Course Philosophy

Humanity is dynamic; that is to say, it is evolving - culturally, educationally, psychologically and sociologically. The traditional way of viewing this pageant of change through history is to look at Mankind's accomplishments and when they occurred. A better way might be to look at his tools and machines for clues as to where the twists and turns in our development have happened, and where they have led us. This course of historical study will peruse inventions, machines, and technology in general, beginning with the harnessing of fire, that have led humanity this way and that; culminating with a different look at our species, as we are today. Then, as a class, we'll boldly prognosticate the future. Historical searches and excursions will include, but not be limited to: Transportation, Education & Literacy, the Arts, Warfare, Communications, and Entertainment.

Course Description

In this two-semester course, you will read, think and converse. This is not a course where you memorize facts and regurgitate them on a test paper. Here, you will hold ideas, turn them in your hands, contemplate them, and make decisions upon them. All history is incomplete. Therefore, as we read, we'll make careful assumptions and discuss why we filled in the blanks as we did. In many ways, it is Mankind's tools that have evolved us into what we are today. We'll peruse that evolution, and decide if we are who we ought to be. Be prepared to talk in class about your thoughts. It will take us until the second semester before we can actually look specifically at the aesthetics, values and authority involved in this pageant. But by that time, we'll be armed with information and tools to look much more carefully at these issues than we could at this beginning point.

This history course is about making assumptions. It is not about memorizing dates! This history course can be fun.
Generally the shape of things will look like this:

Fall Semester-
1) Read Sarum (our text) and from it extract a timeline of technological advance.
2) Take one aspect of technological development, explore its history and prepare a presentation that will go on our website, and that you will present to us in class.
3) View four "Connections" videos in our library and review them.

Spring Semester-
1) We'll look at how the past has viewed its future, and how our present views its future.
2) We will create a web log (Blog) for preserving our class dialog.
3) We will relate the History of Mankind's technology to the Aesthetics, Values and Authority that permeate our culture.

When we're at our journey's end, you should have become a part of our intellectual community, capable of sharing ideas, arguing from a point of fact, and enjoying the company and camaraderie of our class members. In short, we will share scholarship.

"Technology – The Leader of History"
IDH 3005
Your assignments for this semester

Each class member will investigate an area of interest, leading to the class project of assembling a website; i.e. a compendium of gathered and sorted material. There will be infrequent guest lecturers.

We will read one chapter of Sarum each week. (Do not get behind.) You will view and review four of James Burks "Connections" programs.

View - James Burke, "Connections", PBS TV series in the '80's.