

Technology and Society

Sociology 415

Fall 2015

Instructor: Jonathan Dial

Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays; 10:30am – 11:45am

Location: KUY 406

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3pm or by appointment

Office: Saunders 211

Email: dialjonathan@gmail.com

Class Objectives:

This course will take a sociological perspective on the relationship between technology and society. However, we will draw from texts from both within and outside of the discipline. Many people believe that changes in technology necessarily lead to changes in society, and we can see that this is true in some cases. However, others (especially sociologists) contend that technology itself is determined by social forces, and we can see that this is true in other cases. Others argue that a combination of the two is more accurate in understanding the relationship between society and technology. This course will examine each of these arguments in depth, as well as case studies on old and new technologies in order to provide students with a thorough understanding of these issues.

Students in this course will develop critical thinking skills to understand how technology is shaped by social factors and how technology contributes to shaping society. In order to foster that development, the assignments will emphasize academic thought, discussion, research, and writing. Students will be expected to keep up with the assigned readings, take turns leading class discussions, and produce two papers. The first paper (5-7 pages) will be on the topic on which they focus as discussion leader, and the other will be a research paper (10-15 pages) on a topic chosen by the students (in discussions with the instructor). A final presentation will accompany the final paper.

Assignments:

Readings

You are expected to have readings completed by the day they are assigned in order to participate in and contribute to the class discussion. Each student is expected to send two discussion questions pertaining to the readings to the class discussant the night before we discuss those readings in class.

Textbook (required): Science, Technology, and Society: A Sociological Approach. (2006). Written by Wenda K. Bauchspies, Jennifer Croissant, and Sal Restivo. ISBN: 978-0-631-23210-0

Supplemental Readings (required): Assigned articles from academic journals will be posted to Laulima.

Written Work Written work for this course is composed of two parts and is expected to adhere to the American Sociological Association's (ASA's) citation guidelines. All writing is expected to be grammatically correct. We will discuss the guidelines and expectations of these assignments in greater detail in class.

(1) Each student will write a paper on the topic they cover as discussion leader. Papers should be 5-7 pages (double-spaced) in length, include citations, and compare the topic/reading they presented with other readings/theories from the course (as well as outside sources). Papers are due on the day you lead the class discussion.

(3) The research paper (10-15 pages, double-spaced) will analyze a technology or relevant topic chosen by the student and the instructor. Original quantitative or qualitative data is required. Details of requirements will depend on the project and must be worked out with the instructor.

Analysis should include citations from assigned readings as well as outside sources. Suggestions for analysis: Is this technology changing society? Why or why not? How has society been involved in the shaping of that technology? What policy implications accompany this technology? What do you predict concerning the future of this technology? Why?

Presentations

Class Discussant

Students will choose a day/reading on the syllabus for which they will lead the class discussion. Discussion leaders (and all students) are expected to have thoroughly read and understand the readings that they will discuss. Discussion leaders can use the suggested discussion questions provided by their classmates to structure the discussion around the class's questions and interests. Visual aids are welcome, but do not attempt to "eat up" time by focusing too much on such things. The point is to create an engaging discussion that covers the main points covered in the readings.

Research Project

Each student will give a 10 minute presentation during the last two weeks of the semester. Presentations will cover the background/literature review of your research topic, methodology, findings, and analysis. Visual aids are encouraged.

Attendance and Participation

As this class focuses heavily upon class discussions, attendance is required. Attendance will be taken daily and will count toward your overall grade. However, simply attending class is not the same as contributing to the discussion. Thus, students who do not participate in the discussion will be counted as absent.

Grading:

Presentation/Class Discussion – 20%
Paper on Class Discussion Topic/Presentation – 20%
Final Project Presentation 20%
Final Project Paper – 20%
Attendance/Participation – 20%

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 –

8/25 – Introduction
8/27 – Chapter 1: Introduction (Textbook)

Week 2 –

9/1 – Nye: Does Technology Control Us? (Laulima)
9/3 – Mumford: The New Megamachine (Laulima)

Week 3 –

9/8 – Beniger: The Control Revolution (Laulima)
9/10 – Chapter 2: Cultures of Science (Textbook)

Week 4 –

9/15 – Trevor J. Pinch and Wiebe E. Bijker: The Social Construction of Facts and Artifacts: Or How the Sociology of Science and the Sociology of Technology Might Benefit Each Other (Laulima)
9/17 – James Fallows: The American Army and the M-16 Rifle (Laulima)
** Due 9/18: 1-2 page description of research topic/question

Week 5 –

9/22 – Ruth Schwartz Cowan: The Industrial Revolution in the Home (Laulima)
9/24 – Chapter 3: The Dance of Truth (Textbook)

Week 6 –

9/29 – David R. Johnson: Technological Change and Professional Control in the Professoriate (Laulima)

10/1 – Edward C. Hamilton and Norm Friesen: Online Education: A Science and Technology Studies Perspective (Laulima)

Week 7 –

10/6 – Chapter 4: STS and Power in the Modern World (Textbook)

10/8 – Altheide: Media Logic, Social Control, and Fear. (Laulima)

Week 8 –

10/13 – Bucher: The Friendship Assemblage: Investigating Programmed Sociality on Facebook (Laulima)

10/15 – Zeynep Tufekci and Christopher Wilson: Social Media and the Decision to Participate in Political Protest: Observations From Tahrir Square (Laulima)

Week 9 –

10/20 – Tufekci: Engineering the Public

10/22 – Chapter 5: Life after Science and Technology Studies (Textbook)

Week 10 –

10/27 – Bill Joy: Why the Future Doesn't Need Us (Laulima)

10/29 – John Seely Brown and Paul Duguid: Don't Count Society Out (Laulima)

Week 11 –

11/3 – Allenby: Are New Technologies Undermining the Laws of War? (Laulima)

11/5 – Cutcliffe, Pense, and Zvalaren: Framing the Discussion: Nanotechnology and the Social Construction of Technology--What STS Scholars Are Saying. (Laulima)

Week 12 –

11/10 – Ellison and boyd: Sociality Through Social Network Sites (Laulima)

11/12 – Marwick and boyd: I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience (Laulima)

Week 13 –

11/17 – Roberta Lamb and Steve Sawyer: On extending social informatics from a rich legacy of networks and conceptual resources (Laulima)

11/19 – Perez-Latre: The Paradoxes of Social Media (Laulima)

Week 14 –

11/24 – TBD

11/26 – **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING DAY**

Week 15 –

12/1 – Final Presentations

12/3 – Final Presentations

Week 16 –

12/8 – Final Presentations

12/10 – Final Presentations

Final Paper Due: Sunday (12/13/2015) @ Midnight

The Sociology Department has established three Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that support the Institutional Learning Objectives:

- SLO 1: Students will be able to evaluate sociological theories pertaining to the creation, adaptation, and effects of multiple types of technologies.
- SLO 2: Students will be able to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and draw valid conclusions from their analyses in order to produce new knowledge about the relationship between society and technology.
- SLO 3: Students will have clear and effective verbal and written communication skills.

Kokua

Any student in need of additional help, due to disability, can contact me personally and the KOKUA program officer to discuss ways to accommodate specific needs. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 or by email (kokua@hawaii.edu).

The KOKUA office is located in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.

Plagiarism

“Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual’s work without identifying that individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student’s language and style; paraphrasing a passage so closely that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; and “dry-labbing,” which includes obtaining and using experimental data from other students without the express consent of the instructor, utilizing experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of the course or from previous terms, and fabricating data to fit the expected results.”

- University of Hawai`i at Manoa Student Conduct

< <http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm> >

It is ultimately each student's responsibility to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it. Ignorance of the rules, saying "I forgot about that" or "I made a mistake" are not considered valid excuses when it comes to plagiarism.