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David F. Noble Papers

1977-2010
16 boxes (22.5 linear feet)
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[Read collection overview](#)

David F. Noble was a critical and highly influential historian of technology, science, and education, writing from a strong leftist perspective. Receiving his doctorate at the University of Rochester, Noble began his academic career at MIT. His first book, *America By Design* (1977), received strong reviews for its critique of the corporate control of science and technology, but proved too radical for MIT, which denied him tenure despite strong support from his peers. A stint at the Smithsonian followed, but ended similarly, and he continued to face opposition in his career for his radicalism and persistence. After several years at Drexel (1986-1994), Noble landed at York University, where he remained committed to a range of social justice issues, including opposition to the corporatization of universities. Among his major works *Forces of Production* (1984), *A World Without Women* (1992), *The Religion of Technology* (1997), *Digital Diploma Mills* (2001), and *Beyond the Promised Land* (2005). Noble died of complications of pneumonia in December 2010, and was survived by his wife Sarah Dopp and three daughters.

The challenges of academic freedom and corporate influence that Noble confronted throughout his career, and his trenchant analysis of technology, science, and religion in contemporary culture, form the core of this collection. Although the files relating to his first book were mostly lost, each of his later books is well represented, accompanied by general correspondence, documentation of his lawsuits against his employers, and selective public talks and publications. Noble's time at York is particularly well documented, including content relating to his principled stand against grading students.

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Background on David F. Noble

NOTE HERE

Scope of collection

The David F. Noble papers contain documents and materials from Noble's career with a significant amount of material relating to his published books and his role in the academic pushback against the involvement of corporations and university administrations in education. Included are materials from courses that he taught at several universities, research, publications, and drafts.

Series descriptions

[Series 1. Professional Papers](#)

1977-2010

5 boxes (7.5 linear feet)

Noble's professional papers include material related to his time at Drexel University, Harvey Mudd College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Smithsonian, and at York University as well as material relating to the International Space University and the National Coalition for Universities in the Public Interest. Included are correspondence, syllabi, course readings, media publications, documents relating to several academic legal cases, and conference CDs, transcripts, and handwritten notes.

[Series 2. Writing and Research](#)

1968-2011

10 boxes (13.5 linear feet)

Throughout his career, Noble published several books and numerous articles on technology, society, history, and education. Included in this series are his research, drafts, related conference tapes, and interactions with readers for his professional writing. In addition the series includes some correspondence, as well as publications and articles written by others collected by Noble.

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