

**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**Technology and Society**  
**Sociology 2755WA 2015**

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Office Hours: Tues. 1:30-2:20 PM & Thurs. 1:30-2:20 PM  
Sociology Department Website: <http://sociology.lakeheadu.ca>

Winter 2015  
Thurs. 7:00-10:00 PM  
RC0005

**Course Description**

This course of study examines the reciprocal relationship between technological change and social structure. It identifies and describes important sociological theories and concepts which help us understand the dynamics of technological development and diffusion, as well as the impact of technology on social interaction, community, medicine, organization of work, the industrial food system, the natural environment, transportation, communications, and more. Special attention is given to the effects of technological change in northern Aboriginal communities with case studies in telehealth, TV broadcasting, web-based education, social networking, the digital divide, and so on. The course of study also places special emphasis on the relationship between technological advance and environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

**Required Reading Material**

- 1) Mugenyi, Bianca and Yves Engler. 2011. *Stop Signs: Cars and Capitalism on the Road to Economic, Social and Ecological Decay*. Fernwood/Red Publishing.
- 2) Murthy, Dhiraj. 2013. *Twitter: Social Communication in the Twitter Age*. Polity Books.

**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 examinations, and the Course Schedule for examination dates.

**Assignments**

There are 2 assignments scheduled throughout the course, each worth 10% of your final course grade. Please see the Course Schedule for deadlines. Further details to follow.

**Grading Scheme**

Assignment #1.....	10%
Assignment #2.....	10%
Midterm Exam.....	40%
Final Exam.....	40%

**COURSE SCHEDULE** (subject to minor changes)

**JANUARY 8th**

**What is Technology?**

Recommended reading:

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

## **JANUARY 15th**

### **The Two Faces of Technology**

Recommended reading:

McMahon, Robert et al. (2011). "Digital Divides and the 'First Mile': Framing First Nations Broadband Development in Canada," *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*. Vol. 2, Issue 2

<http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1048&context=iipj>

## **JANUARY 22nd**

### **Theories of Technological Change: Part 1**

Recommended reading:

Ramirez, R., and Richardson, D. (2005). "Measuring the impact of telecommunication services on rural and remote communities". *Telecommunications Policy*, Vol. 29

## **JANUARY 29th**

### **Theories of Technological Change: Part 2**

Recommended reading:

Baltruschat, Doris. (2004). "Television and Canada's Aboriginal Communities Seeking Opportunities through Traditional Storytelling and Digital Technologies," *Canadian Journal of Communication*. Vol. 29, Issue 1

<http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/viewArticle/1403/1495>

## **FEBRUARY 5th**

### **Theories of Technological Diffusion**

Recommended reading:

Mignone, Javier et al. (2008). *Information and Communication Technology in Aboriginal Communities in Canada: Increasing Aboriginal Social Capital*

<http://www.academia.edu/166502/>

## **FEBRUARY 12th**

### **\*\*DEADLINE: Assignment #1**

#### **The Electronic Media**

Recommended reading:

1) Volti, Rudi. 2014. "The Internet Age". Pp263-81 in *Society and Technological Change, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*, New York: Worth Publishers

2) Quan-Haase, Anabel. 2013. "Technology-Mediated Social Relationships". Pp. 167-89 in *Technology and Society: Social Networks, Power, and Inequality*, Don Mills: Oxford University Press

## **FEBRUARY 26th**

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION:** regular class time and location

## **MARCH 5th**

### **Technology and Jobs: Part 1**

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

## **MARCH 12th**

### **Technology and Jobs: Part 2**

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
- 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

## **MARCH 19th**

### **Surveillance Technologies**

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

## **MARCH 26th**

### **Technology and Organizations**

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

## **APRIL 2nd**

### **\*\*DEADLINE: Assignment #2**

### **Technology and Government**

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 Erman 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

**FINAL EXAMINATION:** location, date and time to be announced