

**University of Calgary**  
**Department of Communication, Media and Film**

**Science, Technology and Society STAS 325, L02**  
**Technology Within Contemporary Society**

**Spring 2015**

**Sat., May 16 – Sat., June 20**

**Lectures, Saturday 9:00–1:20; Tutorial, Saturday 1:30–2:20**

**Instructor:** Dr. Meaghan Brierley  
**Office:** SS307 (shared office space)  
**E-Mail:** m.brierley@ucalgary.ca  
**Web Page:** D2L available through MyUofC portal  
**Office Hours:** Thursdays 2:00–4:00 or by appointment

### **Course Description**

This course will examine a series of key questions about technology in our lives centred around the issue “does technology control us or does our society control technology?” Examples of questions the course will explore include the following issues:

- 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**

At the completion of this course, students will be able to

- Evaluate the roles of technology in contemporary society and how society shapes the technology and those roles.
- Describe and apply theoretical perspectives to technology within contemporary society.
- Debate the challenges and perceived benefits of technology.
- Apply enhanced skills in analytic thinking through written and oral communication.

### **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 Saturday sessions.

The textbook chapters are not long. Additional reading found through the course D2L will accompany topics to give a different perspective and you will need to use library and Internet resources for the term research paper.

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

The rules and guidelines about the use of Internet and electronic devices (laptops, cell phones etc.) will be set in class.

### **Assignments and Evaluation**

In-class tutorial papers:	20%
Participation:	10%
Mid-term: (May 30)	15%
Group Presentations (June 13 & 20) and Group Research Report (June 20):	30%
Final Exam:	25%

**In-class tutorial papers:** In addition to lectures, the course will have a series (one each Saturday) of short group assignments based on an issue related to one of the topic questions raised by Nye. These short papers (6 in total) will count for 20% of the course mark.

**Participation:** Four pre-assignments, consisting of 1-5 brief one-sentence answer questions, will be based on the chapters assigned for that day, a hard copy and due at 9am. Four participation marks will be given for peer assessment (during end-of-term presentations), and three participation marks will be given for work completed in class. Ten out of these eleven participation marks will be counted towards the final participation mark (10%).

**Mid-term:** The mid-term of both short answer and essay questions is scheduled for May 30<sup>th</sup>. It will count for 15% of the course mark.

**Group Presentation and Research Report:** There will be a term project assignment based on an analysis of a current or recent *controversy involving the uses of a technology*, identifying the perspectives of the major stakeholder groups and their relationships to each other. 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 (June 13 and June 20) and a research report (written) will be due the last class (June 20). The presentation will count for 10% of the term mark and the research report for 20%.

**Final Exam:** There will be a registrar-scheduled final examination for this course. It will be a cumulative exam of short answer and essay questions.

**Registrar-scheduled Final Examination:** Yes

All assignments and exams weighted more than 15% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

**Submission of Assignments:**

Please hand in your pre-assignments directly to your instructor.

Please hand in your six in-class tutorial paper assignments and group research paper through the dropbox folder in D2L.

Please include your name(s) and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at final exams in SS 320 after classes have ended. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

**Note:** It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment. For courses in which assignments are submitted electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct copy of the assignment is submitted. (Including the version date or version number in your file name may help you avoid submitting the wrong version of your written assignments.)

**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.

**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 14 days after the start of the course.

**Writing Skills Statement**

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, 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. Sources used in research papers and reports 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 & Department of Communication, Media and Film

**Grade Scale** Work in this course will be graded using percentage grades. The following grade scale percentage equivalents are used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film:

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Department grade scale equivalents	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good—clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	00 - 49.99%	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. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

### Academic Misconduct

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

### Research 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 <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

### Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
<b>ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)</b>	SS 102 403-220-3580 <a href="mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca">artsads@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>CAMPUS SECURITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calgary Police Service</li> <li>• Emergency Text Messaging</li> <li>• Emergency Evacuation &amp; Assembly</li> <li>• Safewalk Program</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/</a> <b>403-220-5333</b> <b>403-266-1234</b> <b>Emergency: call 911</b> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints">http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints</a> If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort ( <b>220-5333</b> ). For more information, see <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk">http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk</a>
<b>DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT help line</li> </ul>	<a href="http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students">http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students</a> 403-220-5555 or <a href="mailto:itsupport@ucalgary.ca">itsupport@ucalgary.ca</a>
<b>STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Support Services</li> <li>• Student Services Mobile App</li> </ul>	<a href="http://ucalgary.ca/ssc">http://ucalgary.ca/ssc</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support">http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support</a> <a href="http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents">http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents</a>
<b>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty of Arts Reps</li> <li>• Student Ombudsman</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/">https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</a> <a href="http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds">http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</a>
<b>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</b>	<b>403-210-9355</b> (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Counselling Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Health Services</b></li> <li>• <b>Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE</b></li> <li>• <b>Online resources and tips</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</a></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</a></p> <p><b>403-266-HELP (4357)</b></p> <p><a href="http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus">http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</a></p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>
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### Schedule of Lectures and Readings

<i>Class</i>	<i>Required readings</i>	<i>Assignments completed and/or due during class time</i>	<i>Assignment due dates</i>
<b>Week 1: May 16</b>	<b>Nye Chapters 1–3</b>	<b>Pre-assignment (Participation) (10%)</b> <b>In-class tutorial paper 1 (20%)</b>	
<b>Week 2: May 23</b>	<b>Nye Chapters 4 &amp; 5</b> <b>Assigned Reading</b>	<b>Pre-assignment (Participation)</b> <b>Group Work: Topic &amp; Theoretical Focus (Participation)</b> <b>In-class tutorial paper 2</b>	
<b>Week 3: May 30</b>	<b>Nye Chapters 6 &amp; 7</b>	<b>Pre-assignment (Participation)</b> <b>Group Work: Research &amp; Annotated Bibliography (Participation)</b> <b>In-class tutorial paper 3</b>	<b>Mid-term (15%)</b>
<b>Week 4: June 6</b>	<b>Nye Chapters 8–10</b>	<b>Pre-assignment (Participation)</b> <b>Group Work: Research Report Outline (Participation)</b> <b>In-class tutorial paper 4</b>	
<b>Week 5: June 13</b>		<b>Peer-assessment (Participation)</b> <b>In-class tutorial paper 5</b>	<b>Presentations (10%)</b>
<b>Week 6: June 20</b>		<b>Peer-assessment (Participation)</b> <b>In-class tutorial paper 6</b>	<b>Presentations</b> <b>Research Reports Due (20%)</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>			<b>Exam (25%)</b>