Mini Assignment 1 – 5%
Introduction to Critical Thinking about Technology

The purpose of this assignment is to observe, record and speculate about your own use of information and communication technologies; it is a first step towards thinking critically about communication and technology in your own life. The assignment has two components, both of which must be completed and handed in as a single continuous essay.

1

Choose **one** technology from the list below that is significantly integrated into your everyday life. Please note that, as we will discuss throughout the course, ICTs are not limited to the electronic technologies that have been listed below, but for the purpose of this assignment we are only focusing on these forms of ICT. The following technologies can be considered:

Desktop Computer	Land Line Telephone
Notebook/Laptop Computers	Answering Machine/Voicemail
Palm Pilot/Personal Organizer	Cell Phone, Camera Phone
Television	Pager
VCR/DVD Player	Car Radio/Stereo
Personal Stereo (casette/cd/MP3)	Bank Machines
Home Stereo	Video/Computer/Virtual Reality Games
Radio	Electronic PA Equipment

Choose a typical day, observe and log your use of this technology over the course of this day. **This log (can be a usage chart) must be attached as a separate sheet to your assignment.**

In the first section of your essay write 250-300 words describing in detail how the technology is integrated into your daily life (what do you use if for, how do you use it, under what circumstances, for what purposes, etc.), and why you think this technology is so important to you.

2

The second component of this assignment – 250-400 words – requires that you **write critically** about the use of the selected technology from **three** of the following perspectives (aspects). In this section you must go beyond your own personal usage and **speculate on the broader social implications and dimensions**.

Some Aspects of Technology
Political: The ways your selected technology is shaped by and in turn shapes forms of legal and political power and discourse
Economic: Economic structures and patterns of economic development that affect the use of your selected technology and are also affected by it
Environmental: Environmental factors that affect the use of a technology, and the effects and impacts of the technology on natural and social environments
Cultural: Implications of the selected technology for cultural formations and expressions including effects on popular culture
Aesthetic: Impacts of the selected technology on artistic forms, genres, expressions

Psychological: The shaping of individual attitudes, perceptions and personalities through engagements with your selected technology

Spiritual/Metaphysical: Evolution of structures of belief and their transformation through the use of the selected technology

Physical: Shifts in the physical body, the way the body is used and physiological effects resulting from engagement with the selected technology

Technical Requirements

Your essay must be written in formal academic English. The two components must be addressed and written as a continuous essay with appropriate paragraphing and transitions, an introduction and conclusion.

Your essay must be at least 500 words. Include a word count at the end of your document. Essays that are shorter than the required length will be graded accordingly. Maximum allowed length is 750 words.

Your essay must have a suitable original title (no boring, generic titles such as "My Assignment 1"). No title page is necessary. Include the title at the top of your first page. Also include your full name and tutorial number at the top of this page.

External references are not required for the completion of this assignment; however, if you choose to use them, you must reference them properly using accepted academic styles (APA, MLA, Chicago).

Attach your log as a separate sheet to the back of your essay. Your log can be hand-written as long as it is legible.

Hand in a **hard copy** (stapled sheets, 1" margins, double-spaced, 12 point font, numbered pages, no title page, no folders, etc.) at the **beginning of the lecture on September 22nd. Late penalty is 10% per day, including weekends.**