ARTSSCI 3B03 – Technology & Society I (2019-20, Term 1)

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the complex relationships between technology and society, considering the extent to which these terms mutually constitute each other. Taking an integrative, inquiry-based approach, we will investigate various perspectives on the technology-society nexus, and consider the impacts of such intersections on a range of social issues (e.g., privacy, trust, identity, relationships) and within diverse social contexts (e.g., work, art, migration, health care). Throughout, these topics will be taken up and assessed with the assistance of both historical and contemporary examples.

The course will be structured as a seminar. I will introduce the topics and readings, but students will also be expected to contribute questions and objects of analysis, to participate in discussions, to work in small groups, and to help shape the flow and direction of our work.

Class Times

M 2:30-4:20, BSB 105
W 2:30-3:20, BSB 105

Instructor

Dr. Beth Marquis
Mills Library 524 (MacPherson Institute)
905.525.9140 x27667
beth.marquis@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours:
M 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe, discuss, compare and evaluate a wide range of arguments about the interrelations between technology and society.
2. Apply and extend scholarly understandings of the technology-society interface in order to conduct insightful analyses of historical and/or current case studies and examples.
3. Develop, investigate, and respond effectively to compelling and researchable questions about technology and society.
4. Take an active, inquisitive, and analytical approach to their interactions with technology in their daily lives

Required Texts:

There are no texts to purchase for this course; all readings will be accessible through online channels such as public websites and McMaster's eBook collections and journal databases. Links to these materials will be available on the course Avenue site. See the schedule below for initial reading assignments. Additional readings may be assigned as we move through the term.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Assignment #1	Due before October 11, 2019	= 25%
Assignment #2	Due before November 8, 2019	= 25%
Final Paper	Due December 2, 2019	= 35%
Participation / Critical Responses	Throughout term	= 15%

Assignment Descriptions & Evaluation Criteria:

All students are required to submit a final paper on a topic of their choosing (described further below). The remainder of the assignments offer some flexibility, allowing you to demonstrate the extent to which you've met the course objectives in ways that are of most interest to you. In particular, you will be required to select TWO assignment types from the list provided, and to complete them according to a schedule you determine (noting the last possible deadlines for each indicated above). You will also have the opportunity to choose whether you would prefer to have your participation graded or to complete three short critical responses, which you would turn in over the course of the term. All students must provide me with a plan indicating the assignments they intend to complete by **September 16, 2019.**

Final Paper (35%)

This assignment asks you to develop, investigate, and respond to a researchable question about the interrelations between technology and society. You will be required to construct a research question of interest to you, to identify and obtain information relevant to answering the question, to evaluate the appropriateness of the evidence, to draw reasoned conclusions, and to communicate a coherent and persuasive response in an essay of 3000-4000 words in length. Your capstone paper cannot take up the same topic as one of your assignments, unless it is sufficiently distinctive in approach/focus.

Assignment 1 & 2 Options (25% each; select 2)

Group Exploration & Facilitation

Working in a group of 2-4, you will be expected to select an example or issue related to the week's theme, and to lead discussion of it during the Wednesday class. This will involve locating a brief news article or other introductory source (e.g., a website/video/advertisement) about the topic/example chosen, preparing 1-2 central questions for discussion, circulating the discussion questions & introductory material in advance, and leading the session on the assigned day. The facilitation should be structured such that all group members participate actively in some way, and should involve no more than 20 minutes of introductory presentation, followed by (or interspersed with) 25 minutes for group discussion, activities, etc.

Media Case Study

For this assignment, you will be required to locate one or two brief, technology-relevant media texts (e.g., newspaper/magazine articles, advertisements, editorial cartoons) from 2018 or 2019, and to write a 1750-2000 word critical analysis of the ways in which these texts represent and speak to the technology-society nexus. Your analysis should connect the example(s) to issues taken up in class, evaluate the implications and ramifications of the text(s)' representational choices, and raise questions for further consideration.

Photo/Image Essay

The photo/image essay assignment is intended to afford you an opportunity to develop and construct a visual argument/analysis which speaks to and/or comments on some aspect of the technology-society interface. You will need to produce a series of ~3-5 images (e.g., photos, drawings) that engages with and offers insight into one or more of the topics discussed in class. These images should be conceived and organized such that they fit together to offer an overarching position on or representation of the topic or example you have elected to examine. The images will need to be accompanied by a written statement of approximately 1000 words, which provides relevant background to the issue/example, explains your intent, and situates your visual essay in relation to existing scholarly literature on the topic.

'Engaging Technology' Proposal

This assignment asks you to select an issue or challenge connected to the technology-society nexus, and to propose and evaluate a means of responding to that challenge (e.g., an artistic intervention, an educational campaign, a civil society action, a shift in personal practices, etc.). You will need to describe and explain the issue or challenge on which you are focusing (making reference to relevant literature), set out your proposed means of response (in substantial detail), and assess the likely strengths and limitations of that proposal. The entire proposal should be written up in a document of ~1750-2000 words, and may also contain visual elements or other components that help you illustrate your planned approach.

Participation (15%) or Critical Responses (3 x 5% each)

Participation

Participation in the class process is one of the key indicators of your understanding of the course material. The expectations include: regular attendance, reading the assigned materials, contributing to class discussion, completing in class activities, listening respectfully, and engaging with others' comments to further our understandings of the materials. If you wish, you may also demonstrate your engagement by submitting brief written reflections on course readings or class discussions (these can be short and less formal than the critical responses described below. They're intended as a way for you to raise questions/observations you might not have been able to in class). An Avenue Dropbox will be set up for this purpose. A grading rubric, which lists the criteria by which participation will be assessed, will be posted on Avenue to Learn early in the term.

Critical Responses

Critical responses are brief (~800-1000 word), written analyses that engage with the course readings and/or apply the readings to understand and analyse an experience you've had with technology in your own life. If you elect to complete the responses, you will need to submit three over the term, and cannot submit more than one at the same time. At least one of your responses should focus on engaging critically with a course reading. In such cases, you should demonstrate your understanding of the author's central argument, consider the strengths and limitations of the piece, and engage with key questions it raises and/or examples it might help

us to analyse or understand. A second response should draw on one or more course readings to help you think through an experience you have had with technology or a technological example you've recently encountered. For this, you will need to describe the experience/example, and draw meaningfully on the scholarly source(s) to help you to understand or analyse this example and consider its implications. For the third response, you can choose to focus either on another course reading, or on a second example/experience. You may also develop an alternative topic, in collaboration with me.

Policy Statements

Assignment Deadlines & Missed/Late Work:

Students are expected to hand in all assignments on the specified due dates. Late submissions will be subject to a penalty of 3% per day (including weekend days). Assignments submitted after the specified submission time on the due date will be counted as one day late. No assignments will be accepted after December 11, 2019. Given that course assignments require electronic submission, you should familiarize yourself with the Avenue to Learn dropbox in advance of the deadlines, and ask for assistance as necessary. Problems with electronic submission WILL NOT be accepted as an excuse for lateness.

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF):

In the event of an absence, students should review and follow the Academic Regulations in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work." Please consult the MSAF statement on our website (https://artsci.mcmaster.ca/forms-requests/) and direct any questions or concerns to Shelley Anderson or Madeline Van Impe in the Arts & Science Program Office as appropriate.

McMaster Policy on Academic Integrity:

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences—e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity. The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: 1) Plagiarism—e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. 2) Improper collaboration in group work. 3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. SAS can be contacted by phone 905-

525-9140 ext. 28652 or email sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO):

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous, or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office (i.e. to Shelley Anderson or Madeline Van Impe in the Arts & Science Program Office) normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Sustainable Written Work Submission Guidelines

The written work submission guidelines have been chosen to support the more sustainable use of paper, energy, and toner, and meet the Platinum standard of the Office of Sustainability; http://www.mcmaster.ca/sustainability/. All written work should be submitted in the following format: double-sided pages, reduced line spacing (1.5 lines), exclusion of title page, sans-serif font. Most work will also be submitted and returned online.

Email Contact and Student Responsibility Statement

Please Note: The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L, and/or McMaster email. It is the responsibility of students to check **their McMaster email** and course websites regularly during the term and to note any changes. Announcements will be made in class and by using the course email distribution list.

Course Schedule

A. Definitions & Foundations
Week 1 (September 4): Introduction: Popular Visions & Received Views
- o   No required readings

Week 2 (September 9, 11): Approaches to Understanding the Intersection
- o   **Required Readings:**
    - Franklin, U. (1999). *The Real World of Technology* (pp. 1-26)*.* Toronto: House of Anansi Press.
    - Winner, L. (1986). Technologies as forms of life. In *The Whale and The Reactor.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press (pp. 3-18).
- o   **Recommended Reading:**
    - Wajcman, J. (2019). How Silicon Valley sets time. *New Media & Society, 21*(6)*,* 1272-1289.

B. Issues in the Intersection

Week 3 (September 16, 18): Control and Trust
- **Required Readings:**
    - Slack, J.D. & Wise, J.M. (2015). Control. In *Culture and Technology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 59-73). New York: Peter Lang.
    - Shapiro, A. (2018). Between autonomy and control: Strategies of arbitrage in the 'on demand' economy. *New Media & Society, 20*(8), 2954-2971.
- **Recommended Reading:**
    - Waytz, A., Heafner, J., & Epley, N. (2014). The mind in the machine: Anthropomorphism increases trust in an autonomous vehicle. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 52,* 113-117.

Week 4 (September 23, 25): Privacy, Security, and Surveillance
- **Required Readings:**
    - Bauman, Z. & Lyon, D. (2013). In/security and surveillance. In *Liquid Surveillance* (pp. 100-120). Cambridge: Polity Press.
    - Stark, L. & Levy, K. (2018). The surveillant consumer. *Media, Culture, & Society, 40*(8), 1202-1220.
- **Recommended Reading:**
    - Zuboff, S. (2019). Surveillance capitalism and the challenge of collective action. *New Labor Forum, 28*(1)*,* 10-29.

Week 5 (September 30, October 2): Identity
- **Required Readings:**
    - Bivens, R. (2017). The gender binary will not be deprogrammed: Ten years of coding gender on Facebook. *New Media & Society, 19*(6), 880-898.
    - Noble, S.U. (2018). Introduction: The power of algorithms. In *Algorithms of Oppression* (pp. 1-14). New York, NYU Press.
- **Recommended Reading:**
    - Fisher, E. & Mehozay, Y. (2019). How algorithms see their audience: Media epistemes and the changing conception of the individual. *Media, Culture & Society,* https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719831598

Week 6 (October 7, 9): Humanity, Posthumanism, & Transhumanism
- **Required Readings:**
    - Braidotti, R. (2013). Post-anthropocentrism: Life beyond the species. In *The Posthuman* (pp. 55-67 only)*.* Cambridge: Polity Press*.*
    - More, M. (2013). The philosophy of transhumanism. In *The Transhumanist Reader* (pp. 3-17). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
                        Final day to submit Assignment #1: Friday, October 11 (11:59 pm)

Week 7 (October 14, 16): Fall Break – No classes

Week 8 (October 21, 23): Human/Non-Human Encounters
- o **Required Readings:**
  - Turkle, S. (2011). Love's labor lost. In *Alone Together* (pp.103-126). New York: Basic Books.
  - Borenstein, J. & Arkin, R. (2019). Robots, ethics, and intimacy: The need for scientific research. In D. Berkich & M.V. d'Alfonso (eds.), *On the Cognitive, Ethical, and Scientific Dimensions of Artificial Intelligence* (pp. 299-309). Springer International.

Week 9 (October 28, 30): Technocolonialism
- o **Required Readings:**
  - Kolopenuk, J. (2018). 'Pop-up' Métis and the rise of Canada's post-indigenous formation. *World Anthropologies, 120*(2), 333-337.
  - Casumbal-Salazar, I. (2017). A fictive kinship: Making 'modernity,' 'Ancient Hawaiians,' and the telescopes on Mauna Kea. *Native American and Indigenous Studies, 4*(2), 1-30.

C. Sites of Intersection
Week 10 (November 4, 6): Work
- o **Required Readings:**
  - Nakamura, L. (2014). Indigenous circuits: Navajo women and the racialization of early electronic manufacture. *American Quarterly, 66*(4), 919-941.
  - Atanasoski, N. & Vora, K. (2018). The surrogate effect: Technoliberalism and Whiteness in a 'post' labor era. *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience, 4*(1), 1-13.

Final day to submit Assignment #2: Friday, November 8 (11:59 pm)

Week 11 (November 11, 13): Art
- o **Required Readings:**
  - Benjamin, W. (1936/1968). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. In H. Arendt (Ed.), *Illuminations* (pp. 217-251). New York: Schocken Books.
  - Bazin, A. (1945/2009). The ontology of the photographic image. In L. Braudy & M. Cohen (Eds.), *Film Theory & Criticism* (7th ed.) (pp. 159-163). New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 12 (November 18, 20): Migration
- o **Required Readings:**
  - Madianou, M. (2019). The biometric assemblage: Surveillance, experimentation, profit, and the measuring of refugee bodies. *Television & New Media*, *20*(6), 581-599.
  - Risam, R. (2019). Beyond the migrant 'problem': Visualizing global migration. *Television & New Media, 20*(6), 566-580.

Week 13 (November 25, 27): Health Care
- o **Required Readings:**
    - Owens, K. (2017). Too much of a good thing? American childbirth, intentional ignorance, and the boundaries of responsible knowledge. *Science, Technology, & Human Values, 42*(5), 848-871.
    - Petersen, A., Tanner, C. & Munsie, M. (2019). Citizens' use of digital media to connect with health care: Socio-ethical and regulatory implications. *Health, 23*(4), 367-384.

Week 14 (December 2, 4): War, Wrap Up & Reflections
- o **Required Readings:**
    - Hall Kindervater, K. (2017). The technological rationality of the drone strike. *Critical Studies on Security, 5*(1), 28-44.

Final Paper due by 11:59pm on Monday, December 2