Seminar Task | **Technology in Society and Everyday Life: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives**

Part 2 of the course deals with historical and contemporary perspectives on technology in society and everyday life. This includes questions such as: How do historians understand technology? What drives technological development? How can we assess the importance or impact of technologies? Does technology lead to abundance or scarcity?

The purpose of the seminar task is to reflect on the literature, videos and key themes of part 2 of the course, which also serves as preparations for the seminar discussion on February 13th. Please email the task to jakob.grandin@csduppsala.uu.se on Friday, February 13th at the latest. The task has two parts and will be graded pass/fail.

1) Discuss at least two of the following three questions (2 pages)

a) Nye and Edgerton discuss a number questions relating to technology and society. How do they define technology, and what is the relationship between technology and social processes? Both authors also argue that technological development is not inevitable or deterministic. What do they mean by that? How does Nye's and Edgerton's perspectives on technology relate to other perspectives on technology and society that you have touched upon in the course so far?

b) Does technology lead to abundance or scarcity (or both)? In what ways? Does technological development automatically lead to progress in human terms? Relate your answer to Alf Hornborg's brief paper on the Industrial Revolution. What does he mean by space-time appropriation and environmental load displacement? How does Hornborg understand the role of technology in these processes? How does Hornborg's argument relate to other understandings of the relationship technology and prosperity that you have read or seen in the course so far?

c) David Nye writes that "[t]echnologies are not foreign to 'human nature' but inseparable from it" (p. 2) and Donna Haraway argues that we are all cyborgs. What is the essence of Haraway's cyborg argument? How do you understand the relationship between human nature and technology? How does technological development interconnect with everyday practices, values and ideologies?

2) Analyze a video lecture based on your discussion in part 1 of this seminar task (1 page)

The video lectures for part 2 represent different perspectives on the relationship between technology, society and everyday life. Choose one of the video lectures (for example Diamandis, Patel, Turkle, Rifkin, Brynjolfsson or Knabe) and analyze it, using your discussion in part 1 of this seminar task as a starting point (you are of course free to connect to other perspectives from the course as well). Possible questions to consider are:

• What perspectives on technology and society are represented in the video lecture?
• Which understanding of the drivers of technological development are represented in the lecture? Does the lecture portray a deterministic view on technological development?
• Does technology lead to abundance or is technological progress a zero sum game?
• Which connections between technology, society, humanity and everyday life that are highlighted in the lecture?