

# [POLS 4420E] Politics and Technology

University of Georgia, Maymester 2023

Professor L. Jason Anastasopoulos (“Dr. A”)

Monday-Friday Live Sessions: TBA

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## Course Objectives

Technology is one of the most powerful forces in our political and social world. In this course, we attempt to understand how technology has shaped, and continues to shape political values and international political orders with an eye towards what we might be headed for in the future.

Through philosophy, social science and fiction, we will try to understand the role that technology plays in shaping the state in democratic and authoritarian nations in the past and then turn our attention to the future, exploring technological innovations hatched during the digital revolution such as artificial intelligence, which are transforming our society and culture at this very moment.

What I hope that students will take away from this class is not only an understanding of the role of technology in politics, but a warning about some of the very real dangers that technology poses to human freedom and dignity if we are not vigilant.

## Live Session Attendance and Participation

LINK TO THE LIVE SESSION WILL BE POSTED ON THE eLC.

A great deal of important content from this class will come from the lectures and group assignments during live sessions. Because of this and the rather technical nature of this class, live session attendance is strongly recommended, but not required.

Live sessions recordings will be posted every day for review.

## News Article Sharing

Before a live session, as part of your participation grade, you will be asked to find an article related to a readings for the week and post it in the Assignments Forum on the eLC or email a link to me at [ljanastas@uga.edu](mailto:ljanastas@uga.edu).

Students will submit the articles in alphabetical order starting on May 19th. You can find your name and the day that you are slotted to present here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1oKnKtSwSb7yp9uDCzFdsQ4m4gd2IDLScbpYiBSNkaoE/edit?usp=sharing>

The news article sharing assignment counts towards your Participation grade **for a total of 10 points**.

**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY (+2 points):** If you would like extra credit, you can either

- (1) Present the article at the beginning or end of a live sessions -or-
- (2) Record a short video of yourself presenting the article using the software or platform of your choice and submitting a link to the video via the eLC.

## Grading Items

- *Participation (40 points total)*
  - *Discussion leader : 30 Points.*
  - *News article sharing: 10 Points*
- *Short daily quizzes (30 points total)*
  - *After every live session, there will be a short quiz that may be multiple choice, fill in the blank or both, to test your knowledge of the content covered. Each quiz is worth 2 points and you will have 24 hours to complete the quiz.*
- *Technology policy report (details posted on eLC) (30 Points Total).*
  - *Technology policy report presentation. (10 Points)*
  - *Technology policy written report. (20 Points)*

## Grading Points Breakdown

| Activity                 | Points |
|--------------------------|--------|
| News Article Sharing     | 10     |
| Discussion Leader        | 30     |
| Short Quizzes            | 30     |
| Technology Policy Report | 30     |

## Key Assignment Dates

| Activity                                | Date                                               |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Discussion Leader                       | Varies. Slides will be due prior to live sessions. |
| Short Daily Quizzes                     | Every day.                                         |
| Technology Project Report Presentations | 06/06                                              |
| Technology Project Reports Due          | 06/08                                              |

## Grading Rubric

| Letter Grade | Total Points |
|--------------|--------------|
| A            | 90-100+      |
| A-           | 85-89        |
| B+           | 84-87        |
| B            | 80-83        |
| B-           | 78-79        |
| C+           | 74-77        |
| C            | 67-73        |

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| D | 60-66        |
| F | 59 and below |

## Late Policy

*You will lose 25% off your grade for each day an assignment is late without excuse.*

## Discussion Leaders

Each student will choose a day to be a “discussion leader.”

Discussion leaders will lead the class discussion for that week by preparing a 5-10 Powerpoint slide presentation summarizing the reading and proposing a series of 3-5 discussion questions to start off our discussion about the content.

**Every student MUST participate as a discussion leader.**

Discussion leader assignments can be found here:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FXTe5B7jK2Fu1z4SLFDcBc8ZP9X4hzjaa1\\_GMK0M5Y0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FXTe5B7jK2Fu1z4SLFDcBc8ZP9X4hzjaa1_GMK0M5Y0/edit?usp=sharing)

**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY (+5 points):** If you would like extra credit, you can either

- (1) Present your discussion leader slides at the beginning or end of any live session -or-
- (2) Record a short video of yourself presenting the discussion leader slides using the software or platform of your choice and submitting a link to the video via the eLC.

## Required Books\*

Postman, N., 2011. *Technopoly*. New York: Random House US.

Available free in PDF format on the eLC.

Amazon Version:

[https://www.amazon.com/Technopoly-Surrender-Technology-Neil-Postman-ebook/dp/B004ZZJBW4/ref=tmm\\_kin\\_swatch\\_0?encoding=UTF8&sr=8-1](https://www.amazon.com/Technopoly-Surrender-Technology-Neil-Postman-ebook/dp/B004ZZJBW4/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&sr=8-1)

Scharff, R. and Dusek, V., 2014. *Philosophy Of Technology*. Malden, Mass.: Wiley Blackwell.

Available for free via the UGA portal:

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ugalib/detail.action?docID=7103988>

Amazon Version:

[https://www.amazon.com/Philosophy-Technology-Technological-Condition-Anthology/dp/111854725X/ref=sr\\_1\\_6?](https://www.amazon.com/Philosophy-Technology-Technological-Condition-Anthology/dp/111854725X/ref=sr_1_6?) **[SD below]**

\*You are encouraged to buy a hard copies of these books but they are all available for free via the eLC or through the UGA library portal.

## Prohibition on Recording Lectures.

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

# COURSE OUTLINE

| Week                                                                                                                    | Topic                        | Readings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 1<br>05/16                                                                                                          | <i>Course Introduction</i>   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <u>What is Technology</u><br>How do we define technology and how has it been thought of historically?                   |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Day 2<br>05/17                                                                                                          | <i>Ancient Conceptions</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Introduction</i> (SD, pgs 3-8).<br><input type="checkbox"/> On 'Techne' and 'Episteme', Aristotle (SD, pgs 19-24)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Day 3<br>05/18                                                                                                          | <i>Medieval Conceptions</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>On the Idols and On the Scientific Study of Nature</i> (An excerpt from the unfinished novel "The New Atlantis") - Francis Bacon (SD 39-41)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Day 4<br>05/19                                                                                                          | <i>Modern Conceptions I</i>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Question Concerning Technology</i> - Martin Heidegger (SD 305-317)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Day 5<br>05/22                                                                                                          | <i>Modern Conceptions II</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>The Matrix</i> (Movie) 1999-<br><input type="checkbox"/> Free on Vimeo:<br><a href="https://vimeopro.com/cogitality/feature-films/video/357005575">https://vimeopro.com/cogitality/feature-films/video/357005575</a><br><input type="checkbox"/> Rent on Amazon:<br><a href="https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0094K35S6/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r">https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0094K35S6/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r</a> |
|                                                                                                                         |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <u>Technology, Politics and the State</u><br>What is the role of technology in politics and the state, broadly defined? |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 6<br>05/23                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Overview</b>                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Postman, N., 2011. <i>Technopoly</i> . New York: Random House US., Chapters 1-3.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Day 7<br>05/24                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>International Relations and Technological Change</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Drezner, D.W., 2019. "Technological change and international relations". (eLC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Day 8<br>05/25                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Artificial Intelligence and the Law I</b>            | <input type="checkbox"/> Liu, H.W., Lin, C.F. and Chen, Y.J., 2019. Beyond State v Loomis: artificial intelligence, government algorithmization and accountability. International journal of law and information technology, 27(2), pp.122-141. (eLC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Day 9<br>05/26                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Artificial Intelligence and the Law II</b>           | <input type="checkbox"/> The Minority Report (Movie) <input type="checkbox"/> Available for free on the Internet Archive: <a href="https://archive.org/details/minority-report_202211/Minority+Report+Disc+1.ISO">https://archive.org/details/minority-report_202211/Minority+Report+Disc+1.ISO</a> <input type="checkbox"/> Rent on Amazon: <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Minority-Report-Tom-Cruise/dp/B00AA2UO0E/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=minority+report&amp;sr=8-1">https://www.amazon.com/Minority-Report-Tom-Cruise/dp/B00AA2UO0E/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=minority+report&amp;sr=8-1</a> |
| <b><u>The Technological Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship</u></b><br>What is the role of technology in fostering opposing political systems such as democracy and authoritarianism? |                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Day 10<br>05/30                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Perspectives on Technology and Democracy</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Barber, Benjamin R. "Three scenarios for the future of technology and strong democracy." (eLC)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## The Brave New World: Modern Technology and Political Transformation

|                 |                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Day 11<br>05/31 | The Internet                            | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Faris, Robert, and Bruce Etling.</b><br><b>"Madison and the smart mob: The promise and limitations of the Internet for democracy." (eLC)</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Day 12<br>06/01 | Artificial Intelligence                 | <input type="checkbox"/> "What is Artificial Intelligence?"<br>Darrell West:<br><a href="https://www.brookings.edu/research/what-is-artificial-intelligence/">https://www.brookings.edu/research/what-is-artificial-intelligence/</a><br><input type="checkbox"/> Artificial Intelligence and the Past, Present and Future of Democracy:<br><a href="https://carrcenter.hks.harvard.edu/sites/hwpi.harvard.edu/files/cchr/files/ai-and-democracy.pdf">https://carrcenter.hks.harvard.edu/sites/hwpi.harvard.edu/files/cchr/files/ai-and-democracy.pdf</a> |
| Day 13<br>06/02 | Biotechnology                           | <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">The Science of Biotechnology Meets the Politics of Global Regulation</a><br><input type="checkbox"/> Biotechnology eBook: pgs 1-31. Available <a href="#">free here</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Day 14<br>06/05 | Blockchain                              | <input type="checkbox"/> What is Blockchain Technology?<br>(pgs 1-34)<br><a href="https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/ir/2018/nist.ir.8202.pdf">https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/ir/2018/nist.ir.8202.pdf</a><br><input type="checkbox"/> Central Bank Digital Currency: Assessing the Risks and Dispelling the Myths (CATO Institute):<br><a href="https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/central-bank-digital-currency">https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/central-bank-digital-currency</a>                                                             |
| Day 15<br>06/06 | Technology project report presentations |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

**Statement about Students with Disabilities**

Students with special needs that require accommodation should notify me and the Office for Disability Services in the first two weeks of the course so appropriate arrangements can be made. All information and documentation of special needs is confidential.

**Statement about Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

Students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance of the policy is not an acceptable defense. See also <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty>.