

ARTSSCI 3B03 – Technology & Society I (2020-21, 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 offered virtually, in a mixed synchronous/asynchronous format. Each week, students will be expected to engage with some required course materials (e.g., online modules, readings) on their own time, before attending 1 hour synchronous class sessions on Zoom (M 1:30-2:20, F 2:30-3:20). Zoom sessions will be structured as virtual seminars. I will introduce the topics and readings, but students will also be expected to contribute questions and objects of analysis, to participate in discussion, to work in small groups, and to help shape the flow and direction of our work.

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.

Class Times

W 1:30-2:20

F 2:30-4:20

Please note: only the first hour (2:30-3:30) of the Friday course slot will be used for formal class time. The second hour (3:30-4:20pm) will serve as additional office hour time.

Instructor

Dr. Beth Marquis

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beth.marquis@mcmaster.ca

Office Hours:

M 1:30-2:30 (Zoom) or by appointment

Assignments and Evaluation:

Assignment #1	Due before October 9, 2020	= 25%
Assignment #2	Due before November 13, 2020	= 25%
Final Paper	Due December 2, 2020	= 35%
Participation / Reflections	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 brief written reflections, 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 18, 2020**.

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 3000-3500 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)

Tech Podcast

Working alone or with a partner, you will be expected to select an example or issue related to one of the course themes (e.g., a particular technology, a recent 'case study' in which technology figures significantly), and to develop a brief podcast that takes up and analyses this example. This podcast should explain the example/issue in question clearly and concisely, raise and explore key questions the example/issue provokes, and draw meaningfully on scholarly materials and on popular writing about the example/issue to develop a persuasive and engaging analysis of its ramifications and implications for society. Podcasts completed collaboratively (i.e., by two students), should be a little longer than those completed individually (~18-20 minutes, as compared to ~10 minutes), and should meaningfully include both students in the discussion, as well as in the preparation of the work.

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 2019 or

2020, 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 (or texts') 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 or Reflections (15%)

Participation

Participation will be assessed by considering your ongoing engagement (throughout the term) during synchronous class meetings AND in response to brief online prompts/activities that will be included within the weekly course modules. You will be expected to attend synchronous Zoom classes regularly (though isolated absences due to illness, religious observances, etc. are understood), complete and work actively with the assigned readings and other course materials, contribute to class discussion (while also making space for others' contributions), complete in class and online activities, listen actively and respectfully, and engage with others' comments to further our understandings of the materials and ideas. If you wish, you may also demonstrate your engagement by submitting brief written reflections on course readings or class discussions. An Avenue Dropbox will be set up for this purpose.

Reflections

This option asks you to keep an ongoing log of your reflections on and responses to course readings and discussions. Each week (except the first and last weeks of the term), you'll need to

prepare a brief (~200 word) entry that takes up some aspect of the week's discussion (e.g., questions or thoughts promoted by the readings or other course materials, ideas about a question or example raised in class, consideration of an additional case study or technology-focused example that resonates with our discussion). These entries can be informal (though they should be clear, and written in complete sentences) and do not need to offer complete arguments, but should demonstrate careful thinking about course thematics and related ideas. You should submit your reflections weekly, by 11:59pm on the Monday after the week on which you're reflecting (so, Week 2 reflections would be due by 11:59pm on Monday, September 21, for example); that said, if for some reason you need to miss one week and submit two reflections together in the subsequent week, that's fine as well. Please note that those electing to submit reflections are also still expected to complete the online activities included in the weekly course modules; doing so will be factored into your grade for this assignment.

Course Schedule

A. Definitions & Foundations

Week 1 (September 9, 11): Introduction: Popular Visions & Received Views

- **Required Readings:**

- Franklin, U. (1999). *The Real World of Technology* (pp. 1-26). Toronto: House of Anansi Press.

Week 2 (September 16, 18): Approaches to Understanding the Intersection

- **Required Readings:**

- Winner, L. (1986). Technologies as forms of life. In *The Whale and The Reactor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (pp. 3-18).
- Wajcman, J. (2019). How Silicon Valley sets time. *New Media & Society*, 21(6), 1272-1289.

B. Issues in the Intersection

Week 3 (September 23, 25): 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 30, October 2): Privacy, Security, and Surveillance

- **Required Readings:**

- Stark, L. & Levy, K. (2018). The surveillant consumer. *Media, Culture, & Society*, 40(8), 1202-1220.
- Browne, N. (2015). Introduction, and other dark matters. In *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*, pp. 1-29. Duke University Press.
- **Recommended Reading:**
 - Arora, P. (2019). Decolonizing privacy studies. *Television & New Media*, 20(4), 366-378.
 - Zuboff, S. (2019). Surveillance capitalism and the challenge of collective action. *New Labor Forum*, 28(1), 10-29.

Week 5 (October 7, 9): 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.
 - Roberts, D. (2017). Why baby markets aren't free. *UC Irvine Law Review*, 7(3), 611-621.
- **Recommended Reading:**
 - Benjamin, R. (2019). Default discrimination. Is the glitch systemic? In *Race After Technology*, pp. 77-96. Polity Press.
 - Brock, A. (2020). "The Black purposes of space travel": Black Twitter as technoculture. In *Distributed Blackness: African American Cyber Cultures*, pp.79-124. NYU Press.

Final day to submit Assignment #1: Friday, October 9 (11:59 pm)

Week 6 (October 14, 16): Fall Break – No classes

Week 7 (October 21, 23): Humanity, Posthumanism, & Transhumanism

- **Required Readings:**
 - Braidotti, R. (2019). The posthuman condition. In *Posthuman Knowledge* (pp. 6-19 only). Polity Press.
 - More, M. (2013). The philosophy of transhumanism. In *The Transhumanist Reader* (pp. 3-17). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- **Recommended Reading:**
 - Jerreat-Poole, A. (2020). Sick, slow, cyborg: Crip futurity in *Mass Effect*. *Game Studies*, 20(1), <http://gamestudies.org/2001/articles/ierreatpoole>

Week 8 (October 28, 30): Human/Non-Human Encounters

- **Required Readings:**
 - Turkle, S. (2011). Love's labor lost. In *Alone Together* (pp.103-126). New York: Basic Books.
 - Lewis, J.E., Arista, N., Pechawis, A., & Kite, S. (2018). Making kin with the machines. *Journal of Design & Science*, <https://doi.org/10.21428/bfafd97b>.
- **Recommended Reading:**

- Woods, H.S. (2018). Asking more of Siri and Alexa: Feminine persona in service of surveillance capitalism. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 35(4), 334-349.

Week 9 (November 4, 6): Technocolonialism

- **Required Readings:**
 - Kolopenuk, J. (2018). 'Pop-up' Métis and the rise of Canada's post-indigenous formation. *American Anthropologist*, 120(2), 333-337.
 - Wemigmans, J. (2019). Decolonizing the digital. *A Digital Bundle: Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge Online*, pp. 43-69. University of Regina Press.
- **Recommended Reading:**
 - 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.
 - Ricaurte, P. (2019). Data epistemologies, the coloniality of power, and resistance. *Television & New Media*, 20(4), 350-365.

C. Sites of Intersection

Week 10 (November 11, 13): Work

- **Required Readings:**
 - Atanasoski, N. & Vora, K. (2018). The surrogate effect: Technoliberalism and Whiteness in a 'post' labor era. *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*, 4(1), 1-13.
 - Nakamura, L. (2014). Indigenous circuits: Navajo women and the racialization of early electronic manufacture. *American Quarterly*, 66(4), 919-941.
- **Recommended Reading:**
 - Kaun, A. & Stierstedt, F. (2020). Prison media work: From manual labor to the work of being tracked. *Media, Culture & Society*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719899809>

Final day to submit Assignment #2: Friday, November 13 (11:59 pm)

Week 11 (November 18, 20): Art

- **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 25, 27): Migration

- **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.
- **Recommended Reading:**
 - Alencar, A. (2020). Mobile communication and refugees: An analytical review of academic literature. *Sociology Compass*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12802>

Week 13 (December 2, 4): Health Care

- **Required Readings (Read before December 4):**
 - Cosgrove, L., Karter, J.M., Morrill, Z. (2020). Psychology and surveillance capitalism: The risk of pushing mental health apps during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167820937498>
 - Figueroa, C.A. & Aguilera, A. (2020). The need for a mental health technology revolution in the COVID-19 pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.00523>
- **Recommended Reading (Read before December 2, if possible):**
 - 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.

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

Week 14 (December 9): Wrap Up & Reflections

- **Required Readings:**
 - French, M. & Monahan, T. (2020). Dis-ease surveillance. How might surveillance studies address COVID-19? *Surveillance & Society*, 18(1), 1-11.
 - Nakamura, L. (2020). Feeling good about feeling bad: Virtuous virtual reality and the automation. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 19(1), 47-64.

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 14, 2020. 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.

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. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

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. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>. 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.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection:

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster’s use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Courses with an Online Element:

Some courses may use online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring:

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Conduct Expectations:

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)

(the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**. It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work:

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

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 should submit their request to their Faculty 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.

Copyright and Recording:

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances:

The University reserves the right to 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.

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.

Notes for All Arts & Science Courses:

1. Some of the statements above refer to a “Faculty Office”; please note that the Arts & Science Program Office serves in this capacity.
2. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email regularly. Announcements will be made in class, via A2L, and/or via the course email distribution list <d-as3B03@mcmaster.ca>.