TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE IN PITTSBURGH



Freshman Seminar

FP0003, Fall 2016, University of Pittsburgh

Prof. Annette Vee; UTA: Mira Patel

Meeting time: TTh 4-5:15pm Meeting place: 321 Thackeray Hall

Course website: http://www.annettevee.com/2016fall_techandculture/

Prof. Vee's contact information: Office: 628 C Cathedral of Learning

Email: adv17@pitt.edu

Office Hours: T 12:30-2:30pm and gladly by appointment

UTA: Mira Patel mvp25@pitt.edu

Course Description

In this course, we will explore texts and ideas and assignments loosely based on *technology and culture*. We will ask (and perhaps answer): How do technology and culture intersect and affect each other? How is technology changing the ways we communicate? Because this course is designed also to transition to help you transition to your new life at Pitt, we'll be exploring some local cultures of technologies in Pittsburgh through field trips and local histories of technology and culture.

The theme of technology and culture will also inform the work you will do in this class. Beyond the traditional essays you may be accustomed to, you will write blog posts, create an audio essay and visual image, and do presentations. Peer review workshops, blog posts, and presentations will help to make you more comfortable composing and sharing your work with the class.

Course Goals

FP0003 combines the Intro to the Arts and Sciences class with the freshman writing class, Seminar in Composition (SC). SC is the course that most undergraduates take to fulfill the first of three writing-intensive requirements in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. While the readings and assignments

in this course vary from the standard SC course, this section, like all the others, consists of a sequence of assignments that will require you to:

1. Engage in writing as a creative, disciplined form of critical inquiry.

In this course, you'll be asked to use writing to generate ideas as well as explain them. You'll form questions, explore problems, and examine your own experiences, thoughts, and observations. Investigating a multifaceted subject, you'll be expected to make productive use of uncertainty as you participate in sustained scrutiny of the issues at hand.

2. Compose thoughtfully crafted essays [and other projects] that position your ideas among other views.

In response to reading and discussing challenging texts, you'll write essays [and compose other projects] in which you develop informed positions that engage with the positions of others. You'll analyze as well as summarize the texts you read, and you'll compose essays that pay close attention both to the ideas voiced by other writers and to specific choices they make with language and form.

3. Write with precision, nuance, and awareness of textual conventions.

You'll work on crafting clear, precise prose that uses a variety of sentence and paragraph structures. You'll be required to learn the conventions for quoting and paraphrasing responsibly and adeptly, and you'll be assisted with editing and proofreading strategies that reflect attention to the relation between style and meaning. You'll also have opportunities to consider when and how to challenge conventions as well as follow them.

4. Revise your writing by rethinking the assumptions, aims, and effects of prior drafts.

This course approaches the essay as a flexible genre that takes on different forms in different contexts—not as a thesis-driven argument that adheres to a rigid structure. Much class time will be devoted to considering the purpose, logic, and design of your own writing, and you'll be given opportunities to revise your work in light of comments and class discussion, with the aim of making more attentive decisions as you write.

You must earn a "C-minus" in order to receive your W credit for this class.

Course Requirements

This is a four-credit course, so you should expect a fairly heavy workload. Additionally, we only meet twice per week, so you will often have multiple things due at once. Since this course includes the "Introduction to Arts and Sciences" curriculum, we'll be talking some about how to juggle the workload. To succeed in this course, you will need to stay on top of assignments, participate actively in online and in-class discussions, and respect your peers in conversation and reviews of their work. Specifically, you will need to:

- complete all course readings;
- arrive on time and prepared for class meetings and conferences;
- participate in discussions online and in-class;
- draft, revise and submit all course projects;

- review your peers' work regularly and have your own work reviewed;
- submit all drafts, projects and work **on time** (day/hour that it is due; no credit is given for late drafts; late papers will normally be docked one letter grade per day, unless you get my approval for an extension before the due date).

If, at any time, you have questions or concerns about your ability to fulfill the expectations for this course, please contact Prof. Vee or Mira. We aim to help you succeed in the course, and together we can resolve any issue that may come up.

Course Readings

Readings for each week are listed on the course calendar (see below) by the day they are due to be read. You are not required to buy books or materials for this class; all readings will be available online through CourseWeb unless otherwise noted. In addition to the readings listed below, you will also be reading your peers' work and rereading your own. You should be interacting with all of these texts as you read them, so you may print them out to highlight and annotate them, take notes in a digital or physical notebook, or digitally annotate the texts using a program like Adobe Acrobat. We will regularly discuss your reading and writing strategies in class and in one-on-one conferences.

Grading

Participation in class	10%
Tech field trips	5%
IAS participation	10%
Final blog portfolio	15%
Full drafts, on time	10%
Image and Audio projects	10%
Final portfolio	40%

However well you've done in high school, bear in mind that this course will set higher standards for writing than you've probably experienced before. It's not uncommon for papers that might have earned an "A" in high school to be considered no better than a "C" in college. Here's how the University of Pittsburgh defines each grade level:

A = superior attainment

B = meritorious attainment

C = adequate attainment

D = minimal attainment

F = failure

Note that "meritorious" means commendable or praiseworthy: a "B," in other words, reflects a well-written paper, not an average result.

Late work will be docked points, unless prior arrangements are made with me for extensions, etc. I offer extensions only in extreme circumstances. Please note that a significant portion of your grade is simply turning in drafts on time.

Essays

You will write 5 essays for this course, ranging from three to eight pages long. Each essay will be revised at least two times, after peer review and after comments from Prof. Vee. Revising for this course does not mean editing. In other words, you will need to substantially rethink, rearrange, and revise your work. Do not be alarmed if this is new to you. Very few students enter Pitt knowing how to revise their writing at the college level, and this course is designed to help you learn how. Your writing will not be graded until the final portfolio, but I will give you hypothetical grades on your work as well as lots of feedback to improve.

Technology Log

At the beginning of the course, I will ask you to write a log of all of the technology you use in one day. You will turn in your raw log, accompanied with a cover letter reflecting on your use of technology for the day.

Tech Image of Pittsburgh

This assignment asks you to choose one current issue that is connected to technology and culture in Pittsburgh. After some research, you should learn enough about the issue to have a well-informed approach to it. Then you will create a visual argument that expresses your opinion of the issue and the larger questions it raises. A reflection on your composition process will be included in this assignment.

Local Technology Audio Interview

As you learn more about the influence of technology on the history of Pittsburgh, you'll need to connect to some local people here who know something about technology in this city: medical, industrial, digital, etc. Interview them, and record the interview with a high quality recorder (you can borrow one from Pitt). (If you can't find anyone to interview, I will give you alternatives, but I'd prefer you find someone to talk to.) Then you'll work on editing that audio into a 3-5min podcast-type piece, teaching all of us something about this aspect of technology and culture in Pittsburgh. You can, optionally add images to this audio composition.

Participation

In-class: Participation in the class consists of short writings in class and on the course blog, peer review, discussion, and your general contribution to the work we do together. Participation grades are by their nature subjective, which does not mean they are arbitrary.

Someone with an excellent participation grade:

- will have attended class and appeared engaged without fail;
- will have offered timely, insightful comments to his peers;
- will have always brought her readings or other materials to class;
- will have contributed regularly and thoughtfully to class discussions both online and offline.

Some people are more likely to speak up than others and some are more comfortable sharing ideas after they have had more time to process them; for these reasons, I offer both online (that is, written and not time-sensitive) and offline (that is, vocal and real-time) venues in which to participate in the class. It's normal to be more comfortable in one space than another, but I strongly believe that you will need to be proficient in sharing your ideas in real-time, asynchronous, written and face-to-face contexts to be a successful teacher, entrepreneur, employee, or anything else you may want to be in the future. Therefore, I will consider your participation across all of these venues and may call on you both in class and online to give you an opportunity to share your ideas. Please see me if you have questions about how to participate more actively in any area of the class.

Tech Field trips

One of the goals of this course is to introduce you to the wonderful city of Pittsburgh, where you will live for at least the next 4 years. To this end, I have scheduled several field trips outside of class that are connected to he theme of our class. All or most of the costs of these field trips will be covered by Freshman Programs. You are required to attend at least TWO of these field trips (counted in your participation grade), and you are encouraged to attend more. Additionally, you will post one entry and one response on the blog about each event (due several days afterward).

Field trips focused on Tech in Pittsburgh include (attend at least two):

Carrie Blast Furnace in Rankin (tentatively scheduled for Oct 2)

Pittsburgh Maker Faire at the Children's Museum.on the North Side (Oct 15 or 16)

Frick Museum / Clayton (Henry Clay Frick's house) in Regent Square (tentatively Nov 6)

Andy Warhol Museum / tech tour (Friday evening, to be scheduled)

Heinz History Center (tentatively to be scheduled for Sat or Sun, Nov 12 or 13)

On your own: Hack Pittsburgh, Girl Develop It, TechShop PGH, Code & Supply meetup.

IAS activities

In addition to the Tech field trips that are specific to our class, there will be several other field trips to introduce you to the great sights and museums in Pittsburgh. All of the costs of these field trips will be covered by Freshman Programs. You are required to attend at least ONE of these field trips (counted in your IAS participation grade), and you are encouraged to attend more.

Mira will assess your IAS participation and grade according to the following criteria:

2 points - Attendance to class (with the exception of 2 classes)

2 points - Neighborhood Project and Presentation

2 points - IAS field trip (Carnegie, Phipps, Randyland, or SPACE)

1 point - Hillman Library Attendance & activity

1 point - Time/Space tracking activity

1 point - Office hours for Prof Vee, Mira, or Writing/ Math Center

1 point - Friday @ 5 Film, (Oct 14, 21, 28): http://www.asundergrad.pitt.edu/offices/freshman-programs/common-reader/events-contests.html

Total: 10 points

Blog participation

The blog is a central space for you to wrestle with the ideas from the class. Participation on the blog will be not be graded per blog post, but instead in a blog portfolio of your best writing. This portfolio will include two posts and two responses of your choice, plus a cover letter addressed to Prof. Vee reflecting on your blog writing.

You will be split into three groups:

Group 1=last names A-Kn

Group 2=last names Ko-Z

Each week, one group will post to the blog and the other group will comment. Posts and comments should be at least 250 words long. They are due at 11:59pm on their due date. Mira and I will also occasionally post to the blog to offer you additional ways to reflect on the readings and ideas from class.

I'll add you to the blog as an author so that you can post to it. I'll have to approve your first comment on the blog, but after that, your comments will show up automatically (this helps combat spam comments).

Blog posts should ask probing questions about the readings or ideas from class; alternatively, they may extend an idea from class or point to a current event that connects to our discussions. I encourage you to do a little additional research on technologies or Pittsburgh to extend the ideas from our class. **Blog comments** should respond to a post by answering a posted question in a complex, thoughtful way or by extending the connection posted even further or in different directions.

You are welcome and encouraged to post more often than you are required to. The goal is for the blog to be a conversation about our ideas, not a series of monologues (as class discussion boards often are). Do not simply agree or disagree with your peers. Instead, comment on specific points and extend ideas and complicate theories. If you're doing it right, the word minimum shouldn't be your primary motivation; instead, you should think about spending the time and space necessary to reflect on complex ideas. Although you should generate and reflect on difficult ideas in your post, you are encouraged to write in a relatively informal, online style. Include links and images to illustrate your points and to make it more engaging! The blog is public (although your name will be anonymized) and so you should consider your posts carefully.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance in this course is required. Because this is a low enrollment course, your presence and contributions affect everyone. Regular attendance also means that you are writing and responding to writing regularly, and it means that your peers and I can give your writing the attention it deserves. For these reasons, you need to be in class, on time, prepared, every meeting. You have one free absence. Beyond that, I reserve the right to lower your final grade by one-half a letter grade for each time you miss class. If you miss more than two weeks total of this course (4 class meetings), you will be in danger of not passing this class.

It is your responsibility to get the assignments, class notes, and course changes from a classmate if you do miss a class. It is also your responsibility to keep track of and complete the missing work. In-class work cannot be made up. If you miss class on the day a written assignment is due, make arrangements to turn it in on time. As mentioned above, every day a project is late the grade drops by one letter grade.

I understand that things happen and occasionally you may need to miss a class because you're sick, you've missed your flight back to campus, or you have pressing personal or family issues. The policy above allows for one absence for any reason without penalty. If you need to be absent for some extraordinary reason—because of a severe accident or illness, a family emergency or death, a religious holiday—please let me know, and we will work something out. For such absences, either prior notification or subsequent documentation will be required.

Guidelines for Written Work

I have specified word limits for assignments rather than page limits so that you do not need to use wide margins or tiny, strange fonts to display your work. Please use reader-friendly fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Garamond, or Helvetica and sizes that are humane for your readers (10-12 point). For work that you bring into class in hard copy for peer review, please double spacing. For work you turn in online, please use single spacing. Work due in class is due physically in class, when class begins. Work due online is always due at 11:59pm of the due date.

Academic Integrity

The University asks us to include in our course descriptions this quotation from Pitt's Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (February 1974):

The integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation on the part of faculty and honest academic conduct on the part of students. To this end, students are expected to conduct themselves at a high level of responsibility in the fulfillment of the course of their study. It is the corresponding responsibility of faculty to make clear to students those standards by which students will be evaluated, and the resources permissible for use by students during the course of their study and evaluation. The educational process is perceived as a joint faculty-student enterprise which will perforce involve professional judgment by faculty and may involve—without penalty—reasoned exception by students to the data or views offered by faculty.

Plagiarism hurts the relationships and scholarship we construct during this class. Assignments for this course are designed to be relevant to your specific contexts—your own interest and experience with technologies—and are unlikely to be plagiarized in full. More commonly, students plagiarize by improperly quoting and documenting their sources. We will review how to properly document sources in class and I am happy to answer questions about how you can ensure that work you do for the class is your own. Additionally, please visit the English Department's site defining plagiarism and explaining how to properly document sources: http://www.english.pitt.edu/undergraduate/understand-and-avoid-plagiarism.

Should you plagiarize, consequences are severe: students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted above, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process that I initiate. A minimum sanction of a failing grade for the paper or project will be imposed.

Disability Resources

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please inform me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services (DRS) as early as possible in the term. You can reach DRS at (412) 648-7890 or (412) 383-7355 (TTY) and you can visit their office at 216 William Pitt Union. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free tutorial service for Pitt students. Writing Center consultants can help you learn how to generate ideas, organize your writing, and understand assignments. They can help you understand and deal with any sentence-level problems that you have, too. It's a great place to go in order to have a reader respond to your work so that you can do some intensive work on your writing. You can call for an appointment at (412) 624-6556 or make an appointment online: http://www.rich36.com/pitt/.

The writing center is located in 317B of O'Hara Street Student Center. Visit the Writing Center website at http://www.english.pitt.edu/writingcenter/ for more information.

Technology policy

Please turn off your cell phone **before** class begins and keep it inside your book bag, purse, etc—do *not* keep it on your desk during class. I allow and encourage the use of computers, netbooks, tablets, etc. in class for those who want to take notes digitally during class. These devices are *not* for socializing during class, however—during class you must log out of Facebook, Twitter, IM and the message boards you follow. Studies show that these activities are distracting to your ability to learn and participate. You may visit our blog, Wikipedia or dictionary sites, etc. to help you understand a concept we're discussing in class, but be prepared to explain any of your in-class Internet use to the entire class. If you are socializing online or on your phone (including texting) during class, be prepared to apologize to the class. Please contact me if you have specific questions about this policy.

Course Schedule

Life is complicated; consequently, this schedule is subject to change.

Week 1 (Aug 30 & Sept 1): Introduction to the course

Tues: Icebreakers, intro to the course, look at map of Pittsburgh, diagnostic writing,

Intro to the blog

Thurs: Reading due: William Zinsser, On Writing Well, pp. 1-12

Writing in college, editing vs. revision, and what writing means in this class

IAS: CourseWeb expectations and classroom civility, Q&A, How to talk to professors

Writing due: Your first blog post & comment: tell an anecdote about your relationship with technology

Assign essay #1: Writing about your writing

[IAS Fair: Pittsburgh Folk Festival, Sept 3&4, Sat 11am-10pm and Sun 11am-6pm, Schenley Plaza: http://www.pghfolkfest.org/ Lots of dancing and music and food from many different countries and heritages.] [IAS Fair, Friday, Sept 2: Unblurred Gallery Crawl in Friendship/Garfield, on your own] [IAS Fair, Friday, Sept 2, 6pm: Frick Friday http://www.thefrickpittsburgh.org/visitor-information/summer-fridays/?gclid=CO_Popeazs4CFQRehgodcXULPw (band plus picnicking, family friendly free event on the lawn of the Frick Mansion)]

Week 2 (Sep 6 & 8): Writing in college

Blogs: All groups comment on profvee's post by Weds, Sept 7

Tues: "Introduction," p. 3-39 and University of Pittsburgh, p. 323-338, in Toker's Pittsburgh: A New Portrait,

pay special attention to the history of technology in Pittsburgh

Assign Technology Log

Thurs: Writing due: Essay #1: 500-750 words on your relationship with writing (peer review in class)

IAS: Getting help: using Pitt resources: WC, Math assistance, Academic Resource Center, etc.

Assign neighborhood groups

Schedule conferences for next week in class

[IAS field trip: do your Pittsburgh Neighborhood visit sometime this weekend or next week]

[IAS Fair: Pittsburgh Chinese Cultural Festival, Sept 10, 11am-8pm, Schenley Plaza]

Week 3 (Sep 13 & 15): Technology & culture

Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night, Sep 9; Group 2 responds by Weds night, Sep 14.

Tues: Reading in class: Ruth Schwartz Cowen, "In the beginning," from A Social History of Technology

Writing due: Technology log: one day log of your uses of technology, plus a short reflection

Assign Essay #2: 750 words on your producing/consuming technology.

Thurs: Reading Due: Langdon Winner's "Technologies as Forms of Life"

IAS activity due: go to Writing Center and Math Assistance center in Ohara. Student Center

IAS activity due: Write me to set up a meeting

11:59pm, Writing due: Essay #1 (750 words) due online on CourseWeb

[Sept 9-14, outside of class: 15min confs with Prof. Vee in 628C CL. Discuss writing.]

Week 4 (Sep 20 & 22): Neighborhood presentations & workshops

Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Neighborhood group presentations

Thurs: Writing due: Essay #2 Peer review

Discussion on writing and academic integrity in class

IAS reading due: Read Pitt's policy on Academic Integrity: http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html Read Pitt English's explanation of plagiarism: http://www.english.pitt.edu/undergraduate/understand-

and-avoid-plagiarism

[IAS Field Trip/FP event: Visit to National Aviary, Sat, Sep 24, sign up at 320 Thackeray Hall]

Week 5 (Sep 27 & 29): Library visit / Homestead Strike

Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Listen to this radio story on the Homestead Strike of 1892:

http://wesa.fm/sound/2012/08/08/battle-homestead

Or 10 Days that Changed History Homestead Strike video

Thurs: Library Day: Meet in Hillman Library

Reading due: Pitt Library Guide & SAILS survey http://pitt.libguides.com/ias

11:59pm, Writing due: Essay #2 online on CourseWeb

[Tech field trip: Carrie Blast Furnace, Sunday, Oct 2(?): https://www.riversofsteel.com/things-to-do/guided%20tours/]

Week 6 (Oct 4 & 6): Technology is women's work

Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Reading due: Ruth Schwartz Cowen, "How We Get Our Daily Bread, or the History of Domestic

Technology Revealed"

Thurs: Reading due: Susan Kleinberg, "Technology and Women's Work... in Pittsburgh"

Assign Essay #3, 1200 words on technology and your family

[IAS Fair, Friday, Oct. 7: Unblurred Gallery Crawl in Friendship/Garfield, on your own]

[IAS Fair, Oct 6-9: VIA Festival (music, arts, technology, hipsters): http://www.via-festival.com/2016/]

[Oct 7-12, outside of class: 15min confs with Prof. Vee in 628C CL. Discuss blogs.]

Week 7 (Oct 11 & 13): Uses of technology

Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Reading due: Jameson Wetmore, "Amish Technology," IEEE Technology & Society

In class, Amish on technology:

http://www.npr.org/sections/alltechconsidered/2013/09/02/217287028/amish-community-not-anti-

technology-just-more-thoughful Optional: Howard Reingold, "Look Who's Talking," WIRED, 1999: http://www.wired.com/1999/01/amish/

Thurs: Writing due: Essay #3, peer review in class

IAS: Discuss time management

IAS: Assign Time / space tracking project.

[Tech field trip: Pittsburgh MakerFaire, Oct 15 or 16: http://makerfairepittsburgh.com/]

[Friday@5 Film, Oct 14, 157 Benedum: Bard Ermentrout, Distinguished University Professor in the Department

of Mathematics presents *Contagion*.]

Week 8 (Oct 20): Understanding ourselves

Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: No class (your Monday classes meet today instead)

Thurs: "The Man with the Golden Cells" (45min)

Writing due: Time /space tracking project

11:59pm, Writing due: Essay #3, on CourseWeb

[Friday@5 Film, Oct 21: <u>Bryan Hanks</u>, Associate Professor in the <u>Department of Anthropology</u> presents <u>Raiders</u> of the Lost Ark.]

Week 9 (Oct 25 & 27): Medical technology & ethics

Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Reading due: Patenting the Sun, on Jonas Salk (excerpts)

Assign Essay #4, on technology in your field

Thurs: Reading due: The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks (excerpts)

[Friday@5 Film, Oct 28: <u>Adam Leibovich</u>, Professor in the <u>Department of Physics and Astronomy presents *Donnie Darko*.]</u>

Week 10 (Nov 1 & 3): Peer review, and the importance of liberal arts

Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Writing due: Essay #4, peer review in class

Thurs: Reading due, IAS: "Only Connect," on the idea of a liberal arts education

IAS: registering, knowing what options are open to you for majors, ugrad research, study abroad

IAS: Asking for recommendations

Assign Essay #5 on technology in Pittsburgh, Tech image, and Tech audio assignments

[Tech Field Trip: Frick Museum / Clayton, Sunday afternoon(?):http://www.thefrickpittsburgh.org/visitor-information/tour/]

Week 11 (Nov 8 & 10): Composing in sound

Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Writing workshop // medical ethics

11:59pm, Writing due: Essay #4, on CourseWeb

Thurs: Audacity workshop (do Lynda.com "Audacity Up and Running" 1h45min tutorial before class)

[Tech Field trip: Heinz History Center Sat or Sun afternoon(?):

http://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/exhibits/pittsburgh-tradition-of-innovation]

Week 12 (Nov 15 & 17): Composing in image

Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Essay #5 peer review

IAS checklist: have we covered everything you want to know?

Thurs: Photoshop workshop (do Lynda tutorials before class)

Week 13 (Nov 22 & 24) Thanksgiving week

All blogs are optional after this point.

Tues: Workshop time

11:59pm Writing due: Essay #5 on CourseWeb

Thurs: Class canceled for Thanksgiving

Week 14 (Nov 29 & Dec 1): Wrapping up

Tues: Writing Due: Tech image and audio projects due, peer review in class

Thurs: Final wrap-up and discussion (321 Thackeray)

(do blog survey and FP survey) *Writing due:* Final blog portfolio

Week 15 (Dec 6 & 8): Final Presentations

Tues: Presentations of Technology in Pittsburgh projects

Thurs: Presentations of Technology in Pittsburgh projects

11:59pm Writing due: Tech image and audio projects due on CourseWeb

Tues, Dec 13: FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE (final revisions of all 5 essays, including drafts, in Prof. Vee's mailbox)