

Science, Technology, and Society
STAS 325 L01
Technology within Contemporary Society
Fall 2011
Lectures (ENA 101), M, W 10:00-10:50; Labs F 9:00, 10:00 or 11:00

Instructor: Cooper H Langford
Office Location: SA 258A (inside 258)
Office Phone: 403 220 3228
E-Mail: chlangfo@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: See course Blackboard
Office Hours: M, W 11:00 AM – 1:00 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. Examples will include the following:

- Does technology control us?
- Does it 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?
- Is technology predictable?

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 reading drawn from several disciplines

Objectives of the Course

The key objective of the course is to stimulate thinking about the roles of technology in contemporary society and how society shapes the technology and those roles. This will provide 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 *monocleCAT*. Items presented in class on screen can be answered by text message or on the website. Your cell phone with the monocleCAT number (647) 728-7779 stored will be the best tool. You will need a personal subscription for \$20.00. Go to <http://www.tophatmonocle.com>. If other courses use this tool, you will need only one subscription for all courses. Laptops will be valuable but are expected to be devoted to class relevant work such as lecture slides from Blackboard dealing with *monocleCAT* questions or searches during seminars.

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 Friday sessions.

The textbook chapters are not long. Additional reading found *via* 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 (approx. 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 Friday “lab” class, but there will be a very short required preparatory assignment for each. These short in class group papers (along with one mark available for participation in monocleCAT) will count for 15% of the course mark. The grade will be based on the best 7 of the 8 items.

There will be a term test with both short answer and essay questions tentatively scheduled for October 21st. It will count for 15% 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 four 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.

The presentation will count for 10% of the term mark and the report for 25%

The final examination will include both short answer and essay questions and will count for 35% of the course mark.

(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 TA or the 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

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: 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. 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: (Revised, effective September 2008) 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 (MacEwan Student Centre 4th floor, 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 detailed tentative schedule of activities in the course is posted on the course Blackboard.