

**Science, Technology and Society (STAS) 325: Lecture 20**  
**Technology within Contemporary Society**  
**Spring 2011**  
**Tuesday & Thursday: 14:00 - 16:45**  
**SA145**

**Instructor:** Amanda Williams  
**Office Location:** SS209  
**E-Mail:** [williaam@ucalgary.ca](mailto:williaam@ucalgary.ca)  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Course Description**

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

- Does technology control us?
- Does technology 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?

The course will invite you to analyze aspects of these questions and develop your own perspectives aided by insights from lectures and readings drawn from several disciplines.

**Objectives of the Course**

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

**Internet and electronic communication device information**

Laptops are permitted in class as long as they are used EXCLUSIVELY for note taking. If this privilege is abused the instructor will request the student to come to class without their computer.

Cell phones should be turned off during class and texting is NEVER permitted.

**Required Textbook:**

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 since you will probably want access to it during class.

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**

The assignments and exams are intended to evaluate your knowledge of some of the major ideas and issues reviewed in class and your text.

**1) Short Group Assignments (20%):** The class has a series of short group assignments (5 with an optional one you can miss) based on a discussion of an issue related to one of the book's key questions. The assignments will be developed from discussions in class and written in class. There will be a very short individual preparatory assignment for each (ungraded, but necessary for the group work). These short in class group papers count for 15% (total) of the course mark. **YOU MUST ATTEND CLASS TO GET THESE GRADES (Tentative dates are: May 19, 26, June 7, 9, 14, 16).**

**2) Mid Term Test (20%): May 31** There will be a test with a mixture of questions (multiple choice, short answer and essay questions).

**3) Group Project Assignment (25%):** There is a term group 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 in a group of four students. The project will be presented briefly in class near the end of term (**June 21 & June 23**) and a project report (written or multi-media) will be due on the last day of classes (**June 23**). The presentation counts for **10%** of the term mark, and the report for **15%**.

**4) Annotated Bibliography (5%):** Each group will prepare a brief annotated bibliography for the group project. The annotated bibliography will be due on **May 26**.

**5) Final Exam (30%):** There will be a (Registrar scheduled) final examination that will include a mixture of questions (multiple choice, short answer and essay questions).

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: Yes**

### **Policy for Late Assignments**

Assignments should be handed in during lectures as indicated or in on the date they are due. **No email submissions will be accepted unless specified such as for your final assignment.** Students that anticipate delays should arrange with the instructor, PRIOR to the deadline (at least a day), an appropriate time and place to hand in the assignment. No late assignments will be accepted without a prior agreement between the instructor and student. Without this agreement late assignments will receive a zero.

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.

### **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](http://www.efwr.ucalgary)

### **Grading System**

The following grading system is used in the Department of Communication and Culture: (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

Where a grade on a particular assignment is expressed as a letter grade, it will normally be converted to a number using the midpoint of the scale. That is, A- would be converted to 87.5 for calculation purposes. F will be converted to zero.

### **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>

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

A schedule of lectures and readings, and detailed assignment descriptions, will be made available on Blackboard.