

**Lakehead University**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Sociology 2755 WB**  
**Technology and Society**

**Dr. Laurie Forbes**  
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**Winter 2015**  
**Monday 7.00 to 10.00**  
**AT 2001**  
**Office Hours: Monday 3.00 to 5.00**

**Required Texts**

1. There is a reading package designed for this course available at the campus bookstore.
2. Arsenault, Chris. 2009. *Blowback A Canadian History of Agent Orange and the War At Home*.

**Course Description**

This course will explore the impact of technological change upon the social world. Each class we focus on substantive topics that examine the social changes that are brought about by technological developments. In our first lecture we will discuss the importance of critical analysis from a sociological perspective. In succeeding weeks we will investigate such areas as: the impact of social change from a historical point of view, cultural changes that occurred as a result of introducing technological developments, transportation technology and racism, work and technological change, medicine and technology, eugenics, reproductive technologies, resistance to technology, whistle-blowers, and technological disasters. The impact of technology on First Nations people will be addressed. We will end the course with a discussion on Agent Orange and sustainability.

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and actively participate in class discussions. As well, reading assignments are to be completed on the date specified in the reading list attached to this syllabus.

**Evaluation**

Mid-Term Examination  
Movie Review  
Final Examination  
Participation

**Marks**

35%  
15%  
40%  
10%  
100

**Dates**

February 9, 2015  
March 2, 2015  
Set by the registrar  
Throughout the course

**Examinations**

The examinations will incorporate lectures, class discussions, films and assigned readings.

**Participation**

Your participation mark is based on your contribution to class discussions. During the class you will be given group questions for discussion and your group will compile a report of that discussion. Those who participated will sign their name to the report and the report will be handed in at the end of the class.

**Movie Review**

The movie review is due at the beginning of class on March 2, 2015. Your review is to be of a movie that encompasses technology and is sociologically relevant. In your own words, in a paragraph or two, describe what the movie is about. In two to four paragraphs discuss the technology that is portrayed in the movie. In two to four paragraphs discuss the impact of the technology on the social world depicted in the movie. In a couple of sentences outline why you would or why you would not recommend this movie. Your paper is to be 3 to 4 pages in length, not including your title page and bibliography.

Use ASA style to format your review. Use Times Numeral font, 12 font size, and double-space your paper. No reviews are to be submitted electronically. Plagiarism is not tolerated at Lakehead University; please see the Student Handbook for a full discussion on plagiarism.

**NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE HANDED IN ELECTRONICALLY.**

**American Sociological Association (ASA)**

All assignments in the Department of Sociology are to follow the ASA (American Sociological Association) style guide. The guide can be accessed on the web. Type in ASA Style Guide and a number of examples will be available for you to choose from.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is unacceptable and subject to various sanctions. Please see the university regulations section on academic dishonesty in the Lakehead University Calendar.

**Grades**

The Midterm and movie review will be returned in class. You have two weeks, after the day midterm and the movie review are handed back in class, to come and discuss your grade.

**Medical or Compassionate Consideration**

Should you require academic consideration for medical or compassionate reasons, you will need a note from a physician or counsellor. Please refer to the current Lakehead University Calendar for detailed information.

**Office Hours**

There are two regularly scheduled office hours each week. Office hours are set to provide students the opportunity to stop by if they have questions, concerns, or would just like to say hello.

**Please Note: I do try to answer email in a timely fashion. I do guarantee a response during my regularly scheduled office hours. I do not discuss marks through email.**

**Tentative Lecture and Reading Schedule Winter Semester 2015****Monday, Jan. 5: Introduction to Technology and Society****Monday, Jan. 12: Social Change**

Reading: Diamond, Jared. 1999. *Guns, Germs, and Steel The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. pp. 239-264.

**Monday, Jan. 19: Impact of Technology on Social Change or Social Change and the Impact on Technology**

Reading: Anderson, R. J., J.A. Hughes, and W. W. Sharrock. 1987. *Classic Disputes in Sociology*. London: Allen and Unwin. pp. 73-78.

Reading: Maracus, Alan, I. and Howard P. Segal. 1999. *Technology in America A Brief History*. Canada: Thomson Wadsworth. pp. 8-22.

Reading: Postman, Neil. 1999. *Building a Bridge to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century How the Past Can Influence Our Future*. New York: Vintage Books. pp. 21-35.

**Monday, Jan. 26: Technological Development and Cultural Changes**

Reading: Eisenstein, Elizabeth. 2007. "The Rise of the Reading Public." Pp. 95-103 in *Communication In History Technology, Culture, Society*, edited by David Crowley and Paul Heyer. Boston: Pearson.

Reading: Mander, Jerry. 1991. *In the Absence of the Sacred The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books. pp. 97-119.

Reading: Stefanac, Suzanne. 2007. *Dispatches from Blogistan A Travel Guide for the Modern Blogger*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders. pp. 1-9.

**Monday, Feb. 2: Whistle-Blowers**

Reading: Brandt, Allan, M. 1996. "Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study." Pp. 33-44 in *Readings for Sociology*, edited by Garth Massey. New York: W. W. Norton.

**Monday, Feb. 9: Mid-term first half of the class****Whistle-Blowers second half of the class**

Reading: Hjorth, Stevens, Linda. 2008 "Whistle-Blowing." In: Hjorth, Stevens, Linda, et al (Eds.). Technology and Society Issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Beyond. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall. pp. 84-87.

Reading: Pooley, Eric. 2008 "Case Study 2 Nuclear Warriors." In: Hjorth, Stevens, Linda, et al (Eds.). Technology and Society Issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and Beyond. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall. pp. 88-98.

**Monday, Feb. 16: Reading Week No Class****Monday, Feb. 23: Technological Disasters**

Reading: Cassels, Jamie. 1996. *The Uncertain Promise of Law*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1996. pp. 3-32.

Reading: Gibbs, Lois, Marie. 1998. *Love Canal The Story Continues*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers. pp. 20-41.

Reading: Ali, Harris, S. 2007. "Dealing with Toxicity in the Risk Society: The Hamilton, Ontario Plastic Recycling Fire." in *Sociology Canadian Perspectives*, edited by Lorne Tepperman and Harley Dickinson. Toronto: Oxford University Press. **Pp. 293-296.**

**Monday, Mar. 2: Work**

Reading: Cross, Gary and Rick Szostak. 2005. *Technology and American Society A History*. New Jersey: Pearson. pp. 222-237.

**Movie Review is due****Monday, Mar. 9: Transportation Technology and Racism**

Reading: Surtees, Robert, J. 1992. *The Northern Connection Ontario Northland Since 1902*. North York: Captus Press. pp. 9-27.

**Monday, Mar. 16: Positive and Negative Eugenics**

Reading: Savulescu, Julian. 2010. "Should We Clone Human Beings?" Pp. 355-366 in *Taking Sides Clashing Views in Science, Technology, and Society*, edited by Thomas A. Easton. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill

Reading: Van Gend, David. 2010. "Prometheus, Pandora, and the Myths of Cloning." Pp. 367-373 in *Taking Sides Clashing Views in Science, Technology, and Society*, edited by Thomas A. Easton. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Reading: Grekul, Jana, Harvey Krahn, and Dave Odynak. 2009. "Sterilizing the 'Feeble-Minded': Eugenics in Alberta, Canada, 1929-1972." Pp. 292-303 in *Biomedical Ethics A Canadian Focus*, edited by Johanna Fisher. Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

Reading: Glover, Jonathan. 2009. "Eugenics: Some Lessons from the Nazi Experience." Pp. 287-292 in *Biomedical Ethics A Canadian Focus*, edited by Johanna Fisher. Don Mills ON: Oxford University Press.

**Monday, Mar. 23: Resistance to Technology and Medical Technology and Reproduction**

Reading: Volti, Rudi. 2008. *Society and Technological Change*. New York: Worth Publishers. Pp.19-26.

Reading: Volti, Rudi. 2008. *Society and Technological Change*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Worth Publishers. pp. 118-136.

Reading: Kennedy, Paul. 2013. *Engineers of Victory*. Toronto: Harpers Collins Publishers Limited, pp. 353-373

**Monday, Mar. 30: 29 Agent Orange and Politics and Sustainability**

Reading: Blowback A Canadian History of Agent Orange and the War At Home.