

# Philosophy 164: Technology & Human Values

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Philosophy – Science Studies

Spring Quarter 2013  
TuTh 12:30pm – 1:50pm, York 4080A

## Course Description

In this class we will consider many questions, such as: what is technology? What are values? Which values are the right values? The wrong values? Can technology itself be good, or bad? Fundamentally, what is the *value of technology*?

Many thinkers have considered these and related questions. We will consult their answers by reading their work. But we will also examine the questions themselves. This is because getting good answers first requires asking good questions.

Thinking even briefly about the terms ‘technology’ and ‘value’ reveals that the meanings of these terms vary by place, speaker, time, and use. Given that, does it even make sense to ask about the ‘value of technology’ *simpliciter*? If that doesn’t make sense, what *can* we ask about technology and human values?

In this class we will strive to both settle these questions and answer them.

## Course Requirements

Do the reading. Come to class most of the time. Contribute to discussion. Behave like an adult. Be respectful of your fellow students and the instructor. Do most of the writing assignments. Write two decent philosophical essays. Turn your writing in on time, and don’t cheat. Think for yourself.

## Reading Materials

The class website (which can be found at [www.classes.joycehavstad.com](http://www.classes.joycehavstad.com)) has PDFs of all of the assigned readings for the course.

## Grades

Overall course grade will be based on short writing assignments (one for each reading), in-class discussion of reading and writing assignments, and two papers (one 5–6 page midterm paper and one 8–10 page final paper). The grade breakdown is:

- In-class discussion – 15%
- Writing assignments – 25%
- Midterm paper – 25%
- Final paper – 35%

Grades will never be discussed over email. Grade changes can be requested in person, though the grade may decrease rather than increase upon reevaluation by the instructor. Total percentages will be assigned letter grades as follows:

A+	[100-98]	B+	[89-87]	C+	[79-77]	D	[69-60]
A	[97-93]	B	[86-83]	C	[76-73]	F	[50-0]
A-	[92-90]	B-	[82-80]	C-	[72-70]		

## **Writing Assignments**

On most days of class we will discuss a piece of writing, which must be read beforehand. Your daily writing assignment is to succinctly but insightfully summarize the reading. These summaries should be typed, no less than one paragraph and no more than one page in length. They should conclude with a question you have after doing the reading and considering its implications.

To receive credit for any given assignment, you must bring two copies of it to class. One copy must be turned in, by you, to the instructor during the first five minutes of class. You must be prepared to discuss your summary during class, and you can use the other, second copy of your summary for notes and reference during that discussion.

To receive credit for the writing assignment portion (25%) of your overall grade in the class, you must complete at least 16 of the 18 writing assignments. So, you can skip at least two assignments with absolutely no penalties. If you miss any more than that you seriously risk failing the class. But as long as you turn in, on time, at least 16 writing assignments of satisfactory quality over the course of the quarter, you will receive this 25% of your overall grade.

Late assignments will only be accepted in person and accompanied by official documentation (such as a signed doctor's note or a letter from a licensed funeral home, for example).

## **In-Class Discussion**

You should be prepared to participate during class discussion by sharing your written summaries of and questions about the reading assignments. On any given day for which you complete a writing assignment, you may be called on to present your summary and discuss your question.

Particularly excellent in-class contributions to discussion can earn you up to a third of your participation grade (in other words, 5% of the relevant 15%). Less favorable contributions can, however, reduce your participation grade. And in the unfortunate case of particularly offensive or inappropriate behavior, there is no limit to the amount by which your overall grade might be reduced as a result of such behavior.

## **Student Conduct**

Basically regular attendance and approximate punctuality are somewhat required due to the almost daily writing assignments. More importantly, considerate and appropriate behavior during lecture is expected at all times, as is possession and display of an attitude of respect towards other students in addition to the instructor.

This means not talking or interrupting while other students or the instructor is speaking. It also means listening carefully and responding to the contributions made by those in class with you, giving everyone the chance to contribute and assessing those contributions as charitably as possible. And it means no texting, taking calls, or otherwise engaging with social media during class.

In fact, no electronic devices are to be used at all during class (unless you have special dispensation from, for example, the Office for Students with Disabilities). This includes laptops.

Students with athletic, religious, or other critical obligations must inform the instructor within the first week of class of any anticipated conflicts, in order to plan

accordingly. Emergencies will be always accommodated as long as appropriate documentation can be provided.

Again, late assignments will not be accepted without official documentation. Late papers submitted without such documentation will be graded on half the normal scale, and no credit will be given for anything submitted after the assigned date of the final exam time slot.

Finally, class participation and open-mindedness are encouraged, but cheating and plagiarism are strictly forbidden.

### **Plagiarism**

You must complete the course assignments yourself—all submitted work should contain your ideas and be expressed in your own words. Any other sources used or quoted must be cited. Failure to cite sources is a violation of the University's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship (see <http://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/policy.html>), which all students must observe at all times.

This policy prohibits academic misconduct, "broadly defined as any prohibited and dishonest means to receive course credit, a higher grade, or avoid a lower grade." It is your responsibility to know the terms of this policy and to abide by it. In the case of any failures to observe the policy, all forms of academic misconduct will be immediately reported to the Academic Integrity Office.

### **Papers**

Two philosophical essays will comprise 60% of your overall grade. The first is shorter (5–6 pages), worth slightly less (25%), and will be based on the readings and discussion from the first few weeks of class. The second will be longer (8–10 pages), worth slightly more (35%), and should draw more from later material in the course.

You will get your paper assignments two weeks before the papers are due. Both papers must be typed and turned in on time. And as noted above, you must write these papers yourself. But you are welcome to ask for as much help as you need from the instructor during class and especially office hours.

### **Office Hours**

Tuesdays 2:00pm – 4:00pm in H&SS 7055; or by appointment, made in person and kept.

### **Contact Information**

The instructor is available during class and office hours. Emails will only be responded to in case of emergency.

### **Disabilities**

During the first week of class, students requesting accommodations and services due to a disability for this course need to provide a current Authorization For Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), prior to eligibility for requests. Receipt of AFAs in advance is necessary for appropriate planning for the provision of reasonable accommodations. OSD Academic Liaisons also need to receive current AFA letters.

For additional information, please contact OSD (<http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>).

– COURSE CALENDAR –

**Week 1**

Tuesday April 2

- Syllabus & Introductions

Thursday April 4

- Mesthene’s “The Role of Technology in Society” (1969)

**Week 2**

Tuesday April 9

- McDermott’s “Technology: The Opiate of the Intellectuals” (1969)

Thursday April 11

- Tiles & Oberdiek’s “Conflicting Visions of Technology” (1995)

**Week 3**

Tuesday April 16

- Winner’s “Do Artifacts Have Politics?” (1986)
- MIDTERM PAPERS ASSIGNED

Thursday April 18

- NO CLASS

**Week 4**

Tuesday April 23

- Park’s “Perpetuum Mobile: In Which People Dream of Infinite Free Energy” (2000)

Thursday April 25

- Oppenheimer’s “Speech to the Association of Los Alamos Scientists” (1945)

**Week 5**

Tuesday April 30

- Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818)
- MIDTERM PAPERS DUE

Thursday May 2

- Callicott’s “Intrinsic Value in Nature: A Metaethical Analysis” (1995)

**Week 6**

Tuesday May 7

- Rolston’s “Naturalizing Values” (1998)

Thursday May 9

- Douglas’ “Inductive Risk and Values in Science” (2000)

**Week 7**

Tuesday May 14

- Hollander’s “Institutionalizing Public Service Science: Its Perils and Promise” (1984)

Thursday May 16

- Anderson's "Uses of Value Judgments in Science: A General Argument, with Lessons from a Case Study of Feminist Research on Divorce" (2004)

### **Week 8**

Tuesday May 21

- Sagoff's "At the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, or Why Political Questions Are Not All Economic" (1981)

Thursday May 23

- Schmitz' "A Place for Cost-Benefit Analysis" (2001)

### **Week 9**

Tuesday May 28

- Collins & Pinch's "Tidings of Comfort and Joy: Seven Wise Men and the Science of Economics" (1998)
- FINAL PAPERS ASSIGNED

Thursday May 30

- Collins & Pinch's "The Hole in the Heart of Medicine: The Placebo Effect" (2005)

### **Week 10**

Tuesday June 4

- Parfit's "Energy Policy and the Further Future: The Identity Problem" (1983)

Thursday June 6

- Gjerris' "This Is Not a Hammer: On Ethics and Technology" (2009)

### **Finals Week**

Monday, June 10

- FINAL PAPERS DUE (11:30am – 2:29pm, location TBA)