

# Technologies of Writing: Cultures of Writing from Stoicism to Software

## Graduate Course Proposal

This course asks its participants to think about the philosophical condition of writing as a technology used for discrete practices by human subjects. It theorizes the connection between writing and subjectivation along a historical trajectory, with major axis points at Plato, Roman Stoicism, early ascetic Christianity, and eighteenth-century enlightenment thought. In thinking about writing as a technology, as a technique practiced by human beings in conscious acts of self-encounter, the class posits a space where we can begin to theorize the place of writing within the emerging digital culture of new media.

### Grades

a brief analytic essay (~6 pages);  
a seminar paper(~20pgs);  
weekly analytic writings;  
regular, routine, engaged participation both in class & in electronic spaces.

### Reading List

*Most of these works will not be read in their entirety; the aim of the course is to initiate a sustainable investigative act, not to “cover” material. Each week we’ll maintain a trans-historic focus, with ancient texts juxtaposed against modern interpretations and contemporary scholarship. We’ll supplement the readings with a course pack of current scholarship that considers the material we’re investigating.*

Week 1: Plato, *Phaedrus*, *Letters*. Andrew Feenburg, *TextWords*

Week 2: Cicero *Tusculan Disputations*, *On Fate*. Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*

Week 3: Seneca, *Epistles*, *On Tranquility*. Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as an Other*

Week 4: Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, *Discourses*. Bernard Stiegler, *Acting Out*

Week 5: Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*. Alan Liu, *Local Transcendence*

Week 6: Michel Foucault *Dits et Ecrits*, *Technologies of the Self*, *Hermeneutics of the Subject*

Week 7: St. Athanasius, *Vita Antonii*, St. Augustine, *Confessions*. Leslie Kavanaugh, *Chrono-Topologies*

Week 8: Rene Descartes *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, *Discourse on Method*. Matt Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms*.

Week 9: Joseph Addison & Richard Steele *The Spectator*. Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*.

Week 10: Lord Kames *Letters*, *Introduction to the Art of Thinking*, Benjamin Franklin *Letters*, *Autobiography*, *Papers*. *Politics of Friendship*, (cont)

Week 11: Lord Shaftesbury *Askhmata*, *Letters*, *Characteristics*. Jacques Derrida, *Ear of the Other*.

Week 12: Locke *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Lev Manovich, *Info Aesthetics & Language of New Media*.

Week 13: Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time*

Week 14: Franco Berardi, *Ethereal Power*. Lev Manovich, *Cultural Software & Ideology*