

About the final exam, spring 2016

The exam will consist of two essays worth 50 points each. Those two essays will be responses to two of the four prompts you see below. NOTE WELL you do not get to pick which two prompts you will answer. Instead, I will throw a die at the beginning of the exam period to determine which two prompts students will address.

Keep in mind that your grader is looking for mastery of the sociology of technology. That is, I need to see that you are an accomplished student of SOCI 3390, not just an intelligent somebody from off the street.

Possible essay prompts:

1. Analyze the following statement: “Happily, human culture has progressed enough that bombings like the ones in Brussels, Belgium in March of 2016 are uncommon, but the nature of technological evolution is such that it is easier and easier for only a few people to cause terrible mayhem.”
2. Which has changed Western societies more in the last five or six centuries, changes in gender relations or changes in reckoning time? Why has the other mattered less?
3. Give a memetic analysis of the public response to the news of the death of Prince.
4. Say something useful and interesting about culture, instinct, technological cluelessness, and the 2016 election season.

A word about studying for an exam of this type: it's ok to talk in a very general way with classmates about these prompts or to ask each other clarifying questions about them. It is plainly out of bounds to divvy up the labor by, for example, having four students prepare a thorough answer to one prompt each, then exchange notes. Somewhere between those two scenarios, cheating commences. Consider that the goal of an exam is to get each student to master the material for himself or herself. If you're undermining that goal, you're cheating. If I catch you cheating, I will (at least) give you a zero for the exam and bring academic dishonesty charges. If the boundaries in this regard aren't clear to you, ask me about them!