

Small-Group Discussions

Names of those in your group: _____

Section (circle one): Section 2 (TR 1:40–3:00) Section 1 (TR 4:40–6:00)

Neil Postman identifies five aspects of technological change that he wants us to be aware of:

1. **Trade-off.** Any new technology gives something *and also takes something away*.
2. **Distribution.** The costs and benefits of technologies are not equally shared.
3. **Powerful idea.** Each technology contains within it a philosophy and a prejudice.
4. **Ecological.** Technological change is not additive, but ecological.
5. **Mythic.** Technollogy gets viewed as part of the natural-order of things.

Each group will be assigned *one* of the following technologies to focus on. Discuss among yourselves how the introduction and use of the technology you are looking at illustrates—or refutes—each of Postman’s five claims. Produce a page of notes and be prepared to present orally to the class. Not all technologies are as relevant to each claim as all others: focus on those of the five claims that seem most interesting and relevant in your case.

1. **Lecture-format classroom instruction** (~ 5th century AD?)
2. **Sunscreen** (~ 1928)
3. **Mobile phones** (~ 1983)
4. **iPod** (~ 2001)