

**Science, Technology and Society (STAS) 325 – L/B21  
Technology within Contemporary Society  
Spring 2011**

**Saturday: 8:00-12:30 Class Dates: May 7, 14, 21, 28; June 4, 11, 18**

**Instructor:** Dr. Linda Vennard  
**Office**  
**Location:** SS209  
**Office Phone:** n/a  
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**Web Page:** See Blackboard  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

### **Additional Information**

Please note office hours are 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?

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 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**

Students are encouraged to bring their laptops, the use of which will be during designated times in class and only for purposes of the class, and otherwise not permitted. No texting or cell phone use permitted in class.

### **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 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**

**Short Group Assignments (15%):** The class has a series of short group assignments (approximately 6) based on a discussion of an issue related to one of the 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. The short group Assignments will be distributed throughout the course (approximately one per class, excluding the last class, i.e. on May 7, 14, 21, 28 and June 4, 11), and will be done in class during assigned Lab times.

**Term Test (15%):** There will be a test with both short answer and essay questions on May 28, 2011.

**Group Project Assignment:** 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 in a group of four students. The project will be presented briefly in class near the end of term (on June 18, 2011) and a project report (written or multi-media) will be due on the last day of classes (June 18, 2011). The presentation counts for 10% of the term mark, and the report for 20%.

**Annotated Bibliography (5%):** Each group will prepare an annotated bibliography for the group project. The annotated bibliography will be due May 14, 2011.

**Final Exam (35%):** There will be a (Registrar scheduled) final examination that will include both short answer and essay questions.

(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**

Faculty 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 [www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/info](http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/info). 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**

In this class, you will receive grades in the 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.

The following grading system is used in the Faculty of Communication and Culture: (Revised, effective September 2008)

Letter Grade	Grading Scale	Grade Point Value (see <a href="#">U of C Calendar: Academic Standing</a> )
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 (SS 106, [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 Communication and Culture see [www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/su](http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/su)

**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/compliance/ethics/info/undergrad/>

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings**

A schedule of lectures and readings, and detailed assignment descriptions, will be made available on or before the first day of classes.