Fall 2019 -- CRD 118 Technology and Society

CRD 118, 4 units                  Community and Regional Development
Martin Kenney                      University of California, Davis
Office: 2307 Hart Hall              Office tele. #: 754-5943
Office Hours: MW 10-11 am           mfkenney@ucdavis.edu
F by appointment

Brief Course Description

This class explores the relationships between technology and socio-economic world. Few of us reflect upon how technology develops or why it develops in the ways it does, even though it plays a fundamental role in nearly all of our activities even the most intimate ones. The purpose of this course is to develop a theoretical and historical understanding of how technology evolves and then use these understandings to examine some topics regarding technological development and contemporary society. By the end of the course, my hope is that you will have a better understanding of why our everyday technologies have evolved in the way they have. I also hope you will have a better understanding of how we, ourselves, and our social, economic, and political system we affect this evolution.

We are constantly creating new things for our use and abuse. These objects create new needs such as for a smartphone, pad computer, side-impact air bags, designer drugs, etc. And yet, we know little about why and how these artifacts came to populate our world and structure our lives. In the modern era, when we perceive a problem, then we call upon our technologists to solve it. Technical fixes are a preferred remedy. Even when there is no problem, businesses are trying to create new needs and define new problems. As human-developed objects, technologies are not neutral, they have politics, social structures, and many other values designed into them. For example, consider the role of privacy in a world where firms control the computers upon which you store your most intimate details. Further, the technologies that groups or society creates and uses tell us much about the society and power in that society. Further, we often measure other societies by their technologies, not their moral or ethical values. Finally, and most important, technological artifacts shape our lives and are powerful forces in structuring our actions. Today, our technologies have become so powerful and all-pervasive that they are part of what and who we are including our flesh, bones, blood, plastic, and other human-made materials in our world. Our technologies have made us so powerful that some believe we are destroying our planet and ourselves with it.

Required Readings

1. All readings are on the class Canvas web site under “Files.”
2. Parts of one book are required (you can buy it on Amazon. However, I have scanned the assigned portions and they are on class website):

Grading

Your grade will be given on the basis of the following products:

1. Four unannounced quizzes (drop one - 10% each) 30%
   Quizzes missed cannot be made-up. However, the lowest one will be dropped. The quiz is given at the beginning of class any student more than 10 minutes late will not be allowed to take the quiz (no exceptions). There are no make-ups because you decided to go out of town for a vacation, present a paper, go to a study session, or any other reason. If you want to miss class during the quarter, it is your choice. If missing quizzes worries you, please drop the class.

2. Final Paper (due on day of final) 40% (total)

   The final paper writing will be a three-step process:
a. On **October 9, 2019**, you should submit the idea for your paper for comments by the TAs and/or the instructor. I will return it to you on **October 14, 2019** with comments and ideas. Essentially, we will decide whether the topic is a good one that will be doable. I will discuss choosing a topic during class. This is required and, if you do not hand in the topic you will be unable to finish the class.

Topics that cannot be done because we discuss them in great detail during class include: bicycles, cameras, and Teflon.

b. On **November 18, 2019**, you must submit a draft of your paper for the TA and me to comment upon. This draft does not need to be a complete paper, but it should include the following:

1. An introduction with thesis
2. Exploration of one of the ideas mentioned in their thesis/intro (body paragraphs).
3. Utilization of at least two readings

This portion of the paper assignment will be **20%** of the final grade. You will be graded on the quality of the introduction, the coherence of the thesis, exploration of the ideas, and how were using the two (or more readings) to elucidate the topics of your paper.

c. The final paper will be due on the day of the scheduled final. The final paper accounts for **40%** of the total grade.

The final original research paper is meant to acquaint you with the evolution of a technological artifact in greater depth. Any technology or artifact is acceptable for the paper, after it is approved. The paper should be approximately fifteen pages in length. For the paper you will choose any product or item you wish and you will trace its evolution through time and you should integrate the theories we have learned in the class into the paper to provide an understanding of the evolution of the artifact. The integration of the readings into the paper is mandatory. Any paper that does not refer to and use the readings will receive no higher than a C – the better the integration, the higher the grade. I have posted previous “A” and “bad” papers on the Canvas website.

The paper should be typed double-spaced on one side of the page. Please use a normal typeface and a 10 or 12 pitch. References to any written materials should be in footnotes or embedded citations (Kenney 2014:2). **Everyone must provide an electronic copy of the paper emailed as an attachment. However, a hard copy is also required.** The paper will be due on the date of the final examination as published in the catalog.

Please do not put any covers etc. on the papers. The paper should begin with a title page including your name, the class, date, instructor etc.

You will be given a chance during the last two days of class to make a five-minute presentation on their research. I really encourage you to make the presentation, as talking about what you are writing is vital to producing a great paper.

3. Classroom participation (I call on students in class randomly!)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Classroom participation (I call on students in class randomly!)</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Code of Conduct**

All students should be familiar with the Student Code of Academic Conduct that is located here [http://sja.ucdavis.edu/cac.html](http://sja.ucdavis.edu/cac.html). Please review this carefully and ask your instructor, if you have any questions. Remember the instructor is obliged to refer you to Student Judicial Affairs in all cases of violation or suspected violation.

In addition to the well-known cases of plagiarism and cheating on examinations, it is also a violation of the Code of Conduct to use your own written materials from papers prepared for other classes, unless you take the following points into consideration.
It is permissible to use materials and texts from other class projects, within CRD or in other departments, under these conditions:
(1) You inform the instructor beforehand.
(2) You clearly identify the portions where you quote yourself (or collaborative work)
(3) You provide a copy of the previous work you have submitted in the other class to the instructor.
(4) To ensure that you receive a good grade make sure that it fits seamlessly into the assignment for THIS class.
(5) If you have any doubts about the extent to which you can use already written materials, talk to the instructor or the TA prior to making any submission.

Required Readings

Readings are an essential part of the course and, though not necessarily duplicated in the course lectures, are a necessary background for discussion. They will be necessary to adequately participate in the class and you will be responsible for knowing this material for quizzes.

Wednesday, September 25 – Introduction and hand out syllabus etc.

Monday, September 30 – Why is Technology Important?


Wednesday, October 2 - What Is Technology?


Monday, October 7 – Marx on Technology


Wednesday, October 9 – Technological Evolution -- Hand in Paper Topic


Monday, October 14 – Evolution Illustrated


**Wednesday, October 16 – Selection**


**Monday, October 21 – Path Dependence, Standards, and Lock-In**


**Wednesday, October 23 – Technology and Intellectual Property**

• From the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office please read:

  1. What is a patent?
  3. What can be patented?
  4. Novelty and other conditions for obtaining a patent

• The URL is: http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/doc/general/


• Please play around with Google Patent. Check out patents from 1820 and today to see how they were written.

**Monday, October 28 – Social Construction of Technology**


**Wednesday, October 30 – Social Construction Examples**


**Monday, November 4 – Technology in Sport**


**Wednesday, November 6 – Technology and Food**


**Monday, November 11 – VETERANS DAY**

**Wednesday, November 13 – Social Construction of the Digital**


**Monday, November 18 – Technology and Politics {Submit draft of paper for comments}**


**Wednesday, November 20 – Environment, Community, and Technology**


Monday, November 25 – Asia, Technology and Imperialism


Wednesday, November 27 – “Intelligent” Technology? {Thanksgiving is tomorrow so no quiz today!}


Monday, December 2 – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, December 4 – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Paper due the day of the final