

L A K E H E A D U N I V E R S I T Y
Technology, Society, and Indigenous Peoples of Canada
SOCI-2755-WDE 2026
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Course Outline

This course of study examines the relationship between technology and society. The course proceeds according to a *socio-technical perspective*; that is, the notion that technology and society share a reciprocal relationship wherein first we shape our technologies, then our technologies shape us.

The course includes an examination of traditional and contemporary definitions of technology, the identification and description of several competing theoretical perspectives regarding the causes and consequences of technological change, and numerous topics such as the dynamics of technological design and development, the adoption and diffusion of technology, technology's relationship to various forms of inequality, the nature of work, the gendering of technology, the impact of technology on community and communications, technology's role in modern surveillance, and others. The course concludes with an examination of the moral and ethical considerations regarding technology.

The course of study also pays special attention to technology and Canada's Indigenous peoples. Content may include topics such as the impact of major technological systems on the social and economic development of isolated Northern communities, the incorporation of new information and communications technologies into human services on First Nations reserves, traditional Native worldviews vs. the modern scientific approach, technology's role in efforts to resist cultural assimilation, the impact of legal decisions regarding technology on Aboriginal treaty rights, the role of technology in the perpetuation of Native stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, and more.

Learner Outcomes

At the completion of this course students will have a strong understanding of the *socio-technical perspective* common to many sociological analyses of the causes and consequences of *technological change*. In particular, students will learn how this perspective is helpful in understanding various issues faced by Indigenous communities in Canada's northern regions. Specific learning objectives include the development of a solid understanding of key course components such as: the comprehensive definition of technology favoured in contemporary sociology; a broad overview of the historical evolution of technology; the nature of *Indigenous knowledge* and its relationship to *appropriate technology*; a critical examination of theories on technological change (special focus on video games and digital media); the processes by which technologies are developed (special focus on *technopoles*, the *creative class*, and *algorithms*); the colonial impact of modern ICT's and digital practices on traditional Indigenous communities; the classic model of the adoption and diffusion of innovations; how differences in technology ownership and know-how lead to social, economic, and cultural inequality (special focus on the *digital divide* in remote Indigenous communities); the role of technology in the changing division of labour (special focus on the *sharing economy* and *gig work*); the impact of industrialized resource extraction on northern Indigenous communities; the historical and contemporary theoretical perspectives on the study of gendered technologies (special focus on household technologies and the IT industry); the impact of the gendering of internet-based medical technologies on women in remote Indigenous communities; how social media technologies have altered interpersonal relationships and connections; electronic surveillance in the context of personal privacy and civil liberties; the role of technology in food security/insecurity issues in Indigenous communities; and the ethical and moral dimensions of our technological society.

How to Proceed Through the Course of Study

This course of study has no classroom. Rather, it features an excellent book and a variety of online articles and videos. Anabel Quan-Haase's book *Technology and Society: Social Networks, Power, and Inequality* identifies and discusses most of the important theories and basic concepts needed to develop a thorough understanding of how society shapes technology and, in turn, how technology shapes society. The various online articles provide insight into the nature of the relationship between technology and Indigenous people.

The course is comprised of 6 study modules. Each module includes learning objectives, chapter synopses, review questions, lists of important terms and concepts for the required Quan-Haase chapters, as well as titles and links to required and supplementary online articles and videos.

Here is what I recommend:

- Set aside a minimum of 6-7 hours each week and carefully read the required chapters and online articles. Pay particular attention to the lists of important terms and concepts and review questions which accompany the required readings.
The review questions and lists of important terms and concepts should be used as guidance in your preparations for examinations. When I set the examinations I will use the lists of important terms and concepts and the review questions as my primary guidelines. Follow along with the Course Schedule and do your best not to fall behind.

If you have a question, post it in our Discussions forum and I, or one of our classmates, will respond. Or you may simply email brian.mcmillan@lakeheadu.ca. I monitor my email on a regular basis and you can expect a reply within 60-120 minutes Monday to Saturday 8am - 6pm.

Required Reading Material

Quan-Haase, Anabel. (2020). *Technology and Society: Social Networks, Power, and Inequality*, Third Edition. Oxford University Press.

You can obtain the Quan-Haase text (instant access) using the following link:

[https://bookstore.lakeheadu.ca/CourseSearch/?course\[\]DL,FALL24,SOCI,SOCI2755DE,&course\[\]DL,FALL24, SOCI,SOCI2755DF,&](https://bookstore.lakeheadu.ca/CourseSearch/?course[]DL,FALL24,SOCI,SOCI2755DE,&course[]DL,FALL24, SOCI,SOCI2755DF,&)

The LU Bookstore purchase price of the Quan-Haase text is \$84.99. The e-version price is \$63.99. Prices are subject to change without notice.

Online Articles: You are also required to read several online articles throughout the course which pertain specifically to Canada's Indigenous peoples and various technology-related issues. The titles and URLs of these articles can be found in their respective Study Modules in the Content area of the course site (see navigator bar at top of page).

All online articles are free-of-charge.

Video Material

The course of study includes several online videos. While these videos should be considered required viewing and meant to deepen your understanding of important course concepts related to Indigenous issues, they are not covered on examinations. You are encouraged to view the videos and post any comments you might have in the appropriate discussions forum. You are also encouraged to read the posts of other students

and are invited to respond to any and all posts. The titles and links to the videos can be found in their respective Study Modules in the Content area of the course site.

All video materials are free-of-charge.

Grading Scheme

Exam #1	28%
Exam #2	28%
Exam #3	28%
Written Assignment	16%

Timed Online Examinations

There are 3 examinations scheduled throughout the course of study. The exams are accessed using the *Quizzes* tab on the navigator bar at the top of the page. All 3 exams will be based on the required readings in the Quan-Haase book and the online articles pertaining to Indigenous issues. All 3 examinations will be timed online tests. Timed online tests can be taken from any computer connected to the internet. I advise against the use of smartphones or any other wireless devices because of common connectivity problems. It is your responsibility to ensure that your internet connection during examinations is reliable and secure. The examinations will be comprised of 90-100 multiple-choice and true-or-false questions, and the duration of examinations will be 100 minutes.

The first exam covers study modules 1 and 2. The second exam covers study modules 3 and 4. The third exam covers study modules 5 and 6. Please see the *Grading Scheme (above)* for the weighting of exams and the *Course Schedule (Table of Contents)* for examination dates and times.

Timed online examinations must be commenced during the prescribed examination windows; for example, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time. You must login during the prescribed examination window and complete the exam in a single sitting. You will not be allowed to commence before the designated start time (e.g., 7:00 p.m.) and you will not be allowed to commence after the designated completion time (e.g., 9:00 p.m.).

See the Course Schedule (Table of Contents) for examination window dates and times.

The timed online tests will be administered through our course website (D2L). At the time of the exam you will be required to login using your usual Lakehead University username and password.

I have set up a mock timed online test to give you a chance to practice logging in, answering questions, and moving from one page to another. Click the *Quizzes* tab on the navigator bar at the top of the page to access the practice quiz.

Please Note: You must complete all 3 examinations in this course on your own with no collaboration with any other person(s) during the examinations and no unauthorized use of online apps or websites. Receiving or giving assistance in direct connection to an examination is a serious violation of the Lakehead University Student Code of Conduct: Academic Integrity; in particular, Section III, para. 26, b., c., e., g. See link below:

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/293/docs/Student-Conduct/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf>

Please Note: Lakehead University has a very strict policy regarding the failure to write formally-scheduled examinations at the prescribed time. Special accommodations, such as a make-up

exam, will only be offered when missed examinations are due to medical reasons or other approved unforeseen extenuating circumstances. Work schedules, weddings, travel activities, faulty technology, etc. are not considered acceptable reasons for rescheduling examinations. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the University's policy regarding missed examinations. See link below:

https://csdc.lakeheadu.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=31&c_hapterid=10967&loaduserredits=False

Written Assignment

There is one (1) written assignment scheduled in the course of study weighted at a maximum of 16% of your final course grade. Please see details on the course site (Content>Table of Contents>Written Assignment).

The use of GenAI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) must be conducted in a responsible and ethical manner. GenAI may be used to provide suggestions and insights regarding written assignments, but must never act as the primary vehicle for submissions which are to be graded. Your assignments must be written in your own words and must carefully cite all of its sources. If you have any questions about how GenAI can and cannot be used in this course, please contact me.

Discussions Forum

Our course site features a Discussions forum (tab located on the navigator bar at top of page) where you can interact with classmates, discuss course concepts/issues, and seek clarification of course content. I will post comments related to course content in the Discussions forum on a regular basis. If you have an issue of a private nature, please do not use the Discussions forum but rather email me directly: brian.mcmillan@lakeheadu.ca

Please Note: Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please contact Student Accessibility Services

<http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

Thunder Bay - SAS -- SC0003, 343-8047 or
sas@lakeheadu.ca Orillia - SAS - OA 1030, [705-330-4008 ext 2103](tel:705-330-4008 ext 2103))

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