Where the heck is my flying car?

Where The Heck is my Flying Car?

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Week 1 - Welcome. What is futurism? How do you do it?

The Layout of the rest of the class. What you should do before a class — readings, watchings (movies to be found on youtube, dailymotion, or the sakai site), writings What is expected from you in each class. What is expected from you for the class project (20 years/50 years/100 years/200 years/500 years in the future)

What is a “utopia”? What is a “dystopia”? How are they different from futurism

Types of change — evolutionary vs revolutionary?

What is the role of major wars in views of the future?

What is the role of “magic” (completely unforeseen events)

For instance, Hemophilia: when WWI broke out
England ruled by King George V - grandson of Queen Victoria
Germany ruled by Kaiser Wilhelm II - grandson of Queen Victoria
Russia ruled by Czar Nicholas II - married to a granddaughter of Queen Victoria
Romania ruled by King Ferdinand - married to a granddaughter of Queen Victoria
Sweden ruled by King Gustav VI — married to a granddaughter of Queen Victoria
Spain ruled by King Alfonso XIII - married to a granddaughter of Queen Victoria

... 1 son, 3 grandsons, 6 great grandsons had the disease. In addition, ALL the female descendents from her were carriers, including her daughter Alix of Hesse, who married the Tsar of Russia, who had four daughters (who may or may not have been carriers, they were murdered before having children of their own), and one son, Alexis, who was a hemophiliac — the heir to the tsar of all the Russias. (http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/haemophilia.html)

Hemophilia runs rampant in Victoria’s descendants, but not in her predecessors. Hemophilia is an X-chromosone gene, men can get it if their mother has the gene, but women are carriers unless *both* parents have the gene. Either her husband (Prince Albert) had an insanely rare mutation to pass the gene on, but not have the disease himself, or...

Victoria -> Alix (Empress Alexandria) -> Alexis -> Rasputin -> WWI -> Russian Revolution
(Rasputin insinuated himself into the Russian Court by his apparent ability to ease symptoms of Alexis.)
... why bring this up? Because something as simple as hemophilia could be thought of as a major factor in WWI — and the Russian Revolution. A futurist (if looking, from say the 1890’s) would have been hard-pressed to make that kind of a prediction… From hemophilia to Lenin to Stalin to the Cold War to the Space Race to landing on the Moon… to Putin.

What about smallpox?

Question to class: What is the most important event of the
1700’s (whole century) 1800’s (whole century)
1900-1910 1910-1920
1920-1930 1930-1940
1940-1950 1950-1960
2000-2010 2010-now

Discuss — what is meant by the quotations (extra handout)

Themes we’ll look at in our look(s) to the future.
Politics (what underlies political power?)
Economics (what is the basis of economic activity?)
War (what form does war take?)
Crime
Communications (how is communications different from now?)
Information and Entertainment
Art/Music
Education
Major Philosophies
Games
Medicine
Communities

Themes NOT to look at

Religion - they don’t make specific predictions, except the JW’s
The foolishness of racism. It’s just exactly that — foolishness.
We may take it as given that the future will be less racist than the present, as the present is less than the past.
The alternative is just too depressing.

What didn’t they foresee? (“magic”, and its effects) - failed futurisms
Silent films - talkies (and the destruction of theater bands)
big-bands - electric instruments (and destruction of them)
horse cavalry - trains, automobiles and tanks
napoleonic and mexican-american war - rifles
civil war combat - machine guns (but they did foresee trench war)
battleship navies - aircraft and aircraft carriers
computers of the 1950’s - miniaturization
WWI - gas warfare, aircraft warfare, tank warfare

Jehovah’s Witnesses - missing the (several) ends of the world

Sample views of the future:

**Steady state** (just like now, but maybe slightly different)
- the basic view for most of history
- overcome by events, mostly bad

**Steady improvement** (better than now, but recognizably similar - “evolutionary”)

**Revolutionary** changes, which are ‘digested’ by society badly, or strangely, and generally by the young, and this digestion is often interrupted by the next big change. (Phones, then phones in every house and office and establishment. Then, answering machines. Then, fax machines. Then cell phones. Then texting. Then a video camera in every hand. Then a computer in every hand. Then high-bandwidth up and down. Then augmented reality. Then…)

For instance, the internet was hailed as a major change in teaching, communicating, politics, and economics (the “information society”)… but what is the internet’s three major uses? Porn, movies, and games. Its used in business, but the amount of traffic is dwarfed by the other three.

**Futurists**

Who “makes” the future? Scientists? Engineers? Artists? You and me?

Who has a better handle on the future? Academics? or Rod Serling? Star Trek? Star Wars?

*For instance, economists are statisticians with better job titles. They will gladly tell you everything about what happened last year, but they cannot (despite claims otherwise) tell you anything about next week. Futurists? Not hardly. But they are believed by policy makers and business types without question.*

So, your model of the future tied to your model of the present (that is, your understanding of how things “really work”), and your model of the past (your understanding of what things “really mean”)

**Writing assignment for next week: Understanding the Past.** A total length: 5-ish pages

For each of the following years, state (in a couple of sentences)
* The current state of communications technology
* the current state of transportation technology
* the current state of entertainment technology
* current state of medical technology
* the most recent type of political theory
* the most recent style(s) of art
* the most recent advance in computing

and

* the advance in any single one of the above that came as a surprise shortly thereafter. And do so, for these years.

1966 (50 years ago); 1916 (100 years ago); 1816 (200 years ago); and 1466 (500 years ago)

Readings for next week: Watch “Connections: The Trigger Effect”
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x4e30ki_connections-episode-1-the-trigger-effect_tech

Week 2 -

Discussion of “Connections”

Discussion of last week’s writings

Pre-20th Century, early 1900’s — up to 1920
Plato’s “Republic”
Sir Thomas More’s book that coined the name ‘utopia’ (1516)
19th Century — Jules Verne (1828-1905)/HG Wells
Verne/Paris in the 20th century (actually 1960) (1863) - written in 1863, but not published until 1994 — his publisher thought it wouldn’t sell, and it was literally forgotten until rediscovered by his grandson, and not published until 1994. Predicted: automobiles powered by gasoline, asphalted roads, electric lights, suburbs, electronic music, wind power to generate electricity, fax machines, and the (mechanical) internet. But the society is dominated by business and technology, to the entire exclusion of artists, writers, and poets. (such pursuits are viewed as disgraceful, and not even taught.) Pretty
much everybody dies at the end (famine, crop failure, global freeze.)

Verne/From the earth to the moon (1872) - by cannon, built by the Americans, that the noted that the pioneers Verne popular on case!

fired from Florida. A Russian, Konstantin tsiolovsky, proved cannon needed would be impossibly long in 1903 — but the story had nevertheless inspired him to become one of of the theories of space flight. In a clever marketing scheme, ends the story with the launch, and produces an equally (and profitable) sequel, “Around the Moon”, which follows the three astronauts to and from the moon. (They never do land the moon. Just as well - they had no way to get back in that

Verne/20,000 leagues (near future 1869) - submarines as threat to surface cliffhanger Verne, a were such stunts.

ships; finding what’s left of Atlantis. Another novel with a ending (with loose ends cleaned up in “Mysterious Island.”

Verne/“Around the World in 80 days” (near future 1872) — why did Frenchman, pick an Englishman as the hero? [Englishmen known - to the French — as insanely neurotic, and prone to

Wells/Sleeper awakes (far future 1897&1910 - set in 2100) The power of the Society then “sleeper.”

compound intérêt makes the protagonist (who ‘slept’ for 200 years) by far the richest man in the world. Trustees of money now run the world, as a one-government entity. is based on exploitation of the workers. The workers rebel, have a schism between a leader of the rebels and the

Wells/Things to Come (film 1935) - WWII breaks out in 1939, gas used
civilians, collapse of civilization

Wells/The War in the Air (1907)  War between US and Germany (a
german zeppelin/ fixed-wing aircraft air fleet), and between US and Japan (the
same). Destruction of NYC by the air (by the Germans) and San
Francisco (by the Japanese), after which the Germans and Japanese
begin fighting each other (over Buffalo, NY), which degenerates
everywhere, then a plague of“the Purple Death”, then the
collapse of civilization2

Wells/The Outline of History (1920) (chapter 40) - one-world federation,
technology as freezer of mankind from heavy labor and
ender of war

Question: why was WWI so catastrophic?
(societies at war; military technology beyond military intellect
(despite clear warnings); civilians as targets of bombing, famine; no limits on types of warfare militarily; remaking the middle east; remaking the pacific — setting up WWII and a number of minor wars in the middle east)

[can we foresee a massive world war in the future?]

Why do some people say it is the beginning of the “modern era”
(modern propaganda state; mobilization of entire populations; women into the industrial workforce for the first time; mechanized warfare)

[What’s the one thing that hasn’t changed through all this? That to hold ground you have to have an infantryman squatting on that ground.]

WWI (refutation of romanticism, beginning of technical outlooks)
deaths worldwide: 18,000,000 (11M military, 7M civilian)

WWI begins the control of information to the people to control the way they think about what the government is doing.
who to hate, who to like, who to kill. The ultimate result is the Bolsheviks: the last romantics (“rational man in a rational society”) — covered in blood

Spanish Flu (the great non-event) https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/ deaths: 50,000,000 worldwide
how it started, spread, the three “waves” of it, and why *that* matters, and why an ebola-type disease epidemic is so feared today. Why it is almost vanished from history.

The average lifespan in US dropped by 10 YEARS
http://demog.berkeley.edu/~andrew/1918/figure2.html
1917: Men 48.4 years; women 54.0
1918: Men 36.6 years; women 42.2 (Slightly more for men because of war casualties)
1919: Men 53.5 years; women 56.0

What effect does a lower lifespan have on people? What effect does a lowered lifespan have? Have we seen this more recently?

What is the Spanish flu the first of? [world-wide, spread by international travel]
What is danger do we see now of this? [Ebola, Zika]

Question: what was the first attempt at a genocide in the 20th century?
Can we foresee barbarity like this? Why is it unlikely to occur in this country?

WWI acts as a great divide in the 20th century
Many of the effects of the war go into the 1920’s. It takes a while for cultures to survive the shocks of a catastrophe as great as this.

Art changes - ‘fountain’, cubism, ‘realism’. Rejection of “retinal” art (that is, ‘merely’ pleasing to the eye. Duchamp pioneered “found” art (or “readymade” art), that didn’t require any work by the artist, merely recognizing it as art. (If this sounds profoundly lazy, it is.) “Kinetic art”

Bauhaus - design as art

writing - “war poets”, hemingway (much more direct, “athletic” writing style), fitzgerald (a “jazz age” avatar)s

Musical changes - atonal ‘music’

Politics change - communism, socialism is accepted, rise of fascism

war changes
… basically everything goes overboard
other changes - movies become mass-marketed, radio

Philosophy - rise of existentialism; existed before, but embraced by many after the war. rejection of 'imposed morality', that the self decides what morality to follow, and what morality *is*. After the apparent moral bankruptcy of western philosophy for wwi, a general distrust of the ‘powers that be’ (Also re-embraced after WWII)

Reading for the week: “The Roads must Roll”, by Robert Heinlein
Watch Genius of Design, episode 2: "Designs for Living"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNboCSpEiIU

Writing for next week: Understanding the Present (5-ish pages total)

What factors of today do you see affecting your (personal) future? How? Why?

What factors in the State of NJ’s future (for the next 50 years)? How? Why?

What factors in The US’s future (next 50 years)? How? Why?
The world’s future (next 50 years)? How? Why?

Week 3 - 1920's, 1930's - futures imposed, with no limits

Introduction to chaos theory, and its application to our problem

We’re going to start discussing the futures different groups of people tried to create and why.

Roads must roll: should critical infrastructure be militarized? Or have its own elite paramilitary organization? What critical infrastructure do we have now that might benefit from such a militarization?

Writing assignment - what changes did you find as you moved to larger and larger venues?

art- surrealism, as part of the general rejection of art of the pre-wwi era.

Eugenics movement. Ever hear of it? It intended to build better people by using the permission to have children to allow the race as a whole to improve.

Eugenics movement in US and everywhere else (a brand of futurism that seeks to impose a future; which saw its final form in germany) supported by WEB Dubois:"only fit blacks should procreate to eradicate the race's heritage of moral iniquity."
and Margaret Sanger (founder of Planned Parenthood), advocating that people who didn’t act like she thought should be prohibited from ever having children, and that this was the attitude of “all thinking people”. In this way, “a new race” would come into being of people who thought like she wanted them to. (she even titled her 1922 book, “Woman and the New Race.”

… or if you’re unconvinced, Sanger in 1922’s “Pivot of Civilization”

“Organized charity itself is the symptom of a malignant social disease… Instead of decreasing and aiming to eliminate the stocks [of people] that are most detrimental to the future of the race and the world, it tends to render them to a menacing degree dominant.”

… so now it’s just down to who decides whose ‘stock’ gets eliminated, and how.

Question: where was the first forced sterilization laws?
Question: when did it stop in this country?
Question: Who wrote a book in 1941 advocating the eradication of all Germans by forced sterilization?

The erasure of people; attempts to control not just the present, but the past - to justify tyranny. (1984; William Connolly)

Question: What revolutionary regime first killed entire classes of perceived enemies, to the extent of razing entire cities? [French Revolution]

Question: When a revolution succeeds, what must it first do?
[Make sure there isn’t another one. Hello, secret police.]

The Nazi “experiment” (bolsheviks with no illusions)

The Stalinist “experiment” (and how it was exactly like Leninism)
“The people who cast the votes decide nothing.
The people who count the votes decide everything.”
-Stalin

The Nazis believed that race was all. The Bolsheviks believed class/politics was all.

The impact of penicillin and sulfa drugs on public health, war, and even sexual behavior (suddenly syphilis can be cured). The impact of “the great binge” (1870-1915, when heroin, cocain, morphine, and opium were all legal, could be bought at drugstores and
department stores and could and were used by men, women and children (Coca-Cola containing cocaine, for instance, morphine for menstrual cramps) and methamphetamine on people and leaders (like Hitler.) Methamphetamine were freely used by military troops — unfortunately, amphetamines can lead to hyperagression. So we know what happens when drugs are freely available — we've seen it before.

Futures:

What future were the Bolsheviks trying to create? What happened? What went wrong?
[Stalin; the survival of capitalism in the face of “historical inevitability”]

What future did the Nazis trying to create?

What future did the eugenicists in the US try to create?

What future were the Japanese trying to create?
[One in of equality among nations, but equality dominated by Japan. The Japanese were (and to large extent still are) quite racist in their views, and in their own superiority.]

What future were the Japanese and Germans hoping to impose by going to war?

What are the implications of controlling the past? (e.g. “erased people”)

Readings for next week: Programs and information about the 1939 NY World’s Fair Additional - optional - resources can be found at the Sakai site)

(the ‘readings’ are only intended to give you ideas, and a feeling for the time.)

Writing: (total length, 5-ish pages) Write a description of what you would visit if you were at the 1939 NY World's Fair, if you had been born in 1921 (and so were 18 at the time of the event), and lived in New Brunswick, NJ?

How would you get to the event? Also, what would you eat? Drink? What souvenirs would you get? If you had a Cine-Kodak Eight-25 movie camera, what would you film? (Remember you can film at most 8 minutes of action, in segments of 30 seconds at a time.)

Would your experience (that is, the future the fair made you think was possible) be different if you had visited before September 1, 1939 than if you visited in September or October of 1939, or in 1940?
Week 4 - 1940's/1950s  Death, death, and more death

Comments on writing assignment?

WWII breaks out in 1939 (or 1932). How is this war different from the Great War?

What weapons were added to the arsenals of nations in WWII? What were there effects?

- Firebombs
- Nuclear weapons
- Tanks
- Assault Rifles (picture of German one)
- Long-range strategic bombers
- Bacteriological Warfare
- Rockets (show katuchka, v2)
- Unmanned “bombers” (v1)
- Suicide attacks (using aircraft) (show kamikaze attacks)

What concepts were new? (Douhet (“Command of the Air” (1921), Mitchell, “the bomber will get through”) (show Things to come sequence)

(Compare with Mahan’s “The Influence of Sea Power upon History” (1890))

That a nation’s entire population was a target (their will to fight, specifically, by killing big bunches of them. That there was no actual difference between military and non-military targets. Anyone of the enemy were proper targets. (“Total war” in a way that hadn’t been practiced since the days of the Huns, or the Mongols.)

[Skip this

Views of the future: Socialist/Communist utopia (with lots of dead capitalists)
Nazi “utopia” (with lots of dead non-aryans)
Four freedoms - what futures were they trying to make? ]

Nuclear nightmares - what assumptions were they based on?

why did “Hiroshima USA” and “Atomic Attack” resonate with US audiences (because for the first time
since the war of 1812, our own cities were at risk)
After WWII, what were the presumptions about a large-scale war?

(millions of dead, radioactive cities, war-to-the-maximum carried out against entire populations)

The rise of “rational” nuclear war fighting strategies — RAND, and think tanks. We’ll talk more about this next time. But the creation of “systems analysis” sought to study large systems of things - economics, medicine, transport, war fighting, production techniques.

The rise of statistical health studies (“epidemiology”), and the beginning of tests for specific cure drugs and vaccines. The “march of dimes”, and the eradication (more or less) of polio.
[Call back to the 1854 cholera study in London — determining a disease vector without actually knowing the disease mechanism]

Polio: identified as a specific airborne virus 1908. First vaccination program 1955. Declared ‘eradicated’ in the US in 1994. (to this day, 50-100 a year people still get it world-wide. Most recent case reported Nigeria, July 13, 2016. Pakistan and Afghanistan are still defined as “polio-endemic” — the last two countries to be so defined. The most recent US case was in 1999.)

Known since ancient Egyptian times, compaction of humans in cities made it more and more common, with epidemics appearing in the early 1900’s. These got worse as the century moved on, by 1950, over half-a-million people would be paralyzed or killed every year, world-wide. It would strike without warning, without obvious pattern. You’d just wake up paralyzed. Babies could get it in the womb, and die, starting in about the 6th month.

What expectations of medicine and disease grew out of this experience? What effects did the survivors of polio (that is, people crippled, but otherwise normal) have on the society as a whole in the following years?

[What happened to the “March of Dimes”?

1945 - National Survey and Construction Act to evaluate number of hospital beds available and fund construction where needed. Still in force as the Public Health Service
Act.

Question:
Radio -> TV. Movie-makers treat TV as the enemy. Why? What future did Hollywood miss? (Where Hollywood would quickly supplant NYC as the center of TV production; why? (because TV is short movies))

What future was foreseen in the United States, by the wealthy class? Middle class? Lower class? Has the United States always been trying to validate its promise of life, liberty, pursuit of happiness? (Why “pursuit”?)

Readings for next week:

- Colliers August 1950 (handout)
- Colliers October 1951 (handout)
- “Atomic War! 01” (handout)

Watch: Missile strike sequence from “Damnation Alley” (Sakai resource) (5 minutes)
- Disney’s “Magic Highway” (1958)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7icGIHPOviQ (not recommended, too long)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHjS9YBXzXU (9 minutes)

- Disney’s House of the future (part 1 and 2)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoCCO3GKqWY (9 minutes)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVMAeSNZZz0 (2:30 minutes)

Writing for next week:

- How is the Disney view of the future different from the 1939 world’s fair view? Or is it? (1-ish page)

- Write on an apocalypse to happen in the next 10 years. (4-ish pages)
  When?
  What? How does it start? How does it end?
  Why?
  Who lives? Why?
  Who dies? Why?
  A recovery scenario. How do we recover?

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Week 5 - 1960’s/1970s Money, money, and more money, in the aluminum future

if a meteor was going to strike the earth in 1 year, would you tell anyone? How about
10 years?

[BRING AFTER THE HOLOCAUST GAME]

Computers as oppressors; computers as liberators? (Who was right?)

Increase in speed and bandwidth of communications - email, file transfer, credit cards, many TV channels. How has this changed society from, say, 1940?

The rise of medical treatment of the food-chain — antibiotics and steroids for animals, irradiated foods; “silent spring” and the condemnation of millions to death by malaria (a sore subject with me.)

The illusion that ‘brushfire wars’ were the wars of the future; that thumb-wrestling with the Soviets was an end goal.

“We thought If we took enough drugs and read enough books we could change the world” - Grace Slick, Jefferson Airplane

Think tanks - the illusion of rationality; siop-62

The failure of the “rational” future — Cuban Missile Crisis (“that’s when we hope cooler heads will prevail” — in the midst of an escalating nuclear exchange: strike Cuba, they strike Turkey; we strike strike Russia military sites, they strike a us site — on the way to city-busting.)

Vietnam (Diem assassinations)

What future was the RAND Corporation and its like trying to create? How were they trying to do it? Why did they fail? [Because “game theory” doesn't work when whole populations are at risk. It fails entirely. Saying “we hope cooler heads prevail” is just empty words. Beyond a certain number of millions of dead, rationality is impossible.]

Milgram Experiment; Stanford Experiment

Population Bomb why it was completely wrong

*The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now. At this late date nothing can prevent a substantial increase in the world death rate...* [However, in reality the global death rate has continued to decline substantially since then, from 13/1000 in 1965–74 to 10/1000 from 1985–1990. Meanwhile, the population of the world has more
than doubled, while calories consumed/person have increased 24%. the percentage of the world's population who qualify as "undernourished" has fallen by more than half, from 33 percent to about 16 percent, since Ehrlich published *The Population Bomb.*]

Proposes using “temporary sterilants” added to the water and food supply. Sterilize entire populations.

Proposes a US government “Department of Popuslation and Environment” should be set up with the power to take whatever steps are necessary to establish a reasonable population size”. Whatever steps are necessary?

Only sending food aid to countries that have a “sufficient program” - in his view - of population control. That is, starving the rest to death.

Sterilize all men with three or more children. Period.

[What erlich wrong about? Well, basically everything. Food production outstripped the catastrophic failures he announced were coming. Wars for food simply did not occur. Political stability actually increased in areas in danger of massive famine. Distribution by aid organizations is inefficient, but effective.

(though Erlich continues to declare himself completely right, and that well, really he was “just raising awareness” by trying to scare us all into doing what he wanted, and we did - even though we didn’t.) Remember the JW's? Wrong repeatedly, but sticking to their religion? Turns out Erlich has a religion of his own — with himself as God.)

Where have we more recently seen an Erlich-like evasiveness about predictions and reality?
Global Warming. Remember the “hockey stick”? (Still declared right in many circles, even though shown to be entirely wrong?)

*Reading for next week:* [remove “The Psychohistorians” from “Foundation” by Asimov.]

“Computer reconstruction of fossil organisms” by Robert Olson, 1974.

[yes, 1974.]
Watch: Segments of “Andromeda Strain”, and “The President’s Analyst”
“Colossus the Forbin Project”, “Soylent Green” (Sakai resource),
“THX 1138” (Sakai resource)

Watch: House of the future (1967)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RRxqg4G-G4

Understanding the Complex Systems Around Us: Martin Schmidt
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGFLeqJEZTY

[ remove
Complex Adaptive Systems: 1 Complexity Theory
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7art8jsjlOI

TEDxRotterdam - Igor Nikolic - Complex adaptive systems
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jS0zj_dYeBE

Complexity Academy
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCutCcajxhR33k9UR-DdLsAQ
]

Writing for next week (5-ish pages)

Create a utopian society.
How is it organized?
Who lives there?
Who *doesn’t* live there?
How is order maintained?
How does it interact with other societies?
How do we get from now to then? How many years does it take?

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Week 6 - 1980’s/1990s Many futures lost

AIDS, ebola, over-medication (antibiotics for acne, and the like), the power-lines scare

How many people have died — total of AIDS in the US since 1980?
How many people died of malaria in that time?

Is the difference that we could see AIDS patients, but don’t see the dead from Malaria?

End of the Cold War, the sudden spate of little wars

The politicization of science: global warming, fracking, stem cells, cold fusion, changing the data to create the conclusions
The rise of video games

complexity theory: large systems that cannot be controlled, but can be observed and managed

Who had the most effect on the world: Elvis Presley, or Neil Armstrong, and why?

Assignment of futurism years-ahead

Reading: Watch “Connections, Yesterday, today, and tomorrow”
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2hdg0b_connections-yesterday-tomorrow-and-you_school

Writing: You have developed a time machine — congratulations! However, you are pretty sure you can only use it once (because use of it will probably make your own existence impossible), it’s only for about 10 seconds, and you cannot touch or physically affect anything in the past (because of the law of... uh, not touching things in the past. Yeah, that’s it.)

You are allowed to make one change to history. This can involve saying exactly one sentence (of no more than 30 words) to exactly one man or woman in history. You can be sure they will hear you, hear you exactly, and not believe you are a phantom or ghost (even though you kind of are.)

(1 page-ish) What would you say, who would it be to, and why?
(3 pages-ish) How would it affect the present (that is, our present)?
(1 page-ish) How would it affect the future?

An example might be to go to the White House on April 15, 1865, and say to Abraham Lincoln, “Do not go to Ford’s Theater tonight.” I’d say it to convince him not to go to Ford’s theater (and then explain - in my 1-ish page why paper why not going to Ford’s theater tonight is a good thing, and what you think he might do instead.)

Affecting the present? Reconstruction of the South is done entirely differently; the KKK is never invented, African-Americans are brought into the body politic in a much less cataclysmic manner. Andrew Johnson is never President. WEB DuBois founds the Department of Sociology at Harvard. In the present, race relations are entirely different. (And then why, what else might have changed as a result)

Affecting the future? With race relations in the US much less volatile, US aid to Africa is much more direct and effective; Africa becomes the most dynamic economy on earth (and so on.)

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Week 7 - 2000+ Computerized You
Cultural Shocks
Cultural catastrophes - cultural interactions “steel ax” people, Aztecs destroyed;
Lakota overwhelmed; Red Cloud’s war;
what happens if aliens come?

‘Weaponizing’ facebook?

Immersive Lifestyles (3d, second life, ‘Surrogates”, etc.) SL demo

Ubiquitous Communication, its pluses and minuses
How has ubiquitous communication and high-bandwidth communication
and access to huge (compared to even 10 years before) computing
resources changed society from, say, 1980?

Artificial Intelligence; artificial stupidity

Telegraph -> phone is same tech, but the immediacy of voice and the interactivity make
it an entirely different experience
Phone -> fax
Fax -> computer network
computer network -> cell
Cell -> wireless computing
wireless computing -> smart phone

Medicine - genetic therapies, microsurgeries, stem cell therapies
Increased lifespan. Lowered lifespan is bad. Is extended
lifespan good? the bureaucratization of medical practice
(NHS, obamacare, the VA)

summary of what we've learned;
what have we learned about futurism?
can we plan for “magic”?

Reading: Read “Tomorrowland” (September 2016)
Watch “House of the Future” (microsoft, 2013)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wh-LV28Quqs

“House of the Future” (Honda, 2015)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTW_7vIOLw

Writing: Outline of your future-view presentation (1 page, please)
Essay (3-ish pages) - what impact will Artificial
Intelligence have on the world of 30 years from now?
Why has it had so little impact so far? (Or has it?)
Essay (1-ish pages) You’ve seen a number of “houses of the future”.
Which one did you like the best, and why? (not necessarily the best predictor)

Week 8 - Assignment discussion - What will your future look like?

Discussion

what categories of life must be described?

What factors do you think will affect your (and everybody else’s) future?

NO END OF THE WORLD SCENARIOS

For ease of work, the future you’ll describe is in North America, but you should be cognizant of what’s happening in the rest of the world.

3 students - 20 years
3 students - 50 years
5 students - 100 years
5 students - 200 years
4 students - 500 years in the future

Mention
Politics
Economics
War
Crime
Communications
Entertainment
Education
Major Philosophies
Games
Music
Medicine
General Life

… is your future utopian, dystopian, evolutionary, or revolutionary?

if its apocalyptic, why? What effects does it have.

Writing: 5-10-ish pages of description for your presentation (which can be mockups yours slides, for instance)

Week 9 - Student presentations (15 minutes max each - power points or the like recommended)
people will be picked at random!
2*20 years
2*50 years
3*100 years
2*200 years
1*500 years

Writing: a 3-ish pages of critique of someone else’s presentation (which will be anonymized if discussed in class) - only those who didn’t get picked today.

Week 10 - Student presentations (15 minutes max each - - power points or the like recommended)
1*20 years
1*50 years
2*100 years
3*200 years
3*500 years

Writing: Nothing! You’re free!!!!