**Assignment Sheet for Formal Essay Three: Technology Analysis**

**Assignment Summary**

This essay is the most personal one you’ll write all semester. It will require you to draw from your own experience with technology and from observations of other people’s technology use for source material. After settling upon a particular life role—student or employee or family member, etc.—your goal is to analyze technology’s influence on people’s performance in that role. Once more you’ll use text from Sherry Turkle’s *Alone Together* in promotion of your thesis, and you will do the same with at least one of the other technocentric texts we’ve read.

**Content Requirements**

* All requirements below are tremendously important. Your delivery of those requirements, though, should be dedicated to this goal: Compose a cogent, evidence-based, argumentative text. You need to know what your thesis is, in the first place, and to strive toward a paper that is entirely in the service of that thesis. (In “Technophilia,” Kevin Kelly’s thesis runs thus: Future technology will elicit from humans the same measure of love we’ve heretofore reserved for the natural world, “And this is as it should be because technology wants to be loved.” His firsthand account of attending the Dream Machines conference promotes the thesis, as does his analysis of the evolution of scissors, as does—with varied effectiveness—everything else in “Technophilia.”)
* Analyze your own experience with technology and your observations of other people’s technology use, while following the assignment summary’s guidance to focus on a particular life role. You might develop a thesis and supporting claims concerned with technology’s influence on the lives of, e.g., students or artists or friends. (Kevin Kelly doesn’t focus on a particular life role, but his analysis of technology’s influence on people is nonetheless an excellent model. Consider his introduction’s brief analysis of a teenager’s technology-withdrawal symptoms, and consider his page-5 analysis of personal experience with the internet, built around the novel claim that “The web smells like life.” The thing to note is that Kelly analyzes technology’s influence on both himself and other people, which is what you need to do with the additional requirement of focusing on a particular life role.)
* Summarize, quote, paraphrase, and/or synthesize both your firsthand experience with technology and your observations of other people’s technology use in support of your analysis. (To support the claim that “machines ape, so to speak, animal life,” Kelly offers a summarized synthesis of his initial experience with Blastolenes.)
* Summarize, quote, paraphrase, and/or synthesize material from Sherry Turkle’s *Alone Together* and (at least) one of our other technocentric texts in support of your thesis. Take note that Turkle’s book is fundamentally skeptical of technology, whereas our other technocentric texts are fundamentally advocative of technology. Therefore, you’ll have to use these texts in opposite ways: one in fundamental agreement with your thesis and the other in fundamental disagreement therewith. (The Joan Didion quotes about the Hoover Dam Kelly uses are in fundamental agreement with his thesis; they eloquently reinforce his claim that people feel drawn to technology. Conversely, he quotes and summarizes Sherry Turkle in order to develop the rhetorical force of his essay; her fundamental disagreement with him makes his thesis seem provoked or called for in the world’s debate over technology.)
* Cultivate the rhetor’s ethos. Naturally, you’re the rhetor, and analyzing your own experience with technology will require use of pronouns in reference to yourself: *I*, *me*, *mine*. But you ought to further develop your ethos by explicitly elaborating on facets of your disposition or character that are relevant to your argument. (Miller reports to have been “born lacking the normal male gene for car-madness.” This lack—one facet of his ethos—establishes the revolutionariness of his sudden “deep affinity” for Blastolenes. “I am no longer embarrassed to admit that I love the internet,” he reports later in his essay, thus further developing his ethos. Most important to notice is that Miller’s explicit cultivation of ethos promotes his ultimate point: “Our identity with technology runs deep, to our core.”)

**Formal Requirements**

* Meet deadlines: Friday, October 11 for the first draft; Friday, October 18 for the revision. Review the syllabus’s late-work policy if need be.
* Meet page minimums: 3 pages for your first draft, 5 pages for your revision. When grading your first draft for completion, I will dock you for essay shortness at a rate of 3 letter grades per page. When grading your revision, I will dock you for essay shortness at a rate of 2 letter grades per page. And I’ll prorate by line.
* Adhere to the syllabus’s formatting guidelines. A single violation in this regard will result in a ⅓ letter grade penalty. Multiple violations will not result in multiple penalties. But if a formatting violation—such as wide margins—extends your page count, I will dock you for shortness till I see a draft with corrected formatting that proves you have met the page minimum.
* Creatively title your essay.
* Throughout your essay, provide parenthetical documentation wherever you incorporate text.
* Include a works cited page at the end of your essay. This does not contribute to your page count.