

Lakehead University
Department of Sociology
Sociology 2755 WA
Technology and Society

Dr. Laurie Forbes

Office: UC 0034

Phone: 343-8966

Email: lforbes@lakeheadu.ca

Sociology Website: <http://sociology.lakeheadu.ca/>

Winter 2011

Tuesday: 7.00-10.00

RC 0005

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 3.30-4.30

Required Texts

1. There is a reading package designed for this course available at the campus bookstore.
2. Arsenault, Chris. 2009. *Blowback A Canadian History of Agent Orange and the War At Home.*
3. The reading list contains articles that can be accessed online, through the Lakehead University Library website.

Course Description

This course will focus on the impact of technological change upon the social world. Each week we will look at substantive topics that focus on the social changes that are brought about by technological developments. In our first lecture we will discuss the importance of critical analysis from a sociological perspective. In succeeding weeks we will examine such areas as: the impact of social change from a historical point of view, cultural changes that occurred as a result of introducing technological developments, transportation technology and racism, work and technological change, medicine and technology, eugenics, technological fixes, reproduction, resistance to technology, whistle-blowers, technological disasters, and politics.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend class regularly and actively participate in class discussions. As well, reading assignments are to be completed on the date specified in the reading list in this syllabus.

Evaluation

Mid-Term Examination
Mid-Term Examination
Final Examination
Participation

Marks

25%
25%
40%
10%
100

Dates

January 25, 2011
March 01, 2011
Set by the Registrar
Throughout the course

Examinations

The examinations will incorporate lectures, class discussions, films and assigned readings.

Participation

Your participation mark is based on your contribution to class discussions. During the class you will be given group questions for discussion and your group will compile a report of that discussion. Those who participated will sign their name to the report and the report will be handed in at the end of the class.

Reading and Lecture Schedule**1. January 04 – Introduction to Technology and Society****2. January 11 – Social Change**

Readings:

Diamond, Jared. 1999. *Guns, Germs, and Steel The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. pp. 239-264.

Ellul, Jacques. 1964. *The Technological Society*. New York: Vintage Books. pp. 3-32.

3. January 18 – Impact of Technology on Social Change or Social Change and the Impact on Technology

Readings:

Anderson, R. J., J.A. Hughes, and W. W. Sharrock. 1987. *Classic Disputes in Sociology*. London: Allen and Unwin. pp. 73-78.

Feenberg, Andrew. 2006. "Democratic Rationalization." Pp. 97-112 in *Society, Ethics, and Technology*, edited by Morton E. Winston and Ralph Edelbach. Toronto: Thomson Wadsworth.

Maracus, Alan, I. and Howard P. Segal. 1999. *Technology in America A Brief History*. Canada: Thomson Wadsworth. pp. 8-22.

Postman, Neil. 1999. *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century How the Past Can Influence Our Future*. New York: Vintage Books. pp. 21-35.

4. January 25 – Mid-term first half of the class**Negative Eugenics second half of the class**

Readings:

Glover, Jonathan. 2009. "Eugenics: Some Lessons from the Nazi Experience." Pp. 287-292 in *Biomedical Ethics A Canadian Focus*, edited by Johanna Fisher. Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

Grekul, Jana, Harvey Krahn, and Dave Odynak. 2009. "Sterilizing the 'Feeble-Minded': Eugenics in Alberta, Canada, 1929-1972." Pp. 292-303 in *Biomedical Ethics A Canadian Focus*, edited by Johanna Fisher. Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

Pearson, Veronica. 2009. "Population Policy and Eugenics in China." Pp. 304-307 in *Biomedical Ethics A Canadian Focus*, edited by Johanna Fisher. Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

5. February 01 - Technological Development and Cultural Changes

Readings:

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. 2007. "The Rise of the Reading Public." Pp. 95-103 in *Communication In History Technology, Culture, Society*, edited by David Crowley and Paul Heyer. Boston: Pearson.

Mander, Jerry. 1991. *In the Absence of the Sacred The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. pp. 97-119.

Stefanac, Suzanne. 2007. *Dispatches from Blogistan A Travel Guide for the Modern Blogger*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders. pp. 1-9.

6. February 8 – Whistle-Blowers and Resistance to Technology

Readings:

Brandt, Allan, M. 1996. "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study." Pp. 33-44 in *Readings for Sociology*, edited by Garth Massey. New York: W. W. Norton.

Pence, Gregory, E. 2009. "The Tuskegee Study." Pp. 462-469. in *Biomedical Ethics A Canadian Focus*. edited by Johanna Fisher. Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

Hjorth, Stevens, Linda. 2008 "Whistle-Blowing." In: Hjorth, Stevens, Linda, et al (Eds.). Technology and Society Issues for the 21st Century and Beyond. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall. pp. 84-87.

Pooley, Eric. 2008 "Case Study 2 Nuclear Warriors." In: Hjorth, Stevens, Linda, et al (Eds.). Technology and Society Issues for the 21st Century and Beyond. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall. pp. 88-98.

Volti, Rudi. 2008. Society and Technological Change. New York: Worth Publishers. Pp.19-26.

7. February 15 – Technological Disasters

Readings:

Cassels, Jamie. 1996. *The Uncertain Promise of Law*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1996. pp. 3-32.

Gibbs, Lois, Marie. 1998. *Love Canal The Story Continues*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers. pp. 20-41.

8. February 22 Study Week No Classes are Scheduled

9. March 01 – Mid-term first half of the class

Positive Eugenics second half of the class

Readings:

Savulescu, Julian. 2010. "Should We Clone Human Beings?" Pp. 355-366 in *Taking Sides Clashing Views in Science, Technology, and Society*, edited by Thomas A. Easton. 9th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill. *

Van Gend, David. 2010. "Prometheus, Pandora, and the Myths of Cloning." Pp. 367-373 in *Taking Sides Clashing Views in Science, Technology, and Society*, edited by Thomas A. Easton. 9th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.

10. March 08 - Transportation Technology and Racism

Readings:

Surtees, Robert, J. 1992. *The Northern Connection Ontario Northland Since 1902*. North York: Captus Press. pp. 9-27.

Boswell, Terry, E. "A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882." *American Sociological Review* 51, No. 3 (Jun. 1986), pp. 352-371. (Library)

11. March 15 – Work

Readings:

Cross, Gary and Rick Szostak. 2005. *Technology and American Society A History*. New Jersey: Pearson. pp. 222-237.

Hamper, Ben. 1991. *Rivthead Tales From the Assembly Line*. New York: Warner Books. pp. 1-14.

Jones, Stephen R. G. "Was There a Hawthorne Effect?" *The American Journal of Sociology* 98, No. 3 (Nov., 1992), pp. 451-468. (Library)

12. March 22 – Medical Technology

Readings:

Silversides, Ann. 2010. "Lifting the Curtain on the Drug Approval Process." Pp. 116-138 in *The Push to Prescribe Women and Canadian Drug Policy*, edited by Anne Rochon Ford and Diane Saibil. Toronto: Women's Press.

Volti, Rudi. 2008. *Society and Technological Change*. 9th ed. New York: Worth Publishers. pp. 118-136.

13. March 29 Agent Orange and Politics

Reading:

Blowback A Canadian History of Agent Orange and the War At Home.