

STS 201: UNDERSTANDING TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Semester: Fall 2018

Meets: Tuesdays 6:00PM – 9:00PM

Room: Kupfrian Hall 210

Instructor: Jonathan Stiles

Office Hours: By Appointment Tuesdays 4:00 – 5:00PM in Cullimore Hall, Rm. 435

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Course Description:

The course offers an introduction to the study of how our society gives shape to and is shaped by technology. We will draw on the humanities, social sciences, and philosophy as we explore some major theories of science and technology studies, and consider emerging issues, including those related to the rise of the Internet. Over the course of the semester you will apply knowledge from the readings and lectures in contributing to a qualitative study on the use of a technology.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Describe some of the major theories of technology studies
2. Consider technologies from multiple perspectives, including their design, their place in our lives, and their effects on society
3. Form well-founded, unbiased research questions about emerging technologies
4. Conduct an historical analysis on the design of a technology and collect qualitative data on its use through semi-structured interviews with users.

Course Texts:

- All chapters and articles will be posted online as PDFs via the Moodle site

Assessment:

Your grade for this course is based on the following components:

Participation and Attendance	20%
<i>Includes 2 times serving as discussant</i>	
Weekly Quizzes on Readings	15%
2 Reflection Papers	20%
Group Research Project	25%
Final Exam	20%
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Total	100%

Grading

Course grades are based on the total number of points you earn throughout the course of the semester. Make an appointment to meet with me during the semester to discuss your performance and progress. All grades are non-negotiable and I do not give incompletes.

- A 90 to 100
- B+ 85 to 89
- B 80 to 84
- C+ 75 to 79
- C 70 to 74
- D 60 to 69
- F ≤59

Student Accountability Statement:

Students are expected to read and understand NJIT’s academic integrity policy. Members of the NJIT community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. There is a zero tolerance policy on any and all forms of cheating. For more information see the NJIT Policy on Academic Integrity: <https://www.njit.edu/doss/code-student-conduct-article-11-university-policy-academic-integrity/>

Students that require special accommodations

Students with disabilities who are otherwise qualified and are college able will receive reasonable accommodations to support their special needs. Students must self-identify to the Disabilities Services office to qualify to receive services. NJIT is in full compliance with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Cell Phone and Laptop Use

- Turn all cell phones to silent mode and do not use during class time
- Laptop use is for note taking and in-class research to contribute to class discussion. Any abuse of this privilege will result in laptops not allowed in class. For everyone. Be respectful and courteous to those around you.

Weekly Schedule:

Note: Subject to revision; Readings will be posted on Moodle

<p>Sept 3 - Sept 9</p> <p><i>What is Technology?</i></p> <p><i>Class Orientation</i></p>	<p><u>Read:</u> Syllabus</p> <p><u>Discussion</u> What is Technology?</p> <p><u>Activities (Online)</u> Sign up for first discussant slot Post a photo of a technology “artifact” (object)</p>
<p>Sept 10 - Sept 16</p> <p><i>Does technology shape society?</i></p>	<p><u>Key Concept (definition on Moodle site)</u> Technological determinism</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Chang, “Thing 4: The washing machine has changed the world more</p>

	<p>than the Internet has” Lepore, “Our Own Devices” Toyama, “Why Technology Alone Won't Fix Schools”</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> Washing machine vs. Internet Does technology shape society?</p>
<p>Sept 17 - Sept 23</p> <p><i>The Social Construction of Technology</i></p>	<p><u>Key Concept (definition on Moodle site)</u> Social Construction</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Gladwell, “The Social Life of Paper” LaFrance, “The Triumph of Email” Boghossian, “What is Social Construction?”</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> The social construction of workplace technologies</p> <p><u>Activity</u> “SCOT” Diagramming</p>
<p>Sept 24 - Sept 30</p> <p><i>Technology and Gender</i></p>	<p><u>Key Concept (definition on Moodle site)</u> Gender Scripting</p> <p><u>Read:</u> van Oost, “Materialized Gender: How Shavers Configure the Users’ Femininity and Masculinity” Ensmenger, “Making Programming Masculine”</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> Product design and gender Diversity in the tech sector</p> <p><u>Activity (Online)</u> Post gendered advertisements for products</p>
<p>Oct 1 - Oct 7</p> <p><i>Users and Non-Users</i></p>	<p><u>Key Concepts</u> Non-use; User innovation</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Wyatt, “Non-Users Also Matter: The Construction of Users and Non-</p>

	<p>Users of the Internet” Pew Research Center, “13% of Americans don’t use the Internet. Who are they?” Von Hippel, "Democratizing innovation: The evolving phenomenon of user innovation”</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> Non-use of the Internet and social media</p> <p><u>Activity (Online)</u> Post open source projects</p>
<p>Oct 8 - Oct 14</p> <p><i>Values Embedded in Technology</i></p>	<p><u>Due:</u> First reflection essay by 10/14 11:59pm Submit ideas for technologies to study</p> <p><u>Key Concepts (definitions on Moodle site)</u> Embedded politics; Embedded values,</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Winner, “Do Artifacts Have Politics?” Wynsberghe, “Designing Robots for Care: Care Centered Value-Sensitive Design” Oremus, “Blame the Minder, Not the Machine”</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p> <p><u>Discussion/Activity</u> Facebook Advertising</p>
<p>Oct 15 - Oct 21</p> <p><i>Researching Technology</i></p>	<p><u>Due:</u> Sign up for project group by 10/21 11:59pm</p> <p><u>Key Concepts (definitions on Moodle site)</u> Qualitative research, Quantitative research</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Sociological Research – Chapter 2 (TB) Rubin and Rubin, "Listening, Hearing, and Sharing Social Experiences"</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p> <p><u>Activity</u> Interviewing exercise</p>

<p>Oct 22 - Oct 28</p> <p><i>Socio-Technical Systems</i></p>	<p><u>Key Concept (definition on Moodle site)</u> Socio-technical System</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Hughes, "The Evolution of Large Technical Systems" Perrow, "Normal Accident at Three Mile Island"</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u> Three mile island, Air Travel</p> <p><u>Activity</u> "SCOT" Diagramming 2</p>
<p>Oct 29 - Nov 4</p> <p><i>Technology Use and Sustainability</i></p>	<p><u>Due:</u> User interview guide (group) by 11/4 @ 11:59pm</p> <p><u>Key Concept (definition on Moodle site)</u> Sustainability</p> <p><u>Read:</u> Kuhlman and Farrington, "What is Sustainability?" Shove, "Users, technologies and expectations of comfort, cleanliness and convenience"</p> <p><u>Quiz on Readings/Concepts Due Before Class</u></p>
<p>Nov 5 - Nov 11</p> <p><i>Special Topic: Leaded Gasoline</i></p>	<p><u>Read:</u> Brookings Institution, "New evidence that lead exposure increases crime" BBC News, "Why did we use leaded petrol for so long?" World Bank, "Phasing out lead from gasoline: worldwide experience and policy implications"</p>
<p>Nov 12 - Nov 18</p> <p><i>Special Topic: Teens and Social Media</i></p>	<p><u>Read:</u> Boyd, <i>It's Complicated: The Social Lives of Networked Teens</i>, Chapters 1,2,3,5.</p> <p><u>Activity</u> Interview coding exercise</p>
<p>Nov 19 - Nov 25 THANKSGIVING, NO CLASS MEETING</p>	
<p>Nov 26 - Dec 2</p> <p><i>Special Topics: Anonymity on the</i></p>	<p><u>Due:</u> Historical analysis (Individual) by 12/2 @ 11:59pm</p>

<i>Internet</i>	Interviews Transcript by 12/2 @ 11:59pm <u>Read</u> The New Yorker, "Reddit and the Struggle to Detoxify the Internet" File Qiang, "The Battle for the Chinese Internet"
Dec 3 - Dec 9 <i>Special Topic TBD Based on Your Preferences</i>	
Dec 10 - Dec 16	<u>Due:</u> Final Project Presentation (Group, In Class) Second reflection essay by 12/16 11:59pm
Dec 17 - Dec 23	Final Exam (Online or proctored TBD)