

**Lakehead University**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Sociology 2755 WB**  
**Technology and Society**

**Dr. Laurie Forbes**

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

**Winter 2011**

**Monday: 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 31, 2011

March 7, 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 10 – Introduction to Technology and Society****2. January 17 – 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 24 – 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 18<sup>th</sup> Century How the Past Can Influence Our Future*. New York: Vintage Books. pp. 21-35.

**4. January 31 – 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 7 - 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 14 – 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21 – Study Week No Classes are Scheduled**

**8. February 28 - 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.

**9. March 7 – 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. 9<sup>th</sup> 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. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.

**10. March 14 – 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 21 – 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 28 – 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*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Worth Publishers. pp. 118-136.

**13. April 04 – Agent Orange and Politics**

Reading:

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