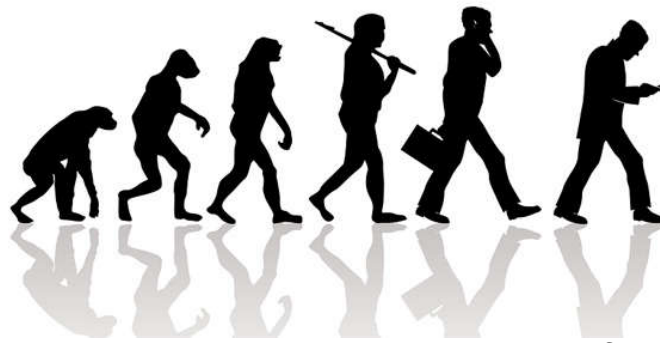


**TECHNOLOGY, SOCIETY, AND  
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN CANADA**  
**Sociology 2755 FA**  
**Fall Semester – 2016**  
**Lakehead University**  
**Wednesdays: 7-10pm (ATAC 1006)**



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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-6:00pm, RB 3003 (or by appointment)

**Course Description**

“If co-operation is thus the lifeblood of science and technology, it is similarly vital to society as a whole.” – Arthur Holly Compton

**Welcome to Technology, Society, and Indigenous Peoples in Canada!** The content of this course is familiar to all of us who engage in technologically-saturated society daily and should be ready at hand to discuss. However, the goal of this course is to understand technology and society not as we interact with them, but sociologically as they exist outside of an individual or group. As such we will have the opportunity to discuss a wide range and breadth of issues from a core of sociological theories and perspectives, which includes: prehistory, the industrial revolution, social inequality, surveillance, community, ethics, policy, and the future (transhumanism and accelerationism). Most importantly, this course is part of the Indigenous Content Requirement program and as such will reflect upon issues of technology and society in regards to Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The struggles and courage of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples will allow us to focus on specifically Canadian, and specifically Indigenous, issues regarding technology and society—to engage better with our own societies as well as those we are otherwise not exposed to, which are all increasingly mediated by technology.

## **Course Objectives**

“The aboriginal peoples illustrate the conflict between technology and the natural world succinctly, by asking, ‘What will you do when the clever men destroy your water?’” – Winona LaDuke

By the end of this course, you will have worked towards meeting the following goals:

1. **Content:** In this course you will become familiar with the history of technology and society as they interact, the pivotal events and thinkers in this relation, how our modern society is structured by technology (and vice versa), the unique affect and perspective that Canada’s Indigenous Peoples can bring to technology studies, the major theories necessary to study technology and society, and a basis for how to affect change regarding these examples and issues.
2. **Reading:** In this course you will read a variety of sociological and theoretical texts that will expand your appreciation of society and the study of it. Through these readings and our course discussion you will develop the ability to identify and summarize the key argument(s) of a text, identify the larger context for specific or general writing, expand upon discussions towards contemporary issues and examples, identify the unique relationship between technology and society (and how it affects each element), and identify how the study of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples enhances and deepens our technological discussion
3. **Critique:** Many of the examples and concepts we discuss in this course may appear familiar to most students. The goal of this course is to defamiliarize ourselves from both the technology and the social structures we are consumed in and by. In distancing ourselves from our own position we will develop the skills to critique and analyze the elements of technology, society, and Indigenous Culture that have become common, but demand selective and direct investigation.
4. **Praxis:** As sociologists, our concern is not only to analyze the relationships between technology, society, and Indigenous Culture, but also to look towards what can be done with this knowledge. As such, this course will always be attendant to the personal, legal, political, and ethical dimensions of technology and how these can be affected through policy, politics, personal projects, and protest.

## **Course Evaluation**

“It has becoming appallingly obvious that our technology has outgrown our humanity.” – Albert Einstein

<b>Course Activity</b>	<b>Grade Value</b>
Mid-Term Exam (October 12)	30%
Course Essay (November 23)	20%
Final Exam (December 14)	50%
<b>Total Grade</b>	<b>100%</b>

a) Mid-Term Exam (30%)

The Mid-Term Exam for this course will be held in the lecture hall during Week 7 (October 19). For this exam you will be required to answer multiple choice and paragraph-length answer questions for all material discussed in the course up to the exam. After the exam there will be a regularly scheduled lecture. This exam is worth 30% of your final grade.

b) Course Essay (20%)

The Course Essay for this course will be a 4-5 page essay written in regards to one of the course readings (of your choosing) and a film or documentary directly related to technology and society (also of your choosing). In this essay you must include: a synopsis of how your film or documentary is **about** technology and does not simply feature it, a discussion of how the reading the film or documentary you chose can inform and challenge our thinking about technology and society, and how your critical discussion could apply to a single example from contemporary society. More details will be offered in class as the due date approached. The Course Essay will be due at the **beginning** of class of Week 10 (November 23) and must be written in accordance with ASA style (which will be discussed during class). This essay is worth 20% of your final grade.

c) Final Exam (50%)

The Final Exam for this course will be held during the scheduled exam period on December 14 and will be a take-home exam. The exam will be provided by e-mail and on the course website at 9am that morning and you will have until 9pm that day to complete the exam and e-mail your answers to the professor (12 full hours). You will be responsible for ensuring you have proper computer and internet access as well as the time and space to complete the exam. This exam will be open-book and written with the assumption that you will use your course readings and notes. It will evaluate your ability to apply course material and engage in critical discussion. The content for this exam will be cumulative for all material discussed in the course, either in your readings or the lectures (or both). When completing this exam you must use proper citation for **all** materials you cite (from the course or otherwise) and plagiarism of other sources or students in the course will **not** be tolerated. More details about the exam will be given in lecture as it approaches. This exam is worth 50% of your final grade.

### **Participation**

Participation is *not required* for this course and will not be evaluated. However, the lectures are the primary means for communicating the course material and strive to discuss every reading in detail, and the exams will be unduly difficult without having attended the lectures.

### **Course Readings Schedule**

“Men have become the tools of their tools.” – Henry David Thoreau

The following is the tentative course schedule for material and readings. The reading listed for each week is expected to be read for that week.

All readings can be found on the course website and should be printed and brought to class for discussion. The only texts that must be purchased directly are:

1. Anabel Quan-Haase. *Technology and Society: Inequality, Power, and Social Networks*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.. Oxford: 2016. (ISBN 019901471X)
2. Paul Virilio. *The Original Accident*. Polity: 2006. (ISBN 0745636144)
3. All other course readings will be available on the course's D2L Website.

**Week 1 (September 7):** Introduction and History of Technology and Society

Readings: None.

**Week 2 (September 14):** Society and Technology as Sociological Concepts

Readings: "The Technological Society" and "Theoretical Perspectives on Technology" by Anabel Quan-Haase

**Week 3 (September 21):** The Emergence of Technology and Society

Readings: "Guns, Germs, and Steel" by Jared Diamond

**Week 4 (October 28):** The Synthesis of Technology and Society

Readings: "The Communist Manifesto" by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

**Week 5 (October 5):** Inequality and Mid-Term Exam

Readings: "Technology and Inequality" by Anabel Quan-Haase

**Week 6 (October 12):** Reading Week

Readings: None. (Consider beginning Paul Virilio's *The Original Accident* early!)

**Week 7 (October 19):** Community via Technology

Readings: "Community in a Network Society" by Anabel Quan-Haase

**Mid-Term Exam**

**Week 8 (October 26):** Technological Relationships

Readings: "Technology-Mediated Social Relationships" by Anabel Quan-Haase

**Week 9 (November 2):** Surveillance and the Other Side of Technology

Readings: "The Surveillance Society" by Anabel Quan-Haase

**Week 10 (November 9):** The Ethics of Technology and Society

Readings: "Ethical Dimensions of Technology" by Anabel Quan-Haase

**Week 11 (November 16):** Idle No More: Protest, Resistant, Revolution

Readings: "Indigenous People in Cyberspace" by Adam Lucas, and "Social Media in Conflict: Comparing Military Social-Movement Technocultures" by Chris Hables Gray and Ángel J Gordo.

**Week 12 (November 23):** Accidents, Technology, and the Speed of Society

Readings: *The Original Accident* by Paul Virilio

**Course Essay Due**

**Week 13 (November 30):** Technology and a Society of Posthumans

Readings: "The Posthuman" by Rosi Braidotti

**Grading**

All grading will be accomplished promptly and returned to students as soon as possible. This grading will be conducted according to all regulations, according to the following rubric:

90-100 (A+): Exceeds all expectations; few errors; clear and original thesis; formatting and citations easy to read.

80-89 (A): Meets all expectations well; errors do not detract from clarity; clear thesis; properly formatted and cited.

70-79 (B): Meets all expectations; few errors; obvious thesis; formatted and cited.

60-69 (C): Meets some expectations; errors detract from final work; no thesis or argument; poorly formatted and/or cited.

50-59 (D): Meets few expectations; errors are numerous and difficult to read; disorganized and sloppy; format and/or citations are confusing or incomplete.

0-49 (Fail): Unreadable and unrelated to the assignment.

**Student Expectations: Plagiarism, Cheating, Conduct, Behaviour**

All students are expected to be familiar with the entirety of the Lakehead *Code Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures* and to follow it fully

(<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/policies/student-related/code-of-student-behaviour-and-disciplinary-procedures>). When these policies are not sufficient, judgement shall be referred to the Department of Philosophy. All violations of these policies will be fully investigated.

In addition, as sociologists we should all be aware of the needs and demands of others and act with respect and camaraderie in all interactions with others during the course. All course discussion and communication forums (including e-mail) will not tolerate any racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, etc, language.