

**Science, Technology and Society (STAS) 325 L21  
Technology within Contemporary Society  
Spring 2012**

**Saturday 08:00 – 12:30**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Dr. Mark Wolfe
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	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.

### **Primary 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.

To apply these concepts in specific topic areas where science policy is implicated.

## **Internet and electronic communication device policy**

While there is no restriction on the quiet/non-distracting use of digital equipment during class, students camping behind laptops and/or on cell phones for much of the semester will need to get real comfortable with the idea of losing ALL 15% of their final grade that participation accounts for.

## **Textbooks and Readings:**

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

*The Third Industrial Revolution: How Lateral Power is Transforming Energy, the Economy, and the World.* Jeremy Rifkin. Palgrave MacMillan, 2011.

Selected readings from the web or made available in class. Consult Blackboard for details and links to external documents.

## **Assignments and Evaluation\***

**Short Group Assignments (30%):** The class has a series of short group assignments (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).

**Mid-term exam (25%)** – An in-class, closed-book, short-essay format exam (90 minutes) will be held May 26th; make-up exams are usually a short research paper.

**Final group project (35%)** – This major course assignment, also completed by groups of 3 or 4 students, comprises a short research proposal due May 19 (5%), a brief oral presentation 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.

**Participation (10%)** – On-going engagement with course material and exercises as expressed through contribution to in-class discussions.

\*See Blackboard for detailed course schedule.

NOTE: 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

### **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 Scale**

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 (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Taylor Digital Family 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 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/](http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html)

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## **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://](http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics)

[www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics](http://www.comcul.ucalgary.ca/ethics)

or the University of Calgary Research Ethics site:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/research/cfreh>

## **Schedule of Lectures and Readings**