The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

MLIS 9707, LIS PhD 9862, MS 9235
Technological Society:
Inequality, Power, and Social Networks

Fall 2013

Classes
>   Time: Fridays 9:00-11:50 am
>   Location: MC15a

Instructor: Prof. Anabel Quan-Haase (Ph.D.)
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>   Office Hours: Fridays 12-1pm.
>   If these times are not convenient, we can also meet by appointment.

1. Course Description

Technology has become such an intrinsic part of our everyday lives in the West that we need to carefully consider its social, economic, and political implications. The aim of this class is to examine the intersection of technology and society by systematically analyzing technology design, implementation, and use. The course provides a solid understanding of the role of technology in society (historically and theoretically) and gives students the tools they need to embark on a critical and in-depth inquiry of our technological society. Key topics include privacy, social networks, inequality, digital skills, and digital creativity.

2. Course Objectives

Students completing this course will:
1. To give students a thorough grounding in the key issues, texts, traditions and debates within theories of technology and society.
2. Understand new trends in the design and implementation of technologies through reading current articles.
3. To learn how to examine the use and social consequences of technologies.
4. To examine the social dimensions of media technologies, including their practices, social implications, and ethical dimensions.
5. To learn about the history of technology (from the book and printing press through the telephone and radio, television, the web and cellphones).

3. Prerequisites

None.

4. Resources

Required Textbook: Quan-Haase, A. (2012). *Technology and society: Inequality, Power, and Social Networks*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195437836.

You can purchase a copy of the textbook at the UWO bookstore or online at http://www.bookstore.uwo.ca. There are also copies available at the UWO library.

If you misplace this course outline, you can download another copy from the course website.

5. Course Requirements and Grading

Requirements	Date	Proportion of Test Grade
Participation	Throughout	15%
Group Discussion Facilitation	TBA	15%
Project Proposal	Oct. 4	30%
Final Paper	Nov. 29	40%
Total		**100%**

Students are expected to do the weekly readings. The weekly readings will be the basis for class discussions and the assignments. Each student will facilitate a class on a topic of their choice. There are a total of 2 assignments. Detailed information on each of the assignments will be provided in the introductory lecture.

6. A few words about the assignments and deadlines

I will not give extensions except under special circumstances. If you cannot meet the deadline, notify the instructor as soon as possible, preferably before the scheduled date and present adequate documentation. Late papers without permission are subject to a cumulative penalty of 5 points per day.
Please also submit a digital copy of your work to aquan@uwo.ca.

6.1 Participation
The course will use a seminar format where we will engage each other's ideas and opinions to negotiate our learning. Students are requested to come prepared to class, to participate actively in the discussions and to allow others space to express their views. Participation grades will be based on level of engagement in the course discussions and preparedness. Students are expected to attend all classes. If you cannot attend a class, please notify the instructor about the reasons for your absence. Missing classes without notifying the instructor will lead to a lower participation mark. Students who do not attend class routinely will receive a mark of zero for participation.

6.2 Group Discussion Facilitation

Your group will be responsible for leading a 20-minute class presentation and 5-10 minute discussion of a topic of your choice (see list of topics below). The first day of class a list with the weekly readings and topics will be distributed and students will be assigned a set of papers and a topic to discuss. The main objective in the facilitation will be to ensure that the class gains a firm and critical grasp of the topic, key concepts, and theories. You are free to facilitate the discussion in any way you choose (e.g. through the use of exercises, examples, cases, etc.). You can, for example, identify 2-3 general questions based on the readings and use these questions to guide discussion on the readings of the week. You should also try to identify links between the week's readings and material covered earlier in the course (if applicable). The facilitation will be graded based on comprehensive coverage of subject matter, pertinent links with other assigned readings, critique and questions raised and handling of discussion.

6.3 Project Proposal

Write a 5-page project proposal on your key topic of interest. The project proposal should consist of a thorough and current literature review of your key area of interest as well as an overview of the research question/problem you will explore for your final research paper. See assignment sheet for details.

The assignment will be about 5 pages in length (double spaced, 12 font size) and is due on **October 4** in class.

6.5 Final Paper

Your final paper is based on your project proposal and should include the following sections:

      a) Literature review
      b) Research question of interest
      c) Methods
      d) Key findings
      e) Conclusions
      f) References

The final paper will be about 10-15 pages in length (double spaced, 12 font size) and is due on **November 29** in class.

7. Plagiarism

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

As written work will be assigned, please note that "All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com)."

8. Cancellation
Please check your email regularly to keep up-to-date with class cancellations in the event of illness. Should your professor cancel a class, please assume that the class facilitation will take place on the following week. We can always schedule several students to present in one class. **Thanks for your understanding.**

9. Course Schedule

It is your responsibility to consult the course schedule in order to keep up with the course readings and ensure you do not miss the deadlines for the assignments. The course schedule outlines the topics to be discussed each week, the readings corresponding to the lectures, and deadlines for the assignments. Assigned readings should be completed **before** attending the class.

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

1   Sept. 6   **Introduction to the Course: The Technological Society**
                          What is the range of technologies available? What classification
                          systems exist?

                          Overview of course.
                          Introduction of key terms. Definition of technology.
                          To discuss the relevance of studying the intersection between
                          technology and society.

                          Debate on *simulation* and *augmentation*. Our Cyborg society. In what
                          settings do we encounter cyborgs? What is their role in the library? In
                          society?

                          Reading:
                          a) Chapter 1

                          Exercise: Test and analyze four systems. How do they compare?

                          →**Assigning Topics and Dates for Class Facilitation.**

2   Sept. 13   **Theoretical Perspectives on Technology**
                          To address the fundamental difference between utopian and
                          dystopian views of technology.
                          To compare and critically examine a wide range of theories on the
                          complex interrelationship between society and technology.

                          Reading assignment.
                          a) Chapters 2-3

                          Additional Readings.
                          b) Pinch, T., & Bijker, W. E. The social construction of facts and
                              artifacts: Or how the sociology of science and the sociology of
                              technology might benefit each other. Social Studies of Science,
                              14, 399-441. [The paper describes an integrated social
                              constructivist approach towards the study of science and
                              technology. From this perspective, science and artifacts are
                              defined as social constructs.]
                          c) Klein, H. K., & Kleinman, D. L. (2002). The social
                              construction of technology: Structural considerations. *Science
                              Technology Human Values, 27*(1), 28-52.
                          d) Tenner, E. (1996). Why things bite back: Technology and the
                              revenge of unintended consequences. New York: Knopf. [The
                              book stresses the potential of technology for unintended
                              consequences, without falling into dystopian rhetoric and
                              completely rejecting technology.]

                          →**Assigning Topics for Final Papers.**

3	Sept. 20	**Techno-Social Designing**

To look at technological design and how it intersects with society and information seeking.
To trace the development of technopoles and uncover their social significance in the modern city and economy.

Reading assignment.
a) Chapter 4

Additional Reading.
b) Kaptelinin, V., & Nardi, B. A. (2012). Activity theory in HCI: Fundamentals and reflections. Morgan & Claypool Publishers.
c) Farooq, U., Ganoe, C.H., and Carroll, J.M. 2008. Designing for creativity in computer supported cooperative work. *International Journal of e-Collaboration, 4*(4), 51-75.
d) Castells, M., & Hall, P. G. (1994). Technopoles of the world: The making of twenty-first-century industrial complexes. London: Routledge. [This book provides an overview of the concept of technopoles and describes their social and economic relevance.]
e) Schumpeter, J. A. (2004). The theory of economic development: An inquiry into profits, capital, credit, interest, and the business cycle [1934]. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers. [This is the most influential social, economic, and political analyses of the link between economic development and the creative process.]

Exercise: Where does creativity happen? Describe five ways to support creativity

4	Sept. 27	**The Adoption and Diffusion of Technological Innovations**

To understand the process that underlies the adoption of technological innovations and the factors affecting this process.
To examine key adopter groups, how the groups differ, and their characteristics.

Reading assignment.
a) Chapter 5

Additional Reading.
b) Kim, Y., & Crowston, K. (2011). Technology adoption and use: Theory review for studying scientists' continued use of cyber-infrastructure. In Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology Annual Meeting. New Orleans. [As ICTs grow in popularity, understanding adoption and use of them is very critical in terms of design and development and deployment of new information systems and technologies.] Retrieved from: http://crowston.syr.edu/node/417

c) Martin, K., & Quan-Haase, A. (2013). Are e-books substituting print books? Tradition, serendipity, and opportunity in the adoption and use of e-books for historical research and teaching. Journal of the American Society for Information Science, 64(5), 1016-1028. DOI: 10.1002/asi.22801

d) Rogers, E. M. (1983). *Diffusion of innovations* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Free Press.

Exercise: E-reading and E-writing. How does digital reading compare with print literacy?

KEY TOPICS OF TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETY

5   Oct. 4   The Labour of Technology

To examine the role technology has played historically in the division of labour and resulting labour struggles.
To analyze the relationship between technology and immaterial labour.

Reading assignment.
a) Chapter 6

Additional Reading.
b) Fuchs, C. (2010). Labor in informational capitalism and on the Internet. *The Information Society, 26*(3), 179-196.
c) Brown, B., & Quan-Haase, A. (2012). 'A workers' inquiry 2.0': An ethnographic method for the study of produsage in social media contexts. *TripleC, 10*(3)
d) Dyer-Witheford, N. (1999). *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and circuits of struggle in high-technology capitalism*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. [Uses Marxist and political economy approaches to examine new developments in cyberspace.]

The Gamification of resources/information.
Cyberknowledgebrokering: Questions and Challenges.

Exercise: Compare searches in four different knowledge brokers.

→*ASSIGNMENT 1: "Proposal" DUE IN CLASS.*

6   Oct. 11   Technology and Inequality

To examine the role technology has played historically in the creation and recreation of inequality. How do we measure and develop digital skills? Policy implications?

Reading assignment.
a) Chapter 7

Additional Reading.
b) Haight, M.,Corbett, B. & Quan-Haase A. (2012). Revisiting the Digital Divide: Preliminary Findings from the 2010 Canadian Internet Use Survey (CIUS). Canadian Sociology Association. Waterloo, June 1-2.

Exercise: How do we measure digital skills? What is the role of the library in developing digital skills? What happened to CAP?

Oct. 18   **READING WEEK IN MLIS Programme: No Class.**

7   Oct. 25   Community in the Network Society/Social Media & Audiences.
Understanding social media in a high-tech society: speed, capital, and fast evolution. How do we connect with audiences?

Reading assignment.
a) Chapter 8

Additional reading.
b) Chu, M. and Meulemans, Y.N. (2008). "The problems and potential of Myspace and Facebook usage in academic libraries", *Internet Reference Services Quarterly, 13* (1), 69-85.
c) Collins, G. (in press). Social Media Use by Ontario University Libraries. *Journal of Web Librarianship*, *AQH place online.*

Discussion of the ethical uses of social media in the library.

Exercise: examine the online presence of academic and public libraries.

8   Nov. 1   No class: conference trip.

9   Nov. 8   Technology Mediated Social Relationships
How information flows through social networks. What we learn from others about the world on Facebook.

Reading assignment.
a) Chapter 9

Exercise: Facebook as sociability? Or as social capital?

→*Discussion of final assignments: questions and answers.*

CONCLUDING CLASSES

10	Nov. 15	**Serendipity in Digital Environments.**

How the digital changes how we find and encounter information.

Reading assignment.
a) Rubin, V. L., Burkell, J., & Quan-Haase, A. (2011). Facets of serendipity in everyday chance encounters: A grounded theory approach to blog analysis. *Information Research*.

Exercises: Designing for serendipity: assessing tools.

→Q&A on Final Projects.

11	Nov. 22	**The Digital Humanities: Technology in the Humanities & the Development of Digital Skills**

What does the movement of the digital humanities constitute?
What are the key developments within the digital humanities?

Reading assignment.
a) Toms, E. G., & O'Brien, H. L. (2008). Understanding the information and communication technology needs of the e-humanist. *Journal of Documentation 64*(1), 102-130.
b) Tahir, Muhammad, Khalid Mahmood, and Farzana Shafique. (2010) Use of Electronic Information Resources and Facilities by Humanities Scholars. *The Electronic Library 28(*1), 122-26.

Additional reading.
c)   Borgman, CL. (2010). The Digital Future is Now: A Call to Action for the Humanities. *Digital Humanities Quarterly 4(*1).

Discussion around how we search information as users and how digitization has affected this process.

Overview on how to write a paper.

12	Nov. 29	**Surveillance/Privacy: The flow of data through networks.**

An exploration of how privacy affects our daily lives.

Reading assignment.
a) Chapter 10

Additional reading.
b) boyd, d. and Hargittai, E. (2010). Facebook privacy settings: Who cares? *First Monday, 15*(8).

c) <u>Raynes-Goldie, K. (2010). Aliases, creeping, and wall cleaning: Understanding privacy in the age of Facebook. *First Monday, 15*(1).</u>
d) <u>Lenhart, A., and Madden, M. (2007). Teens, privacy and online social networks: How teens manage their online identities and personal information in the age of MySpace. PEW Internet and American Life Project.</u>

→Final Projects Due via Email.

13   Dec. 6   Review Class Ethical Implications of Technology What are the ethical considerations when adopting technology: For Libraries 2.0, For Millennials, For Haves/Have-Nots

Reading assignment.
Chapter 11

→Final Projects Returned with Comments.