



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 3455 WA/WAO

Digital Tech & Society

Winter Term 2020

Mondays & Wednesdays: 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., AT 2020/OA1033

Sociology web-page address: <http://sociology.lakeheadu.ca>

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Course Focus

In this course, we will critically examine the social construction of digital culture, digital user identity, and consumer demand. We will discuss their links to software production and development, as well as to advertising and marketing strategies. We will also analyze the impact of the digital technologies on employment, education (especially children's early education), class, gender and ethnic relations in the context of the organization of work and the global economy. We will include in our examination recent technological advances, such as artificial intelligence, robotics and surveillance. We will draw on case studies from around the world and use a variety of sociological perspectives.

Required and Recommended Readings (Available at Lakehead University Bookstore)

- 1) Barnhizer, David and Daniel Barnhizer. 2019. *The Artificial Intelligence Contagion: Can Democracy Withstand the Imminent Transformation of Work, Wealth and the Social Order?* Atlanta: Clarity Press.
- 2) Livingstone, Sonia and Julian Sefton-Green. 2016. *The Class: Living and Learning in the Digital Age.* NY: NYU Press.
- 3) Mirchandani, Kiran, Sanjukta Mukherjee and Shruti Tambe. 2020. *Low Wage in High Tech: An Ethnography of Service Workers in Global India.* NY: Oxford University Press.
- 4) Required (and recommended) additional readings—available on the D2L (see for further details pp: 4-6).

Date	Course Topics	Required Readings	Recommended Readings & Case Studies [Reserve/D2L]
Jan. 6 & 8	1) Introduction Theorizing about the Digital Technology		Sociology, Science & Digital Technology: Bauchspies et al, Preface & Chapter 1
Jan. 8-13	2) Smartphone: the Networking of the Self Smartphone & Behavioural Addictions	Greenfield , chapter 1 Alter , pp: 1-45	

Jan.13-15 th	3) The Use of Computer Technology in our Children's Early Education Digital Technologies and the Environment Learning, the Natural World & Computer Use in our Children's Early Education	Armstrong & Casement , Chapter 10 Bridle , chapter 3 Armstrong & Casement , Chapter 11	Case study: The Future of Education: Reboot Required—Q & A: Don Tapscott ' (CBC): < https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2684746799 >; Dr. Joel Kovel, "Eco-Socialism" Pt. 1 of 3 (see 1:33):< http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sDFI BUH1cSQ >
Jan.15-20 th	4) Digital Tech & Social Relationships Learning and Living in the Digital Age	Turkle , pp: 1X-XII Livingstone , Intro & chapters 1 & 10	Case Studies: Turkle , 279-296; Anabel Quan-Haase , pp:167-189 EDxUIUC - Sherry Turkle - Alone Together < http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtLVCpZliNs >; Livingstone , chapters 2-9 (TBA)
Jan.20-22 nd	5) Activists & the Surveillance State Cyber-Activism across National Borders Citizenship, Democracy & the Internet & Surveillance Technology	Choudry , Chapter 1, pp: 1-22 Winston —J. Stanley & B. Steinhardt, "Bigger Monster, Weaker Chains" (pp: 222-235). Barnhizer , chapters 22-23 Zuboff, chapter 1: 3-24	Case Studies: How Facebook Changed the World: The Arab Spring (parts 1-4): < http://vimeo.com/45410957 >; Hill , pp:11-15;59-83. Shoshana Zuboff on surveillance capitalism VPRO Documentary:< https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIXhnWUmMvw >
Jan.27-29 th	Artificial Intelligence (AI) & the Surveillance System Surveillance Capitalism		
Jan. 29 – Feb. 3 rd	6) Political Economy Theories & the Social Context of the Digital Technology Perspectives on the Information Society Capitalism, Democracy & the Internet	McChesney , Chapter 1	Case Studies: McChesney , Chapters 2-3; Robert McChesney - the History of the Internet and it's Corporate Ownershttps: < https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLCasOG3S2o >
Feb. 3 -5 th	7) Language, Digital Tech & Indigenous Peoples Protecting & Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online	Wemigwans , chapter 1	Case Study: Living the Language - Canada: Ktunaxa :< https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EIPzR6_o4pl >.< https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrAFT4NbG7k > Bolivia : The Aymara
Feb. 5-10 th	8) Employment & the Development of the Computer Technology & the African-American Experience Digital Tech, Canadian State Security & Racial Profiling	Rifkin , Chapter 5 Choudry , Chapter 6	Rifkin , Chapter 3 Rifkin , Chapters 16-18
Feb. 10 -12 th	9) Women's Work in the IT Employment & the Global Economy Theorizing about Women's Work Choices in IT & Structural Relations of Gender, Class & Race New Work versus Same Old & the Inequity of the Labor Market	Scott-Dixon , pp:11-29; 30-40; Menzies , pp:3-19 Scott-Dixon , Chapter 2 (pp: 63-81)	Scott-Dixon , chapter 4
Feb. 12 & 24 th	10) Globalization & Markets & Inequality Multinational High Tech Industries & "Race," Class & Gender	Mirchandani , Intro, chapters 1 & 6	J. Stiglitz (pp: 52-82); Winston —J. Stiglitz, "Making Globalization Work" (pp: 174-181); Mirchandani , Chapters: 2-5 (TBA)
Feb. 24 26 th	11) International Forum on Globalization The Impact of Globalization on Developing Countries Neo-Liberal Globalization & Markets & Inequality in Canada	Winston , "What Should be off-Limits to Globalization" (pp: 182-195).	J. Stiglitz , pp: 265-290. McBride & Whiteside , pp: 58- 79; 106-111
Feb.26 - March 2	12) The Mythology of Computer Use The History of Computing	Rose , Chapter 1 (pp:15-42)	Case Studies [Reserve]: Rose , Chapter 2; McChesney , Chapter 4

	The Culture of Software Production		Rose, Chapter 3 Rose, Chapter 4
	Take home Exam—Due March 4th		
March 4-9 th	13) The Roots of Digital Culture Current Theorizing about Digital Technology & Race, Class, & Gender	Millar, Chapter 1 Millar, Chapter 2	
March 9-11 th	14) Artificial Intelligence, Robotics & “Nanoscience & Ethics: Biotechnology & Nanotechnology & Weapons of Mass Destruction	Winston—Rodney Brooks, "Us and Them" (pp: 249-262);	Case Study: Bill Joy: What I'm worried about, what I'm excited about: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LN2shXeJNz8
March 11 -18	15) The Impact of Artificial Intelligence The Evolution of AI The Impact of the AI on the Global Economic, Social & Political Systems What is AI & What Is It Doing to Us? The Impact of Google, Amazon, Facebook... on Democracy	Barnhizer, chapter 4 Barnhizer, chapters 7-14 Barnhizer, chapters 17-20 Barnhizer, chapter 24	Barnhizer, Chapters 1-3 Barnhizer, chapters 5-6; 15-16
March 23	Test Review, March 23rd		
March 25	In-class Test, March 25th		
March 30 - April 1 st	Moving toward Solutions	Barnhizer, chapters 25-29	

Course Requirements

There are **four (4) requirements** for this course.

1. *One Presentation*.....25%

Students need to work together in groups and divide the work evenly among the members of their group for this assignment. Every group will consist of two students, and every group is required to do the following:

(A) *In-Class Article-Presentation*

Every group will be provided with (or will be asked to choose) two articles dealing with the areas of digital technologies & society from specific social science journals or books (including the recommended readings). The group is expected to present these articles. The presenters should not only sum up the main argument(s) or idea(s) of the articles, but also provide analyses of the articles by making use of the concepts, theories and other material covered in class. It is important that the presenters understand their articles well and effectively communicate their content to the rest of the students. The presenters should be prepared to lead the discussion and answer questions regarding their topic. They may use overheads or any other prop that will improve their presentation.

(B) *Short Film*—In addition to the articles, students may choose to include a short film, or parts of a film (up to 5 minutes) in order to facilitate understanding of a particular part of their topic.

(C) *Personal experience/Observation (to be incorporated in the presentation)*

Further details will be provided in class.

2. **One Take-home Exam. Due date: March 4th**25%
The take-home exam consists of one or two essay question(s), and covers all class work, lecture and reading material to date (more details will be given in class).
3. **One in-class Test: March 25th**30%
The test consists of short-answer and essay questions and may include multiple-choice questions. The test covers all class work, lecture, student presentations, and reading material to date. It is not the instructor's aim to reproduce the same material that is covered in the assigned reading. The lecture material and discussions will complement, expand, and shed more light on the areas that are covered in the readings.
4. **Class Participation, Quizzes & Critical Reflection**.....20%
Class attendance is expected: In order to do well in this course, you must attend class on a regular basis. There will be substantial in-class discussions and much of the material covered in lectures will not be found in the reading. In order to participate in class discussions, it is important that you do the readings before coming to class. You must come to class ready to contribute to discussion in a thoughtful way, to ask questions, as well as critically reflect on the assigned readings.

ASSIGNMENT POLICIES:

- The essay (take-home exam) must be formatted according to the **ASA** (American Sociological Association) Style Guide for referencing and citations. See for more information, the following link:
https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/92/ASA_Style_4th_ed_0.pdf
- Make sure you keep a **backup copy** of the essay (take-home exam).
- There is a **penalty** for essay (take-home exam) handed in late.
- **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated and will be dealt with according to the University regulations. For more information, see **Lakehead University Regulations**.

Further, the student will be given additional information concerning course topics, course requirements, evaluation procedures and other relevant material on the first day of class.

Required (and recommended) additional readings—available on the D2L

Alter, Adam. (2017—pp: 1-45). *Irresistible: The Rise of Addictive Technology and the Business of Keeping Us Hooked*. NY: Penguin Press.

Armstrong, Allison & Charles Casement. (1998—Chapters: 10 & 11, pp: 167-199). *The Child and the Machine: Why Computers May Put Our Children's Education at Risk*. Toronto: Key Porter Books.

Bauchspies, Wenda, Jennifer Croissant & Sal Restivo. (2006—Preface & Chapter 1, pp: VII-XI;1-18). *Science, Technology and Society: a Sociological Perspective*. Malden, MA, USA: Blackwell Publishing.

Bridle, James. (2018—chapter 3, pp: 47-76). *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future*. UK: Verso.

- Choudry, Aziz. (2019—Chapters 1 & 6, pp: 1-22; 117-128). *Activists and the Surveillance State: Learning from Repression*. UK/Toronto: Pluto Press & Between the Lines.
- Greenfield, Adam. (2017—Chapter 1, pp: 9-29). *Radical Technologies: The Design of Everyday Life*. UK: Verso.
- Hill, Symon. (2013—pp:11-15;59-83). *Digital Revolutions: Activism in the Internet Age*. Oxford: New Internationalist.
- McBride, Stephen & Heather Whiteside. (2011—pp:58-79; 106-111). *Private Affluence, Public Austerity: Economic Crisis & Democratic Malaise in Canada*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.
- McChesney, Robert W. (2013—pp:1-22;33-40 & 210). *Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism Is Turning the Internet Against Democracy*. New York: The New Press.
- Menzies, Heather. (1996—pp: 3-19). *Whose Brave New World? The Information Highway & the New Economy*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Millar, Melanie Stewart. (1998—Chapters: 1 & 2, pp: 28- 43; 53-68). *Cracking the Gender Code: Who Rules the Wired World?* Toronto: Second Story Press.
- Quan-Haase, Anabel. (2013—pp: 167-189). *Technology & Society: Social Networks, Power, & Technology*. Toronto: Oxford U Press.
- Rifkin, Jeremy. (1995—Chapters: 3, 5, & 18, pp: 42-56; 69-80; 275-293). *The End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*. New York: Tarcher & Putnam.
- Rose, Elen. (2003—Chapters: 1, pp: 15-42). *User Error: Resisting Computer Culture*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Scott-Dixon, K. (2004—Intro & Chapters: 1 & 2, pp: 11-29; 31-40;63-81). *Doing IT: Women Working in Information Technology*. Toronto: Sumach Press.
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. (2012—pp:52-82; 265-290). *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Turkle, Sherry. (2011—pp: IX-XVII; 279-296). *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. New York: Basic Books.
- Wemigwans, Jennifer. (2018-- Chapter 1, pp: 1-42). *A Digital Bundle: Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online*. Regina: University of Regina Press.
- Winston, Morton & Ralph Edelbach. (2012—pp:182-195; 222-235; 249-262; 301-310). *Society, Ethics, and Computer Technology*, Revised 4th Edition. Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd.

Zuboff, Shoshana. (2019—Chapter 1, pp: 3-24). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. NY: Public Affairs.

University Policies

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the [Code of Student Behaviour](#). Please read the [Code of Student Behaviour](#)¹.
- **Accommodations:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#)² and register as early as possible.
- Accommodations are in accordance with the terms of the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#)³. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

¹ <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/academic-support/skills-for-success/responsibilities>

² <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

³ <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>