[POLS 4420E] Politics and Technology

University of Georgia, Maymester 2024

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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.

Class Format

Asynchronous videos

Students are required to complete the day's reading and the async videos posted on the eLC for each day that the course is in session.

Quizzes

Students will complete a brief quiz each day that covers the readings and async lectures. The quizzes should take no more than 15-30 minutes to complete.

Optional Live Sessions

- There will be 1 OPTIONAL live session each week on Friday in which students will have the opportunity to do a brief (10-15 minute) presentation on a reading of their choice and ask questions about the class or course content.

- For preferred optional live session times click here: [URL]

- **Presentations during live sessions are OPTIONAL - however students can earn up to +10 points of EXTRA CREDIT for doing a presentation.**

- Fill in your time preferences for Friday live sessions here: https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uPPw1IPRGrG0LA

Discussion Leaders

- Students will choose ONE reading from the course syllabus to do a discussion leader presentation on.
- Discussion leaders will prepare a 5-10 Powerpoint slide presentation summarizing the reading and proposing a series of 3-5 discussion questions.
- Discussion leader slides will be submitted via the eLC.
- Sign up for a discussion leader slot here: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FXTe5B7jK2Fu1z4SLFDcBc8ZP9X4hzjaa1_GMK0M5Y0/edit?usp=sharing

Technology Policy Report

- At the end of the class, students will prepare a Technology Policy Report on a technology of their choice.
- Information about Technology Policy Report guidelines can be found here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DamMfF70ikbw9OvDFWx4zAw46PtWuo6apP4troG8Zi4/edit?usp=sharing

Grading Items

- *Discussion leader : 40 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.*

Grading Points Breakdown

Activity	Points
Discussion Leader	40
Short Quizzes	30
Technology Policy Report	30

Key Assignment Dates

Activity	Date
Discussion Leader	Weekly.
Short Daily Quizzes	Daily.
Technology Project Reports Due	06/05

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.

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

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/B004ZZJB
W4/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/111854
725X/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 05/14	*Course Introduction*	
What is Technology How do we define technology and how has it been thought of historically?		
Day 2 05/15	*Ancient Conceptions*	❏ *Introduction* (SD, pgs 3-8). ❏ On 'Techne' and 'Episteme', Aristotle (SD, pgs 19-24)
Day 3 05/16	*Medieval Conceptions*	❏ *On the Idols and On the Scientific Study of Nature (An excerpt from the unfinished novel "The New Atlantis")* - Francis Bacon (SD 39-41)
Day 4 05/17	*Modern Conceptions I*	❏ *The Question Concerning Technology* - Martin Heidegger (SD 305-317)
Day 5 05/20	*Modern Conceptions II*	❏ *The Matrix (Movie) 1999-* ❏ *Free on Vimeo:* https://vimeopro.com/cogitality/feature-films/video/357005575 ❏ *Rent on Amazon:* https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B0094K35S6/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r
Technology, Politics and the State What is the role of technology in politics and the state, broadly defined?		

Day 6 05/21	*Overview*	❏ Postman, N., 2011. *Technopoly*. New York: Random House US., Chapters 1-3.
Day 7 05/22	**International Relations and Technological Change**	☐ Drezner, D.W., 2019. "Technological change and international relations". (eLC)
Day 8 05/23	**Artificial Intelligence and the Law I**	❏ 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 05/24	**Artificial Intelligence and the Law II**	☐ The Minority Report (Movie) 　☐ Available for free on the Internet Archive: https://archive.org/details/minority-report_202211/Minority+Report+Disc+1.ISO 　☐ Rent on Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Minority-Report-Tom-Cruise/dp/B00AA2UO0E/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=minority+report&sr=8-1

The Technological Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship

What is the role of technology in fostering opposing political systems such as democracy and authoritarianism?

Day 10 05/27	**Perspectives on Technology and Democracy**	❏ 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 05/28	**The Internet**	☐ **Faris, Robert, and Bruce Etling. "Madison and the smart mob: The promise and limitations of the Internet for democracy." (eLC)**
Day 12 05/29	**Artificial Intelligence**	☐ "What is Artificial Intelligence?" Darrell West: https://www.brookings.edu/research/what-is-artificial-intelligence/ ☐ Artificial Intelligence and the Past, Present and Future of Democracy: https://carrcenter.hks.harvard.edu/sites/hwpi.harvard.edu/files/cchr/files/ai-and-democracy.pdf

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.