Fall 2023

STS-201 (101): Understanding Technological Society

Laura Stanik

Understanding Technological Society: Fall 2023

Professor Stanik
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Instructor's Contact Information:	**Course Information:**
Professor Stanik Email: stanik@njit.edu Subscribe to Receive Texts (optional): Text: @sts201-101 To: 81010 or (774) 353-0907 Or visit: remind.com/join/sts201-101 (Standard text messaging rates apply to anyone receiving messages.) Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays (by appointment)	STS 201 Section 101 Fall 2023 Tuesdays: 6:00PM – 8:50PM Kupfrian Hall 207 Mode: Face-to-Face Students must bring a laptop or tablet to class. If you do not have access to adequate equipment, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students. Course Materials: http://canvas.njit.edu

People often talk about society, technology, and the environment separately. This course will question that perspective. Can we - and should we - talk about the creation and use of technologies, the human and natural environment, and the development of social and cultural institutions separately? In what ways is there interdependence, codependence, coinfluence, and coproduction?

This course serves as an introduction to the social sciences: anthropology, communication, economics, sociology, geography, history, political science, sustainability, and psychology (and their influence on technology, society, and technological society). Much of the course focuses on technology and its role in addressing and improving local, national, and global issues, as well as, its effect and relationship with the global ecological system and sustainability.

Course Catalog Description
A problem-centered and task-oriented course that integrates social science theory and practice into the leading public issues of a technological society. Students learn critical thinking through hands-on assignments. The course emphasizes student understanding of social institutions that directly affect technological development and professional careers. This course can be used to satisfy either the three credit 200 GER in History and Humanities or the three credit GER in Social Sciences, but not both.

Prerequisites: None

Course Goals
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze course materials and relate them to authentic situations;
2. Create, articulate, and defend cohesive, well-organized arguments based on evidence in course materials;
3. Develop solutions to complex societal problems; and
4. Evaluate the relationships between the creation and use of technologies, the human and natural environment, and the development of social and cultural institutions.

Required Course Materials:
Most course materials will be available in Canvas. You will need to have a valid UCID to access Canvas. See schedule and Canvas for the order of assigned course materials. In addition to the materials available in Canvas, during the semester, you will also need to access the following materials:

Cullen, Heidi. *The Weather of the Future: Heat Waves, Extreme Storms, and Other Scenes from a Climate-Changed Planet.* First edition. New York: Harper, 2010. (available in paperback and ebook; ISBN 9780061726941). *Note: We will only be reading Part 1.

Orlowski, Jeff. *The Social Dilemma.* Exposure Labs, 2020. Netflix, netflix.com/title/81254224.

Ptolemy, Barry. *Transcendent Man.* Docurama. 2009
(https://transcendentman.com/product/transcendent-man-documentary rent as low as $2.99)

Schlosser, Eric, Richard Pearce, Melissa Robledo, Robert Kenner, Elise Pearlstein, Kim Roberts, Michael Pollan, Gary Hirshberg, Joel Salatin, and Mark Adler. *Food, Inc.* Los Angeles: Magnolia Pictures, 2008. (https://digitalcampus-swankmp-net.libdb.njit.edu:8443/njit387129/play/470a05185adf4795?referrer=marc)

All other materials will be provided in class or via Canvas. Any changes or additions to required course materials will be distributed in class or via Canvas.

Course Assignments
STS 201 is a highly interactive class that uses problem- and project-based learning. The goal is for you, with my help, to develop your own solutions and conclusions based on evidence in assigned readings and videos, course lectures, in-class discussions, and multimedia presentations.

Throughout the semester we will be working to answer the question: Can a technological society live sustainably? To help you answer this question by the end of the semester, we will explore aspects of technological society in each course module. For each module, you will be expected to:

1. complete the assigned course prep (as detailed in the schedule) prior to class
   (research questions recommended but optional)
2. come to class with the reading and any notes you have - ready to ask questions, share your reflections, and apply what you've learned
3. complete a quiz for each reading/video to demonstrate you are prepared for class
   (quizzes will be in-class multiple choice and/or short answer – open book and notes)
4. apply course materials to authentic situations
   (complete an assigned in-class project, using course materials and your notes, to help you master the content and understand its application)
5. solve the problem of the module, and relate it to the problem of the semester
   (complete in-class…you will need these for the midterm and final exams)

Originality of Your Work, Etiquette, and Academic Integrity:
This course is highly interactive and facilitates a great deal of reflection, collaboration, and debate. Although you are encouraged to collaborate with classmates as you work through problems and course materials, all of the work you submit in this course for credit must be entirely your own. You will have every opportunity to provide your best work; all assignments will be open book and open notes because the goal is for you to apply and evaluate what you are learning - not memorize and restate it.

Although you are expected to build on, react to, criticize, and analyze the ideas of others, when you do, you must follow NJIT's Code of Student Conduct and Code on Academic Integrity.

Class participants must arrive on-time, remain engaged, and be respectful of one another's time and turn to speak, even when opinions may differ. Scholarly debates are okay. Personal attacks are not.

When stating facts, you must provide a citation that names the original source where the idea was expressed (even if you are not directly quoting from the source or if you reworded the original idea). If you ever have questions about drawing the line between others' work and your own, ask me for guidance or visit he NJIT Student Handbook (current edition).

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy.

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing, or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

Grading Policies
The evaluation of student proficiency in this course is based on the following components:

1. **In-class quizzes (30%):** For each of the assigned readings (and in some cases videos) you will complete an in-class quiz. The quiz will be open book and notes and include multiple choice and/or short answer questions. All quizzes must be completed in person in class. There will be a total of 6 quizzes during the semester, each worth 20 points. Your highest 5 grades will count towards your semester grade. All grades and comments will be provided via Canvas. Because your lowest quiz grade will be dropped, no late submissions will be accepted, no make-up quizzes will be given, and failure to submit a quiz will result in zero points.

2. **In-class answer to the problem of the module (20%):** At the end of each module, you will use course materials, answers to research questions, notes, and in-class project materials to answer the question of the module. These 7 assignments are pass/fail and worth 20 points each. If you submit at least 60% correctly, you will receive full credit for the assignment. If less than 60% is correct, you will receive zero points for the assignment. All problems of the module must be completed in person in class to receive credit. Your highest 5 grades will count towards your semester grade. Because your lowest grade will be dropped, no late submissions will be accepted, no make-up projects will be given, and failure to submit a project will result in zero points. *PLEASE NOTE: these answers also will help you practice for the exams.*

3. **Midterm (20%):** Based on course lectures, assigned readings, multimedia presentations, notes, projects, answers to the problems of the modules, and in-class discussions, you will complete a mid-term exam to demonstrate that you have mastered course content and understand its applications. The midterm exam will be open book and notes and will be similar to the in-class quizzes, projects, and assignments you tackle. The midterm exam must be completed in person in class. *No late submissions will be accepted, no make-up midterm will be given, and failure to submit your midterm will result in zero points.*

4. **Final examination (30%):** A final exam will be conducted during the end-of-semester exam period as scheduled. The final exam will be a cumulative assessment that requires you to draw on course lectures, assigned readings/videos, multimedia presentations, notes, in-class discussions and projects, and answers to the problem of each module. The final exam will be open book and notes and will include a variety of question formats (e.g., multiple choice, short answer, essay). The final exam must be completed in person in class. *No late submissions will be accepted, no make-up final exam will be given, and failure to submit your final will result in zero points.*

Aggregate Grading Scale for Final Grades (based on percentage of points earned):

A = 100%-90% B+ = 89.99%-86% B = 85.99%-80% C+ = 79.99%-76% C = 75.99%-70% D = 69.99%-60% F = <60%	*Final grades are not subject to post-semester rounding or adjustment–with the exception of the change of a grading error. Under no circumstances will students be given the opportunity to complete extra-credit papers or other assignments to bolster their final grades.*

Course Content and Schedule*
This semester you will be working to answer the question:

Can a technological society live sustainably?

**any changes to the required course prep or schedule will be announced in class and/or via email*

COURSE INTRODUCTION & DEFINING TERMS:

Class date(s):	September 5

Module 1: Should the rights to natural resources be owned?

Class date(s):	September 12
Required course prep	Get/order required reading for Mod 2 so you will have it and be able to read it before class
In-Class Quiz	None
In-Class Answer to Problem of the Module	September 12

Module 2: What is the solution for a society in an environmental crisis?

Class date(s):	September 19 & 26
Required course prep	Cullen, *The Weather of the Future* (part 1 only) & "Can We Cool The Planet" (PBS NOVA)
In-Class Quiz	September 19
In-Class Answer to Problem of the Module	September 26

Module 3: Is the American Dream a vision or an illusion?

Class date(s):	October 3 & 10
Required course prep	Assigned readings in Canvas
In-Class Quiz	October 3
In-Class Answer to Problem of the Module	October 10

Course Content and Schedule (continued)

Module 4: Should farms be factories?

Class date(s):	October 17
Required course prep	"Food, Inc."
In-Class Quiz	October 17
In-Class Answer to Problem of the Module	October 17

MIDTERM:

Midterm Exam	October 24

Module 5: Should humans strive for immortality?

Class date(s):	October 31 & November 7
Required course prep	Assigned articles in Canvas, Eythor Bender TED Talk, Amber Case TED Talk & Documentary "Transcendent Man"
In-Class Quiz	October 31
In-Class Answer to Problem of the Module	November 7

Module 6: Can humans design perfection?

Class date(s):	November 14 & 28
Required course prep	Bill McDonough TED Talk & The Social Dilemma
In-Class Quiz	November 14
In-Class Answer to Problem of the Module	November 28

Module 7: How should society measure prosperity? | WRAP UP & REVIEW

Class date(s):	November 28 & December 5
Required course prep	Assigned articles in Canvas & Richard Wilkinson TED talk
In-Class Quiz	November 28
In-Class Answer to Problem of the Module	December 5
Course Wrap Up & Review	December 5 Come prepared with 3 questions about course content and/or the exam that you'd like to clarify before the final

Course Content and Schedule (continued)

FINAL:

Final Exam	TBA (as scheduled)