

L A K E H E A D U N I V E R S I T Y
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Technology and Society
Sociology 2755-FA

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Office Hours: Mon. 2:30-3:30 PM & Wed. 1:00-2:00 PM
Sociology Department Website: <http://sociology.lakeheadu.ca>

Fall 2011
Thurs. 7:00-10:00 PM
RC0005

Course Description

This course of study examines the reciprocal relationship between technological change and social structure. The first half of the course identifies and examines the essential sociological theories and concepts which inform our understanding of technological development and diffusion. The second half focuses on the consequences of specific technologies in areas such as medicine, work, food, environment, and communications.

Reading Material

Required: Volti, Rudi. 2010. *Society and Technological Change 6th Edition*. New York: Worth Publishers

Recommended: please see the Course Schedule below for recommended readings. All recommended readings are available on Library Reserve.

Examinations

There are 2 examinations scheduled throughout the course of study. The exams will be based on the required readings, and all classroom activities (lectures, videos, discussions). The exams may include short-answer, essay, and multiple-choice questions. Please see the Grading Scheme for the weighting of exams, and the Course Schedule for examination dates.

**Lakehead University has a very strict policy regarding the failure to write formal examinations at the prescribed time. Please note that make-up examinations will only be offered when missed exams are due to medical and/or compassionate reasons, for which detailed supporting documentation must be submitted. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the University's policy regarding missed examinations. Knowing your obligations in this area may help you avoid serious academic penalty.*

Class Participation

You should make every effort to attend all classes. Course examinations will, in part, cover material which will only be made available during classes (lectures, videos, activities). You should ensure that you are prepared for classes by reading your assigned chapters *before* the classes in which the chapters are addressed (see the Course Schedule below). Class participation may take the form of attendance, group discussions, Q&A sessions, and mini-assignments. Class participation is worth a maximum of 15% of your final course grade. Class attendance is essential for participation credit.

Grading Scheme

Midterm Exam.....	40%
Class Participation.....	15%
Final Exam.....	45%

WebCT Course Site

A WebCT site has been set up for this course. Login using myCourseLink on the LU homepage. Classroom slides will be uploaded to the site as the course progresses.

Course Schedule

Sept. 15 **The Nature of Technology**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 1, "The Nature of Technology"

Volti, ch. 8, "Genetic Technologies"

Recommended reading:

1) Macionis, John J., Linda M. Gerber. 2011. "Material Culture and Technology". Pp. 66-67 in *Sociology: Seventh Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Pearson Canada

2) Macionis, John J., Linda M. Gerber. 2011. "Max Weber: The Rationalization of Society". Pp. 91-95 in *Sociology: Seventh Cdn Edition*. Toronto: Pearson Canada

3) Marx, Leo. 1993. "Does Improved Technology Mean Progress?" Pp. 3-14 in *Technology in the Future*, edited by Albert H. Teich. New York: St. Martin's Press

Sept. 22 **Winners & Losers: The Differential Effects of Technological Change**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 2, "Winners & Losers: The Differential Effects of Technological Change"

Recommended reading:

1) Postman, Neil. 2003. "Informing Ourselves to Death". Pp. 101-10 in *Computers, Ethics, and Society*, edited by M. David Erman and Michele S. Shauf. NY: Oxford

2) Weinberg, Alvin, M. 1972. "Can Technology Replace Social Engineering". Pp. 171-78 in *Technology and Society*, edited by Noel deNevers. New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

3) Volti, ch. 6, "More Miles to the Gallon", pp. 109-111

Sept. 29 **The Sources of Technological Change**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 3, "The Sources of Technological Change"

Recommended reading:

1) Hopkins, Patrick D. 2009. "The Intersection of Culture, Gender, and Technology". Pp. 195-203 in *Technology and Society: Building our Sociotechnical Future*, edited by Deborah G. Johnson and J. M. Wetmore. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press

2) Volti, Rudi. 2004. "The Dawn of the Motor Age, 1886-1905". Pp. 1-21 in *Cars and Culture*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press

3) Volti, ch. 12, "Newspapers", pp. 217-21

Oct. 6 **The Diffusion of Technology**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 4, "The Diffusion of Technology"

Recommended reading:

- 1) Einsiedel, Edna F. 2009. "Patents in the Public Sphere: Public Perceptions and Biotechnology Patents". Pp. 51-63 in *Emerging Technologies: From Hindsight to Foresight*, edited by Edna F. Einsiedel. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press
- 2) Goyder, John. 2005. "Technological Diffusion". Pp. 75-91 in *Technology and Society: A Canadian Perspective 2nd Edition*. Peterborough: Broadview Press

Oct. 13 **Technology and its Creators**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 16, "Technology and its Creators: Who's in Charge of Whom?"

Recommended reading:

- 1) Heilbroner, Robert L. 2009. "Do Machines Make History". Pp. 97-106 in *Technology and Society: Building our Sociotechnical Future*, edited by Deborah G. Johnson and Jameson M. Wetmore. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press
- 2) Macionis, John J., Linda M. Gerber. 2011. "Gerhard and Jean Lenski: Society and Technology". Pp. 81-86 in *Sociology: Seventh Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Pearson
- 3) Volti, ch. 12, "Printing", pp. 209-16

Oct. 20 **MIDTERM EXAMINATION:** regular class time and location

Oct. 27 **Organizations and Technological Change**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 17, "Organizations and Technological Change"

Recommended reading:

- 1) Feagin, Joe R. and Robert Parker. 1996. "The Rise and Fall of Mass Rail Transit". Pp. 385-90 in *Readings for Sociology*, edited by Garth Massey. New York: Norton
- 2) Lowe, Graham S. 1993. "Corporate Capitalism and the Administrative Revolution." Pp. 25-37 in *Work in Canada: Readings in the Sociology of Work and Industry*, edited by Graham S. Lowe and Harvey J. Krahn. Scarborough: Nelson Canada
- 3) Weber, Max. 2007/1946. "The Characteristics of Bureaucracy." Pp. 113-16 in *Seeing Ourselves: Classic, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Readings in Sociology*, edited by John J. Macionis et al. Toronto, Ontario: Pearson Education Canada

Nov. 3 **Governing Technology**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 18, "Governing Technology"

Recommended reading:

- 1) Bereano, Phillip. 2003. "Technology is a Tool of the Powerful." Pp. 85-90 in *Computers, Ethics, and Society*, ed by M. David Ertman and M. S. Shauf. NY: Oxford
- 2) Burgess, M. and J. Tansey. 2009. "Technology, Democracy and Ethics: Democratic Deficit and the Ethics of Public Engagement". Pp. 275-86 in *Emerging Technologies: From Hindsight to Foresight*, ed by E. F. Einsiedel. Vancouver: UBC Press
- 3) Winner, Langdon. 1993. "Artifact/Ideas and Political Culture" Pp. 283-92 in *Technology in the Future*, edited by Albert H. Teich. New York: St. Martin's Press

Nov. 3 Recommended reading (cont'd):

4) Volti, ch. 6, "Economic Systems, Government Policies, and the Environment", pp. 111-14

Nov. 10 **Technology and Jobs: Part 1**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 10, "Technology and Jobs: More of One and Less of the Other"

Recommended reading:

1) Fraser, Jill Andresky. 2007. "They Used to Use a Ball and Chain: Technology's Impact on the Workplace." Pp.140-49 in *The Transformation of Work in the New Economy*, Robert Perrucci and Carolyn Cummings Perrucci. L.A., CA: Roxbury

2) Heron, Craig. 1993. "The Crisis of the Craftsman: Hamilton Metal Workers in the Early 20th Century." Pp. 4-13 in *Work in Canada: Readings in the Sociology of Work and Industry*, edited by Graham S. Lowe and Harvey J. Krahn. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Canada

3) Volti, ch. 9, "Work in Non-industrial Societies"

Nov. 17 **Technology and Jobs: Part II**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 11, "Technological Change and Life on the Job"

Recommended reading:

1) Graham, Laurie. 2007. "Inside a Japanese Transplant." Pp. 351-67 in *The Transformation of Work in the New Economy*, Robert Perrucci and Carolyn Cummings Perrucci. Los Angeles, California: Roxbury Publishing Co.

2) Reiter, Ester. 1993. "Working at a Burger King Outlet." Pp. 369-79 in *Work in Canada: Readings in the Sociology of Work and Industry*, edited by Graham S. Lowe and Harvey J. Krahn. Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Canada

3) Ritzer, George. 2008. "Control: Human and Non-human Robots". Pp. 115-139 in *The McDonaldization of Society*, George Ritzer. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge

Nov. 24 **The Electronic Media**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 13, "The Electronic Media"

Recommended reading:

1) Burgess, Jean and Joshua Green. 2009. "YouTube's Cultural Politics". Pp. 75-99 in *YouTube*, Jean Burgess and Joshua Green. Malden, MA: Polity Press

2) Chadwick, Andrew. 2006. "The Political Economy of Internet Media". Pp. 289-316 in *Internet Politics: States, Citizens, and New Communication Technologies*, Andrew Chadwick. New York: Oxford

3) Monahan, Torin. 2009. "Questioning Surveillance and Security". Pp. 537-557 in *Technology and Society: Building our Sociotechnical Future*, edited by Deborah G. Johnson and Jameson M. Wetmore. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press

Dec. 1 **Medical & Biological Technologies**

Required reading:

Volti, ch. 7, "Medical and Biological Technologies"

Recommended reading:

1) Bubela, Tania and T. Caulfield. 2009. "When Human Dignity is Not Enough: Embryonic Stem Cell Research and Human Cloning in Canada". Pp. 161-84 in *Emerging Technologies: From Hindsight to Foresight*, ed. by E. F. Einsiedel. Vancouver: UBC Press

2) Colen, B.D. 2000. "Organ Concert". Pp. 360-65 in *Technology and Society: A Bridge to the 21st Century*, ed. by Linda S. Hjorth. Columbus, Ohio: Prentice Hall

3) Leo, Jonathan. 2007. "American Preschoolers on Ritalin". Pp. 392-401 in *Sociological Odyssey*, edited by Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler. Belmont, CA: Thomson

TBA **FINAL EXAMINATION:** location, date and time TBA