

Arbeitsgruppe **10** **Technologies of Nature, Natures of Technology:  
Contemporary Perspectives on the Given and the Made**

We live in a time in which technology is revealing itself as an agent of change on both the global scale as well as on the mundane level of the everyday. Since the advent of photography, technological advancements have allowed for the reproduction and dematerialization of cultural and artistic objects. This technological tendency to allow for virtual records of human activity goes hand in hand with advancements in the natural sciences that promise an ever deeper understanding of the material processes and laws of nature itself. Technical instruments, tools, but also logical devices of argument both lead to the discovery of parts of nature at the same time as they put us out of touch with our object of inquiry. Rather than seeing in technology a neutral 'thing' that can be thought separately from its user and from the environment in which it is put to use, this course will engage with a range of ideas that conceive of technology as an integral part of our access to and comprehension of nature.

This course will delineate two divergent but yet interrelated ways in which a specific problem has been approached in Western thought. This is the problem of how nature tends to withdraw from the perception, apprehension, and grasp of human beings; the one trajectory is focused on deceleration and conservation ('Orphism'), the other is geared towards acceleration and emancipation ('Prometheanism'). Yet, the 'Orphic' reverence for the mysteries of life cannot simply be contrasted with the 'Promethean' willingness to enhance the natural, as this leads straight back to the idealized view of a theoretical divide between nature and artifice.

This course will pay attention to contemporary philosophies of technology and recent developments in movements like speculative realism and new materialism. The tension between the natural and the artificial, that is, between the given and the made, will allow us to discuss the ways in which we categorize objects in the world as either living or dead, as worthwhile or discardable.

The preferred language will be English, although, depending on the text, discussions will also be held in German.



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Studierende aller Fächer, insbesondere der Philosophie, Literatur-, Medien- und Kulturwissenschaften