University of Calgary

Department of Communication and Culture

Science, Technology and Society (STAS) 325 Lec. 01
Technology within Contemporary Society
Summer 2014
TuTh 12:00 – 14:45

Instructor:	**Dr. Mark Wolfe**
Office Location:	**SS 209**
Office Phone:	**403-850-5770**
E-Mail:	**mwolfe@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?

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.

Additional Information

It is **imperative and strongly recommended** that students read the Preface and Chapter One of the required textbook before attending the first class (July 2).

Either solo or in groups, students will complete a major research project for the final assignment that requires course themes and discussion be brought to bear on the chosen topics of focus. **Class attendance is therefore of critical importance**.

Make-up assignments possibly on account of *verifiable* **medical or other emergencies only**. Students should enroll in another section of this course if this section overlaps with weddings, vacations, hiking and other types of personal plans.

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 and print-capable tablets strongly recommended.

Required textbook:

Technology Matters: Questions to live with. David Nye. MIT Press, 2007.

Optional but highly recommended textbook:

Other selected supplementary readings will be pointed to, or made available, on Blackboard or during class lectures.

Assignments and Evaluation

Short Group Assignments (35%): The class has a series of short, in-class group assignments (7). These comprise a collaboratively written response to an issue that relates to our readings, as well as to study questions provided ahead of time. Except for the mid-term class day (July 31), students will receive one or more take-home study questions to be worked on for the next class. Students individually prepare short responses to these study questions, print them out and hand them in at the beginning of the next class. These individual "pre-assignment" study question responses (approx. 300 words) are not for grading but are required in order for you to participate in the in-class collaborative writing assignment that plays off of the same themes and issues. Groups will be assigned at random; each day new groups will be generated. **Students not completing the individual pre-assignment** can still participate in a group assignment but **will not be graded for their contributions to the in-class group assignment.** Both the pre-assignments and for-grading in-class group assignments will be based primarily on readings from the primary text.

Mid-term exam (30%) – An in-class, closed-book, short-essay format exam (90 minutes) will be held July 31.

Final group project (35%) – This major course assignment, completed individually as a research paper or as a research report/presentation in groups of 3 or 4 students, comprises a short research proposal due July 17 (5%), a brief oral presentation (groups only) to be made in class near the end of term (10%), and a final hand-in report/video/website/etc. (20%) due the last day of classes. The option exists to do an individually-prepared research paper instead of a group project. This will be graded at (30%) of the final course grade.

You do not need to complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in the course.

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

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

	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 (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, 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/ethics/cfreb

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

To be provided first day of classes