Camosun College

School of Arts & Science
Social Sciences Department

Sociology 240
Society and Technological Change

Instructor:	**Alan Danesh**
Office hours:	Tuesdays & Thursdays 09:30-10:50
Location:	Paul 233
Phone:	370-3370
E-mail:	danesh@camosun.bc.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the social forces responsible for changing patterns of technological innovation in modern industrial societies and the effects of technological change on the organization of work and on social aspects of human interaction.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.   The student can critically assess:

- The major perspectives dealing with technology
- The relations between technology and society
- The social, economic, political and cultural patterns which guide technological developments
- The consequences of technological change for the individual and the society

2.   The student can demonstrate an enhanced ability to think critically and to communicate ideas effectively in writing.

REQUIRED TEXT

Rudi Volti   *Society and Technological Change*   Fourth Edition
                             Worth Publishers, 2001

The course will also utilize the Internet and lectures to examine some of the topics covered in the course outline. The relevant website addresses will be provided to the students during the semester. The students who do not have Internet access at home are urged to obtain a College account in the very first week of classes.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

The course will be based on a series of lectures, followed by seminar-type discussions in which students are urged to participate.

REQUIRED READINGS

The course will cover the text and the Internet articles in their entirety. To facilitate matters for students, lectures will generally follow the outlines of the readings. Additional materials and illustrations, however, will be introduced during lectures and discussions, and students should be prepared to take notes when materials not covered by the readings are thus presented. It is therefore essential for students to read in advance, in order to know when it is necessary to take notes.

BASIS OF STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Evaluation will be based on two in-class examinations, each accounting for fifty percent of the final grade. Each examination will consist of one essay question, selected by the student from a choice of two questions chosen at the time of the exam, and will cover material from the readings, lectures, and discussions. All examinations will be graded anonymously and on the basis of their sociological quality and English proficiency.

In evaluating the examination papers emphasis will be on understanding and analysis, rather than recitation of facts. Avoid memorizing sentences, in particular when it is not clear to you what the sentences mean. Papers indicating memorization will receive a grade of Zero. As for analysis, your learning strategy should be to understand the relationships among facts, not the facts alone. Another important aspect of your paper is illustration. After discussion and analysis, give examples from current or historical developments in society. This will indicate that you understand the concepts and theories and are able to apply them to society as tools for analysis.

More specifically, the exam paper must:

1. show a full understanding of the thesis and the main arguments of the topic;
2. cover all the major components of the topic;
3. be organized and cohesive;
4. be written in clear English and communicate ideas effectively;
5. focus on the topic and avoid unrelated material from other topics or elsewhere;
6. avoid "fillers", padding, repetitions, and vague generalities which can be used for any examination topic; and
7. illustrate the theory by giving appropriate examples, thus "applying" the theory to society.

GRADING SYSTEM

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

A+ = 95 - 100%	B = 75 - 79%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 90 - 94%	B- = 70 - 74%	F = 00 - 49%
A- = 85 - 89%	C+ = 65 - 69%	I = See Calendar for Details
B+ = 80 - 84%	C = 60 - 64%	AUD = Audit

W = Official withdrawal has taken place.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

The date of the first examination will be chosen in consultation with students in order to minimize the chances of their having to write several examinations in the same week. The final examination will be held during the exam week. All examinations must be written in the section of the course in which the student is officially registered.

A grade of Zero will be granted for absence during examination, unless the student produces a medical certificate confirming serious illness and writes the substitute exam within one week of recovery.

The examination papers for the first examination must be claimed by the students in person during the class session in which the papers are returned or the following session.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

(i)   giving, receiving, or obtaining unauthorized information during any type of examination or test;

(ii)   obtaining or providing unauthorized questions or answers relating to any examination or test prior to the time of the examination or test;

(iii)   asking or arranging for another person to take any examination or test in one's place;

(iv)   plagiarizing, that is, appropriating the work of another or parts or passages of another's writing, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as a product of one's own mind or manual skill.

Academic misconduct will result in a grade of "F" for the entire course. The students should note that in accordance with the college policy quoted above, mere access to unauthorized information (for example, texts or lecture notes) constitutes academic misconduct. It is not necessary for the instructor to prove that the information has been used by the student.

TAPE-RECORDING IN THE CLASSROOM

In order to ensure free and open discussion of controversial ideas by the students, tape-recording of the proceedings is not permitted in the class. Exceptions, however, will be

made for students who are visually impaired or are unable to write due to physical disability.

PROCEDURE CHANGES

In order to deal with the day-to-day management of the course, new procedures may be implemented from time to time throughout the semester. Such procedures will be announced in class for two consecutive sessions before they are implemented. It is the responsibility of the student to keep informed of such developments.

All other matters that are not covered by this course outline are governed by official college policies and procedures.

COURSE CONTENT AND STUDY GUIDE

Lectures will focus on explaining and answering the following topics and questions. These topics and questions, in turn, will constitute the source from which the examination questions will be chosen through a random selection process at the time of the exam.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE NATURE OF TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

01.   Discuss the nature of technology as system-based, rational and cumulative, the differential effects of technological change on various groups and sectors of society, and the limits of technology in solving social problems. Volti 3-32

THE PROCESS OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

02.   Examine the sources of technological change and the relationship between scientific knowledge and technological advance. Volti 35-68

03.   Examine the international diffusion of technology, the role of business firms in technological diffusion, and the relationship among technology, energy use, and the environment. Volti 69-106

TECHNOLOGY & THE TRANSFORMATION OF WORK & SOCIETY

04.   Examine the relationship between work and technology before the onset of industrialization and illustrate how the development of technology over time has not always resulted in diminished workload. Volti 129-144

05.   Examine the role of technology as both creator and destroyer of jobs and assess the impact of technological change on the organization of work. Volti 145-177

THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION

06.   Examine the social and psychological consequences of the communications revolution with particular emphasis on the role of printing and the electronic media. Volti 181-217

MILITARY TECHNOLOGY

07.   Examine the major historical developments in military technology and their consequences for the social and political order. Volti 221-238

08.   Explain how social, economic, and political structures influence the development of military technologies and how military technologies and weapons may be contained.   Volti 239-261

THE SHAPING OF TECHNOLOGY

09.   Examine the relationship between technology and its creators and explore the question of technological determinism and the role of experts and expertise. Volti 265-280

10.   Examine the relationship between organizational structure and technological change. Volti 281-293

11.   Examine the influence of governmental actions and institutions on the shaping of technology and discuss whether democratic control of technology is possible. Volti 294-310

MEDICAL AND BIOMEDICAL DILEMMAS

12.   Examine the implications of the dilemmas confronting the individual and society as a consequence of technological advances in medical and biomedical sciences. Volti 107-125

THE INTERNET AND TIME DISPLACEMENT

13.   Examine the complex ways in which the Internet affects interpersonal communication and sociability.

14.   Examine the relationship among work, Internet use, leisure, and social time displacement.

TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY

15.   Examine the relationship among technology, information and the evolution of social policy, and discuss the implications of technology being captured by narrow self-interest groups.

16.   Explain and evaluate the warnings about the future of technology and control over society by technological elites.

17.   Explain how technological developments have resulted in simplification of work and reduction of wages in high-tech industries.

TECHNOLOGY AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

18.   Examine how the expansion of scientific knowledge and the exponential growth of new technologies have affected human societies and how, from a humanitarian perspective, we may deal with the tensions and conflicts we face and strengthen democratic values.

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS OR SERVICES TO ASSIST STUDENTS TO SUCCEED THROUGHOUT THE COURSE

Students are encouraged to utilize support services available at the Writing Centre to prepare for their essay exams.

LEARNING SUPPORT AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

> There are a variety of services available for students to assist them throughout their learning. This information is available in the College Calendar, Registrar's Office or the College web site at http://www.camosun.bc.ca

STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY

> There is a Student Conduct Policy. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School Administration Office, Registration, and on the College web site in the Policy Section.
>
> www.camosun.bc.ca/divisions/pres/policy/2-education/2-8