University of Calgary
Department of Communication and Culture

Science, Technology and Society (STAS) 325 L/B01
Technology within Contemporary Society
Spring 2014 - Thursday, May 15 to Thursday, June 26
Tuesday/Thursday 3:00-5:45 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Linda Vennard

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-3:00 p.m., or 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 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

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 (in-class) (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 necessary for the group work). These short in class group papers count for 15% (total) of the course mark. Further details will be given the first day of class.

Term Test #1 (20%): Test #1 on **May 29, 2014** will be a mixture of short answer, short essay and multiple choice questions covering all course material to that point.

Annotated Bibliography (5%): Each group will prepare an Annotated Bibliography for the group project (described below). The annotated bibliography will be due **May 29, 2014**.

Term Test #2 (20%): Test #2 on **June 10, 2014** will be a mixture of short answer, short essay and multiple choice questions. Test #2 is noncumulative and will cover all course material after Test #1.

Group Project Assignment (10% presentation + 20% report): 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. This project will be completed in a group of four students. The group project will be presented in class (on **June 24 and 26**) and a project report (10 – 12 double-spaced written or multi-media) will be due on **June 24, 2014**. The presentation counts for 10% of the term mark, and the report for 20%. Further details will be given and examples of past projects provided the first day of class.

Participation (10%) – ongoing: Participation through regular attendance and participation in class discussion and activities is an essential component of the course. Students are expected to attend classes and participate; "participation" is not only attendance per se but contributing to each other's learning and participating in the creation of a positive atmosphere and learning environment.

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

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://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/cfreb

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

A daily schedule of lectures and readings, as well as detailed assignment descriptions, will be made available on Blackboard on the first day of class.