the writers and scholars coming from the different walks of life, professions and disciplines, situated in their different life worlds, grouped into different themes, and paired with different theoretical/philosophical backgrounds.

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The group assignment for this week asks you to kindly create a <u>short digital video vignette</u> (about 10-15 minutes long) that resonates with the examples in Turkle's edited volume and that also reconstructs and tells the stories about the "evocative objects" in your team members' own lives, according to your group's choice, design, and execution. You may use something you learn from C&R as part of your group's big concept, shooting script and/or storyboard, etc.

Brainstorm with your group members to come with a big concept and plan (shooting script and/or storyboard, etc.) for making this video clip and, then, put your group's ideas <u>in a clear and concise bullet points or short paragraphs plus additional illustrations</u> that could be put on the Microsoft PowerPoint or any other presentation computer software's and mobile phone applications' pages. <u>Your group's ideas should be only 8 pages</u>. Then, make the video clip using available technologies in the DIY (or

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[1] For Turkle's categorization/differentiation of technology, please also see her other work: *The Second Self: Computers and the Human Spirit* (pp. 18-19; 2005 [1984]) (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press)

Claude Lévi-Struass' "bricolage"[2]) manner and be prepared to save your clip in any standard video formatted files (MP4 or AVI recommended). Use your imagination!

The next 3 groups will be randomly selected from the remaining 6 groups to give a short, no more than 10 minutes presentation at the beginning of next week's session. All 12 groups must submit their video clips and the big concept/plan slides by uploading their MP4, AVI (or other video-formatted) files and PDF files (slides of your ideas) into the designated folders in Week 5's folder in the course's Google Drive. Beware that it might take a considerable amount of times to upload your video files.