

# Blogging in History of Technology (HIST/STS 2715)

## Getting Started

- **Getting your own blog site.** Your first task is to set up your own personal blog page on VT's secure WordPress site. To do so is pretty simple. Go to <http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/> and click on "sign up for your own blog here." Consult this link to help you customize your blog and familiarize yourself with VT's WordPress site: <https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/support/documentation/>
- **Small things that will make a big difference:**
  1. Choose a user name on WordPress that is close to your real name. Good=Hirsh. Bad=Terminator94. If you already have a blog account, set up another site for use in this course.
  2. When you set up your blog, check the box that allows search engines to index your site. Go to Dashboard → Settings → Privacy. Next, click "Allow Search Engines to Index this Site," and make sure that no other option is checked.
  3. On the dashboard, choose "settings" and "discussion." You may keep the boxes checked that ask for a user to provide an email (this will not display when the comment is published), but please uncheck the boxes that hold comments for moderation. (It is easy to change this back at the end of the semester.)
  4. Check the main course website to confirm that your blog has been syndicated. Your post(s) will appear on the main page, and your blog's title will appear on the "contributors" page. It may take up to 24 hours for this action to occur, so please be patient. The main blog updates every hour, so even after your URL has been added, it may take a while for your post to show up.
- As soon as you have set up your account, please send the URL of the blog site to Prof. Hirsh ([richards@vt.edu](mailto:richards@vt.edu)). He will add it to the mother blog for the course (<https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/2715f18/>). Please set up the blog no later than 5:00 PM, Monday, August 27.

## Blogging Basics

You are required to create blog posts for each of the reading summaries you're assigned. Additionally, you need to comment on another person's blog at least once every other week (12 times over the course of the semester). You may, of course, post and comment more frequently. The posts can include text, images, video, and audio files. See the syllabus, and pay attention in class for more details about these assignments. Please learn to use the "Insert read more" tag so your post doesn't take up too much space on the mother blog.

I expect the blog will help you become more engaged with the course materials and help you develop a deeper and more sophisticated reading and writing in the field of history. Moreover, I think these blogging exercises will assist you in becoming more adept at historical analysis and more proficient in locating and using historical sources.

## Commenting Basics

Reading and responding to other people's blog posts gives you the opportunity to ask questions about a particular topic, elaborate on a point made in the blog post, relate the material in your own post (or another student's) to the post you're commenting on, and generally reflect on how the post helps you better understand your efforts to read and write history more effectively.

## The History of Technology Mother Blog

Your individual blogs are syndicated to the main course blog, aka "the mother blog" (<https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/2715f18/>). Syndication means that your posts will be "fed" to this site, which will serve as the gateway to the course.

Fair warning: The use of blogging in classes remains somewhat experimental, and the ride may be bumpy as we figure things out. It may also be necessary to make adjustments to assignments and expectations along the way. Please fasten your seat belts.

I am grateful to Professors Amy Nelson and Ed Gitre for allowing me to modify her instructions (above) and for their kind help in teaching me how to use blogs in ways that enhance the classroom experience.