Science, Technology, and Society
STAS 325 L01
Technology within Contemporary Society
Fall 2013
Lectures, W, F 12:00; Labs M 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, M 10:00

Instructor: Dr. Cooper H Langford and Dr. Amanda Williams

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Web Page: http:// See course Blackboard

Office Hours: W,F   1:00 – 2:30 PM

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 centrted around the issue 'does technology control us or does our society control technology?'. Examples of questions the course will include are the following:

- Does technology determine how it is used?
- Does it lead to sustainable abundance or ecological crisis?
- Through technology do we work more or less, in ways that are better or worse?
- Is technology leading toward cultural uniformity or diversity?
- Is technology predictable?

These questions do not have unambiguous answers and the course will invite you to begin from your own experience with technology, 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 how technology shapes contemporary society and how and to what extent society shapes technology and chooses its roles.

The course provides an opportunity to enhance skills in analytic thinking as well as written and oral communication.

Internet and electronic communication device information

This course will use interactive classroom technology called *TopHat* Items presented in class on screen can be answered by text message or on the website. Your cell phone with the Top Hat number stored will be the best tool. The university has acquired a site license for this service. You will be able to register with www.tophat.com at no charge.

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, approx. $20.00) is highly desirable. You will probably want access to it during the Monday sessions.

The textbook chapters are not long. Additional reading found through 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 (normally 7) of short group assignments based on a discussion of an issue related to one of the topic questions. The assignments will be developed from group discussions in class and written in the Monday "lab" class. These short in class group papers (along with one mark available for participation in Top Hat will count for 15% of the course mark. The grade will be based on the *best seven* of these 8 items. In the Top Hat grade, participation counts.

A first intra-term test with both short answer and an essay questions is tentatively scheduled for October 11th class. It will count for 20% of the course mark. A second intra-term test is tentatively scheduled for November 18th class with both short answer and an essay questions. It will count for 25% 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. These will be completed as group work with a group of four to six 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. A brief term

project proposal indicating the project group membership, title, aims, and initial bibliography will be due Oct. 7th. The presentation will count for 10% of the term mark and the report for 25%

5% of course mark will be based on participation in class, on Blackboard discussion groups, on Top hat (if counted in the 7) and as audience for others' presentations.

There is NO registrar scheduled final examination.

(Note that 55% of the mark in this course is based on open ended student initiated activities.

All assignments must be completed or a grade of F may be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment.
Note: Please hand in your essays directly to your lecture or lab 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: NO

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 up to 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://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: http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

Grading System

In this class, you will receive grades in the letter grade 4-point scale (2.7, 3.0, 3.3) *rather than* percentages.   Sometimes you may receive grade points between letter grades. 3.5 is the mathematical mid-point between a B+ (3.3) and an A- (3.7) and 3.15 is the mid-point between a B (3.0) and a B+ (3.3), etc.. Only in the case of short answer questions on exam papers will the percentages given below guide assignment of the grade point value. Otherwise, all assignments and exam essays are graded on the letter grade scale.

 The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture: The grade point values are established for the university as a whole.

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see U of C Calendar: Academic Standing)
A+	96-100	4
A	90-95.99	4
A -	85-89.99	3.7
B+	80-84.99	3.3
B	75-79.99	3
B-	70-74.99	2.7
C+	65-69.99	2.3
C	60-64.99	2
C-	55-59.99	1.7
D+	53-54.99	1.3
D	50-52.99	1
F	0-49	0

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 (3rd Floor Taylor Family Digital Library, http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support) 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 Student Accessibility Services (220-8237, http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/) 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.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds

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 especially including *term projects* in this course, 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

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

The tentative schedule of class activities and reading assignments is posted on the course Blackboard before the start of classes.