

**Science, Technology, and Society**  
**STAS 325 L01**  
**Technology within Contemporary Society**  
**Fall 2010**  
**Lectures, M,W 10:00; Labs F 9:00, 10:00 or 11:00**

**Instructor:** Cooper H Langford  
**Office Location:** SA 258A (inside 258)  
**Office Phone:** 403 220 3228  
**E-Mail:** chlangfo@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** See course on Blackboard  
**Office Hours:** M.W 11:00 – 1:00

**Additional Information**

The above office hours will be observed as closely as possible, but meetings and similar appointments often interfere. I am happy to meet with students at other times and I am normally available between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. Some evening appointments could be arranged. The best option is to send an email giving two times that are good for you and I will reply.

**Course Description**

This course will examine a series of key questions about technology in our lives. Examples will include the following:

- Does technology control us?
- Does it lead to sustainable abundance or ecological crisis?
- Through technology do we work more or less, better or worse?
- Is technology leading to cultural uniformity or diversity?
- Is technology predictable?

These questions do not have unambiguous answers and the course will invite you to analyze aspects of them and develop your own perspectives aided by insights from lectures and reading drawn from several disciplines

## **Objectives of the Course**

The key objective of the course is to stimulate thinking about the roles of technology in contemporary society and how society shapes the technology and those roles. This will provide an opportunity to enhance skills in analytic thinking as well as written and oral communication.

## **Internet and electronic communication device information**

It is expected that all cell phones will be turned off during class. Laptops will be valuable but should be devoted to class relevant work such as lecture slides from Blackboard or searches during seminars. .

## **Textbooks and Readings:**

David E. Nye *Technology Matters: Questions to Live With*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2006. (paperback) This text is available on-line at the library, but having a hard copy (inexpensive) is highly desirable. You will probably want access during the Friday sessions.

The textbook chapters are not long. Additional reading found on the course Blackboard will accompany each topic to give a different perspective and you will need to use library and internet resources for the term project.

## **Assignments and Evaluation**

In addition to lectures, the course will have a series (approx. 7) of short group assignments based on a discussion of an issue related to one of the questions. The assignments will be developed from group discussions in class and written in class, but there will be a very short preparatory assignment for each. These short in class group papers will count for 15% of the course mark.

There will be a term test with both short answer and essay questions tentatively scheduled for October 22nd. It will count for 15% of the course mark.

There will be a term project assignment based on analysis of a current or recent controversy involving the uses of a technology and the perspectives of the major stakeholder groups. Normally these will be completed as group work with four participants. The results will be presented briefly in class near the end of term and a project report (written or multi-media) will be due on the last day of classes. The presentation will count for 10% of the term mark and the report for 25%.

The final examination will include both short answer and essay questions and will count for 35% of the course mark.

(Note that 50% of the mark in this course is based on open ended student initiated contributions.)

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.

Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

### **Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: YES**

Please note: If your class is held in the evening, the Registrar's Office will make every attempt to schedule the final exam during the evening; however, there is NO guarantee that the exam will NOT be scheduled during the day.

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act**

This course is conducted in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). As one consequence, **students should identify themselves on all written work by placing their name on the front page and their ID number. Also you will be required to provide a piece of picture identification in order to pick up an assignment or look at a final exam from SS320 after classes have ended.**

For more information see also <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>.

### **Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, although to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. For details see <http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/needtoknow>. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented.

If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: [www.efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca)

## Grading System

The grading in this course is based on letter grades and the university standard 4 point grading system:

A+,A 4.0: A-: 3.7: B+ 3.3: B 3.0: B- 2.7: C+ 2.3: C 2.0: C- 1.7: D+ 1.3: D 1.0:

Rarely, numerical marks must be converted to the letter grade system. In these cases conversion will be guided by the Communication and Culture conversion chart shown below (Revised, effective September 2008).

	Grading Scale
A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

## Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. Readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. This includes assignments submitted in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media, and material taken from such sources.

Please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (MacEwan Student Centre 4<sup>th</sup> floor, [efwr.ucalgary.ca](http://efwr.ucalgary.ca)) if you have any questions regarding how to document sources.

## Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and the consequences thereof please see the current University of Calgary Calendar at the following link;  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability who may require academic accommodation, it is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre (220-8237) and discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of the course.

### **Students' Union**

For details about the current Students' Union contacts for the Faculty of Arts see  
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/governance/elections/home.html>

### **Student Ombudsman**

For details on the Student Ombudsman's Office see  
<http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

### **Emergency Evacuation and Assembly points**

For information on the emergency evacuation procedures and the assembly points see  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

### **"SAFEWALK" Program -- 220-5333**

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night -- call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot booths.

### **Ethics**

Whenever you perform research with human participants (i.e. surveys, interviews, observation) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve of your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see

The Department of Communication and Culture Research Ethics site:  
<http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics>

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreb>

The detailed schedule of class activities and readings will be found on the course Blackboard before the start of classes.