

COURSE

- 18Sp ISBU-ISSS 388-101 (SCPS): *Readings in the History and Philosophy of Technology*
- Instructor: [Yitna Firdyiwek](#)
- Contact: ybf2u@virginia.edu

Technical Support

- Login/Password: scpshelpdesk@virginia.edu
- UVaCollab: collab-support@virginia.edu
- BbCollaborate: <http://www.tinyurl.com/uvabbc>
- WordPress: <https://pages.shanti.virginia.edu/>

[Pre-Course Survey](#): Please take before, or soon after, registering for this course. (Password = 3888)



Course Description

What is generally termed "technology" has a ubiquitous presence in contemporary society. Its existence has been justified with great promises for such things as the efficiency of industry, the effectiveness of government, and a marked "improvement" in the way humans learn. In fact, the gains made in health care, transportation, construction, and other sectors of society have been remarkable. But all this has not come without associated costs. There are questions concerning the relentless quest for efficiency, the destructive power of our weapons, and the proper role of communication technology in an open and democratic society. Justifications for modes of control and operation in the name of "progress" have also come into serious question.

As users of technology, we are all challenged to be informed and to make our own determinations about the suitable use of technology in our communications, work, learning, and day-to-day living. Yet we know so little about it. The purpose of this course is to explore ways in which familiarity with the history and philosophy of technology can inform our investigations of the matter at a personal as well as societal level. This course will lead students to exercise a critical perspective on issues that are embedded in, and frame the way we think about, technology.

By the end of the semester students should be able to explain major historical and philosophical topics we will have discussed in class, as well as be able to define and show how their (the students') learning has helped them apply critical thinking towards their own engagement with technology.

Learning Goals:

- Students will be able to practice critical inquiry, analysis, and reflection
- Students will make connections between disparate forms of knowledge
- Students will be able to self-assess and take responsibility for their learning

Learning Outcomes:

- Given a reading on a technological issue, students will be able to identify the author's perspective, the main arguments, and the counter arguments that could be made against it.
- Provided with a particular technological artefact, students will be able to identify the intended and unintended consequences of its design and use.
- After producing responses to specific assignments in the course, students will be able to assess themselves by selecting and presenting their best work and reflecting on their choices and their experience as learners.

Required Text:

- All texts are provided online
- Other material will be added depending on student projects

Required Technology:

- Minimum processor speed: Intel 4th Gen Core i5
- OS: MS Windows 8.1 (64-bit) or Mac OS X 10.10
- Minimum free disk space: 100GB
- Minimum RAM: 8GB
- Headset with microphone



Course Schedule

This is a web-based course with live online meetings using Blackboard Collaborate in UVaCollab. Meetings will be held on Thursdays 7:00PM – 9:45 PM. Students may also be required to do additional out-of-class work in which case class times may vary.

- Week 1 (1/18) Course introduction
- Week 2 (1/25) Perspectives on Technology
- Week 3 (2/1) Technology and Societal Development
- Week 4 (2/8) Philosophy of Technology: Ancient Greece
- Week 5 (2/15) History of Technology: Middle Ages
- Week 6 (2/22) Philosophy of Technology: Middle Ages
- Week 7 (3/1) Bacon, Descartes, Newton
- **Week 8 (3/8) Spring Break**
- Week 9 (3/15) Philosophy of Technology: Modern Period
- Week 10 (3/22) Philosophy of Technology: Modern Period
- Week 11 (3/29) Group Projects
- Week 12 (4/5) Group Projects
- Week 13 (4/12) Group Projects
- Week 14 (4/19) Group Presentations
- Week 15 (4/26) Group Presentations
- **Week 16 (5/3) Final Work Due**

Course Contract

- **Communication & Student Response Time:** Students are expected to check their official UVa email addresses on a frequent and consistent basis to remain informed of course and University communications, as certain communications may be time sensitive. Students who fail to check their email on a regular basis are responsible for any resulting consequences. I will respond to your email within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours over the weekend.
- **Class Requirements:** Students are expected to attend all classes. If you have to miss a class, you are still responsible for all of the missed work. You are also required to watch the class recording and write a "reflection" assignment to make up for missed work. More than two unexcused absences will seriously affect your grade.
- **Assignments:** Assignments are required to be turned in by their due date. If you need a waiver you need to contact me prior to the due date and explain your reasons.
- **Assessment:**
 - Class Participation (10%)
 - Weekly Writing Assignments (20%)
 - WordPress Postings(10%)
 - Team Presentations (20%)
 - ePortfolio (40%)



SCPS Grading Policies:

This course uses the following grading system: A+, A, A-; B+, B, B-; C+, C, C-; D+, D, D-, and F. The symbol W is used when a student officially drops a course before its completion or if the student withdraws from an academic program of the University. Please visit www.scps.virginia.edu/audience/students/grades for more information.

Mid-Term and End-of-Class Evaluations:

Students may be expected to participate in an online mid-term evaluation. Students are expected to complete the online end-of-class evaluation. As the semester comes to a close, students will receive an email with instructions for completing this. Student feedback will be very valuable to the school, the instructor, and future students. We ask that all students please complete these evaluations in a timely manner. Please be assured that the information you submit online will be anonymous and kept confidential.

University of Virginia Honor System:

All work should be pledged in the spirit of the Honor System at the University of Virginia. The instructor will indicate which assignments and activities are to be done individually and which permit collaboration. The following pledge should be written out at the end of all quizzes, examinations, individual assignments and papers: "I pledge that I have neither given nor received help on this examination (quiz, assignment, etc.)". The pledge must be signed by the student. For more information, visit www.virginia.edu/honor.

Special Needs:

It is the policy of the University of Virginia to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws. Any SCPS student with a disability who needs accommodation (e.g., in arrangements for seating, extended time for examinations, or note-taking, etc.), should contact the Student Disability Access Center (SDAC) and provide them with appropriate medical or psychological documentation of his/her condition. Once accommodations are approved, it is the student's responsibility to follow up with the instructor about logistics and implementation of accommodations. Accommodations for test taking should be arranged at least 14 business days in advance of the date of the test(s). Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the SDAC: 434-243-5180/Voice, 434-465-6579/Video Phone, 434-243-5188/Fax. Further policies and statements are available at www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/sdac/sdac.html

For further policies and statements about student rights and responsibilities, please visit www.scps.virginia.edu/audience/students

Note: This syllabus may be modified depending on course circumstances. (Last revised: 11/10/2017)