The Social Organization of Technology: A Comparative Perspective
Sociology 327

Fall 2017, Section 201
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Instructor: D.J. Wolover
Office Hours: T, W 12-1:00pm; or by appointment

BACKGROUND

You can’t avoid technology. Our daily routines are in constant contact with it, yet we rarely take the time to think about how these tools have affected our lives. From dictating how and when we work, how we get around, to how we share information, technology has given us tools for success. However, not all technological advances have been purely beneficial. Throughout this course we’ll examine how various types of technological advances have shaped our language, lifestyles, and, thus, our realities.

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is organized into three sections:

- In the first section, we will examine some of the questions and concepts fundamental to this course, such as: What is technology? How can technology change? And, perhaps most useful for our purposes: Who does technology benefit?
- We will look at specific technological areas in the second section. This section starts with the advent and dispersion of the written word, a driving factor in the development of our later topics. Also, we will consider how our increased connection to technology has affected how we work and interact with one another daily. Finally, we’ll ask the question: Who is watching us online?
- The final section of the course focuses on how our intimate connections to technology have affected how we protest and what’s considered news. Of interest here are the issues of how traditional news outlets utilize content provided by “citizen journalists” and how social movements are harnessing the potential of online tools.

By the end of this course you are expected to be able to

- Outline multiple different definitions of technology, and provide insight into each definition’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Discuss how technology benefits different groups differently. Not all technologies are the same.
- Provide specific examples of how each of the selected technologies influenced society and also discuss how society influenced a technology’s development.

This syllabus, along with additional required readings, course grades, supplementary material, links to interesting data, and other items will be posted on the internet via the UWM D2L (Desire to Learn) system at http://d2l.uwm.edu/ (see below for how to access the site).
REQUIRED READINGS AND CONTENT

- Additional required readings and video clips are posted on the course D2L site under “Content.”

GRADING

3 exams 300pts total
Term Paper & Components 150pts total
Discussion Posts 150pts total
600pts total

Grading Scale (by percent):
A: 93-100  B+: 87-89  C+: 77-79  D+: 67-69  F: 59 or below
A-: 90-92   B: 83-86   C: 73-76   D: 63-66
B-: 80-82   C-: 70-72  D-: 60-62

All grades are calculated to the first decimal (ex: x.1) and are rounded up at .5. Any value less than .5 is rounded down. I utilize D2L’s “Grades” function and it updates as grades are entered, so I encourage you to get in the habit of checking your grade frequently.

Examinations. 300pts of your final grade will be based on your performance on the three examinations given during the semester. Each test will be accessible for the period of time outlined on the schedule and MUST be submitted by 11:59pm the final day they are available. The first exam (10/1-10/7) tests the material during the first section of the course, the second exam (11/12-11/18) the second section’s material, and the third/final exam (12/10-12/14) will cover the final section. The tests will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions which will test your comprehension not only of the course material, but also ask you to draw your own conclusions using the material as evidence. You have 2 hours to complete each exam.

Term Paper. 150pts of your final grade will be based on a semester long writing process. During the writing process you will provide a list of potential topics, a brief annotated bibliography of your references, and final copy of your essay. More details about this assignment can be found in the “Paper Assignment Sheet” file under “Contents.” All components are due by 11:59pm the date listed on the syllabus.

Discussion Answers:
The remaining 150pts will be based on the answers you provide to 10 discussion board questions covering that week’s material. As part of answering your selected question, feel free to list any other sources you may use. Just make sure that the information is attributed to the correct source and/or links to websites are included in your post (see the “A Note on Plagiarism” section for a brief outline on how to cite external sources). While there is no minimum word-count requirement for your answers, they will be evaluated according to the rubric included on page 4 of this syllabus, so make sure you are taking your time and constructing a clear answer. Your answers are due by 11:59pm on the Saturdays noted in the schedule.
AVAILABILITY

Please come to my office hours or e-mail me if you have any questions or problems with any of the assignments or material presented in class. I am here to help you. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to see if me if you are having difficulties. I check my e-mail regularly and will make every effort to respond in a timely fashion. In addition, the UWM Writing Center (Curtin 127) is available if more help is needed. The websites for this service, and others, can be found on pg. 8 of this syllabus.

EXPECTATIONS

Some of the concepts we discuss may be foreign to you and many of your classmates. Your active participation in class will make the time we have together more interesting and will result in your increased competence with the new information. Please make sure that you are keeping up with the assigned readings, as these will form the basis for your discussions. Also, make sure that you’re using the course PowerPoint slides as a tool to help direct your reading.

LATE WORK POLICY

Late assignments will penalized one letter grade per day late (one day late $\rightarrow$ highest grade possible = B+; two days = C+, etc.). Make sure that you follow the formatting and citation instructions provided on the assignment sheets. E-mailed assignments will ONLY be accepted in cases of emergency.

Exam and assignment deadlines will ONLY be extended in cases of a personal emergency or documentable course conflict. Examples of these include: 1) A medical emergency or illness; or 2) a student in the U.S. Military or UWM Athletics who can document a scheduling conflict. Mark the dates of major deadlines on your calendar now. Finally, no extra credit work will be assigned so make sure that you are keeping up with your grades on D2L and ask for assistance early if you are having difficulty with the material.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism involves more than copying an entire essay from another source. Plagiarism also occurs when phrases and sentences are patched together to create an essay. Of course, you will be using in your essay a few words or concepts that come from the assigned readings. That is legitimate. What is not legitimate is copying phrases and sentences from sources (whether assigned or not) and using them as if they represented your own writing. You can avoid this by honestly quoting and citing your sources. A rough rule of thumb is that plagiarism occurs if the writing in question could not have been constructed without copying directly (however sporadically) from another source, including other students. The University's policies on plagiarism are severe; any student who plagiarizes could receive an F for the course and have a letter of notification sent to the dean. In short, when in doubt...CITE!!!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>A-RANGE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>B-RANGE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>C-RANGE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th>D/F-RANGE CHARACTERISTICS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delivery of Post</td>
<td>Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings</td>
<td>Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts</td>
<td>Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts</td>
<td>Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear “hasty” or “last minute”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevance of Post</td>
<td>Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic/question; cites additional references related to discussion</td>
<td>Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content/question; prompts further discussion of topic</td>
<td>Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic/question</td>
<td>Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion question or content; Makes short or irrelevant remarks</td>
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<td>Expression Within the Post</td>
<td>Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic/question</td>
<td>Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic/question</td>
<td>Unclear connection to topic/question evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas</td>
<td>Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to question/topic</td>
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<td>Contribution to the Learning Community</td>
<td>Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic</td>
<td>Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by colleagues, interacts freely</td>
<td>Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on topic/question; marginal effort in constructing responses</td>
<td>Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promptness</td>
<td>Posts answers &amp; responses prior to posted deadline</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fails to post answers &amp; responses prior to deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>ASSIGNED READINGS</td>
<td>IMPORTANT DUE DATES</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 1:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sept. 5-9</td>
<td>What is Technology?&lt;br&gt;How can we define culture?</td>
<td>Murphie &amp; Potts: Intro.&lt;br&gt;Goldfarb: “Dialogue, Culture, Critique”</td>
<td>Discussion Answer 1 due by 11:59pm 9/9</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 2:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sept. 10-16</td>
<td>How Do Sociologists Study Technology?&lt;br&gt;Diffusion of Innovation</td>
<td>Murphie &amp; Potts: Chap. 1&lt;br&gt;Mills: “Personal Experiences and Public Issues”&lt;br&gt;Best: “Sociologists as Outliers”&lt;br&gt;Wajcman: “Feminist Theories of Technology”&lt;br&gt;Rogers: “Elements of Diffusion”</td>
<td>Discussion Answer 2 due by 11:59pm 9/16&lt;br&gt;ESSAY TOPIC LIST DUE on D2L by 11:59pm 9/16</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 3:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sept. 17-23</td>
<td>Change in Technology&lt;br&gt;Technological Determinism</td>
<td>Turkle: “A Passion for Objects”&lt;br&gt;Bolter &amp; Grusin: Introduction (pp. 44-50)&lt;br&gt;Postman: “Five Things We Need to Know about Technological Change”&lt;br&gt;Smith: “Technological Determinism in American Culture”&lt;br&gt;Ceruzzi: “Moore’s Law…”&lt;br&gt;Khanna: “Technology Will Take on a Life of its Own”</td>
<td>Discussion Answer 3 due by 11:59pm 9/23</td>
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<td><strong>WEEK 5:</strong>&lt;br&gt;Oct. 1-7</td>
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<td><strong>EXAM 1</strong></td>
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Kolowich: “Archiving Writers’ Work in the Age of E-Mail”  
Curran: “The Future of Journalism” | Discussion Answer 5 due by 11:59pm 10/14 |
| WEEK 7: Oct. 15-21 | **Workplace in Transition** | Aneesh: “Action Scripts”  
Hayes: “Automation on the Job”  
Aneesh: “Virtual Migration”  
Poster: “Who’s on the Line?” | Discussion Answer 6 due by 11:59pm 10/21 ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE via D2L by 11:59pm 10/21 |
| WEEK 8: Oct. 22-28 | **Computer Use**  
*Social Networks and Networking* | Berry: “Why I’m not going…”  
Vaidhyanathan: “Generational Myth…”  
Postman: Chap. 7  
Rosen: “The End of Forgetting”  
Pooley: “Sociology and the Socially Mediated Self”  
Deresiewicz: “The End of Solitude” | Discussion Answer 7 due by 11:59pm 10/28 |
| WEEK 9: Oct. 29-Nov. 4 | **Surveillance and Privacy** | McCarthy: “Toward a Free Information Movement”  
Trotter: “Interpersonal Social Media Surveillance,”  
“Institutional Social Media Surveillance” & “Market Social Media Surveillance” | Discussion Answer 8 due by 11:59pm 11/4 |
| WEEK 10: Nov. 5-11 | **McDonaldization** | Ritzer: “An Introduction to McDonaldization”  
View: Associated Infomercials | FINAL COPY OF ESSAY DUE via D2L by 11:59pm 11/11 |
| WEEK 11: Nov. 12-18 | **EXAM 2** | |
| WEEK 12: Nov. 19-25 | | **THANKSGIVING WEEK...ENJOY THE BREAK** |
**SECTION 3**

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| WEEK 15: Dec. 10-14 | ****FINAL EXAM** **
CREDIT HOURS STATEMENT
The university has asked departments to break down for students how much time they will spend working on various aspects of their classes.

As the UW System assumes “that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

For a traditional/face-to-face course, you will spend a minimum of

- 37.5 hours in the classroom
- 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

The following are some helpful resources available to you on the UWM campus:

First Year Center  
[http://www4.uwm.edu/access_success/first_year_center/index.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/access_success/first_year_center/index.cfm)
Volunteer Center  
[http://www4.uwm.edu/cvsl/](http://www4.uwm.edu/cvsl/)
Norris Health Center  
[http://www4.uwm.edu/norris/](http://www4.uwm.edu/norris/)
LGBT Resource Center  
Career Development Center  
[http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CDC/](http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CDC/)
Advising Center  
[http://www4.uwm.edu/academics/academic_resources/advising.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/academics/academic_resources/advising.cfm)
Multicultural Student Center  
[http://www4.uwm.edu/msc/](http://www4.uwm.edu/msc/)
Tutoring and Academic Resource Center and the Writing Center  
[http://www4.uwm.edu/access_success/tutoring_services/](http://www4.uwm.edu/access_success/tutoring_services/)
Military Education Benefits Office  
[http://www4.uwm.edu/mebo/](http://www4.uwm.edu/mebo/)
Getting access to & getting help for a course that uses Desire2Learn (D2L) for its Web site

Materials for this course are available on a Desire2Learn (D2L) course Web site. You may see these materials there anytime you wish, using a standard Web browser as described in the paragraph below.

If you have a PC-compatible computer, it is recommended that you use either Internet Explorer or Firefox as your D2L Web browser. If you have a Mac, it is recommended that you use Safari or Firefox. You should also make sure that your browser has “Sun Java Runtime Environment” (Java-scripting) enabled for a recent version of Java. (If you have any questions about these requirements, contact Help as described at the bottom of this page.)

In order to find and browse the course Web site:
1. Call up your Web browser and go to the UWM home page: http://www.uwm.edu OR http://D2L.uwm.edu
2. From the UWM home page, click on the dropdown menu, and select D2L.
3. This will automatically bring up the Desire2Learn welcome screen. You will see a location to enter your Username and Password.
4. Your Username is your ePanther username (the same username as your ePanther campus email), without the “@uwm.edu” part. Do not hit Enter after you have typed in your username! Either hit the Tab key on your keyboard, or use the mouse to click in the box next to Password.
5. Your Password is your ePanther password. After you have typed in your ePanther password, then please hit Login.
6. You should then see a My Home screen. You will see in mid-screen an area called My UW-Milwaukee Courses. If you click on Search with the textbox empty, you will see all the courses you are enrolled in. You can click on the word Semester at the top of the appropriate column (usually click a couple of times) to organize your courses by semester, displaying the current semester first. Alternatively, you can put in a search string (for instance, “psych 101” but without the quotes) and click on Search. If you’re enrolled in a D2L site with that search string, it will be displayed for you.
7. Once you are on the My Home screen, you will see links on the left side of your screen that allow you to change your ePanther password or forward your ePanther email to your preferred private email address.
8. If you have any difficulty getting on the course Web site, please close down your Web browser completely and open it up again, then try logging on again using the instructions above. If you do not know your ePanther username or password, please get help as indicated below.
9. When you are finished looking around the course Web site, always click on Logout if you are in a computer lab, or at least shut down your Web browser. Otherwise, the next person who uses the machine will be using your course account!

What to do if you have problems with Desire2Learn (D2L)
If you have problems with your login (e.g., you forgot your password, or if you just can’t get on) or if you run into any other typical Desire2Learn difficulties, help is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may do one of the following:
- Send an email to help@uwm.edu
- Pick up a phone and call 414.229.4040 if you are in Metro Milwaukee (or just 4040 on a UWM campus phone)
- Go to Bolton 225 (this lab is not open all day or on weekends – check for specific hours)
- Go to EMS E173A (this is a 24/7 lab)
- If you are calling from off campus but within Wisconsin or within the USA, call 1.877.381.3459.
UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that page is:  

1. **Students with disabilities.** Notice to students with disabilities that special services and accommodations are provided. Information is available from the Accessibility Resource Center at  
http://uwm.edu/arc/

2. **Religious observances.** Information concerning accommodations for absences due to religious observance is available at:  
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

3. **Students called to active military duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty is available at  
http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/

4. **Incompletes.** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. The policy outlining incomplete grades is available at:  
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf

5. **Discriminatory conduct** (such as sexual harassment). Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policy regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at:  
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

6. **Academic misconduct.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. The policy and procedures concerning academic misconduct is available at  
http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/

7. **Complaint procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the Sociology Department Chair or the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the Sociology Department Chair, the Associate Dean for Social Sciences in the College of Letters & Sciences, or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. Policy may be found at:  
https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Policy.pdf

8. **Grade appeal procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the College of Letters & Science or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the sociology department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College of Letters & Science. Procedures for undergraduate student grade appeal can be found at  
http://uwm.edu/letters-science/advising/answers-forms/policies/appeal-procedure-for-grades

Procedures for graduate student grade appeal can be found at  
http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-appeals-procedure/

9. **LGBT+ resources.** Resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment are available at  
http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/

10. **Final examination policy.** Policies regarding final examination requirement can be found at:  
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

11. **Publication royalties.** Royalties from the sale of faculty-authored publications to students in their classes are donated to the UWM Foundation–Sociology account to support activities and awards for UWM Sociology students.

Update 08/2017