Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course when you enroll may be different. Use the syllabus provided by your instructor for the most up-to-date information. Please refer to your instructor for more information for the specific requirements of a given semester.

Overview of the Course

This course will examine various ways of evaluating behavioral aspects of new technologies (e.g., mobile communication devices, social media, automotive innovations, sports equipment). Many new consumer products seem like they might improve our lives through increased efficiency, convenience, or power in performing specific tasks. However, technology often has hidden costs such as unexpected effects on social behavior and cultural values, unexpected health consequences, increases in behavioral complexity, surprising patterns of errors in task performance, greater financial expense, and negative environmental impact. It is therefore difficult to predict whether new technology will make us happy, increase creativity, enhance social interactions, or generally improve our quality of life. This course will consider many behavioral dimensions of technology so that people can make better choices in designing, acquiring, and using new devices.

Student responsibilities:

1. Participate actively in class discussions of the required readings and student presentations of their papers later in the course.

2. Write a 2-page double-spaced commentary on the primary issues involved in any of the topics marked with an asterisk (*) in the syllabus. These commentaries may rely on the course readings and/or additional sources. The commentaries are due at the class period in which these topics are discussed (Weeks 1-10). Individuals who prepare commentaries should help to lead our class discussions of these topics.

3. There will be a midterm exam on the course readings, lectures, and discussions on Thursday of Week 10, October 29. The format of the exam will be multiple choice and true false.

4. Instead of a final exam, students will write a 10-page double-spaced paper on a topic relevant to this course. Some class time will be allowed for interaction among students with similar interests during the second half of class on Tuesdays of Weeks 4 and 7.
a. A **one-paragraph description of your tentative paper topic** is due on Thursday of Week 3, **Sept. 10**.

b. A **one-page description of your paper topic** is due by Thursday of Week 6, **Oct. 1**.

c. The **full paper** is due no later than **Monday of Week 11, Nov. 2**. There will be a penalty for missing this deadline.

d. Students will make brief oral presentations of their papers and respond to comments and questions from the class during **Weeks 11 - 16**, and during our final exam period on **Friday, Dec. 11, 4:00 – 5:45 p.m.**

The paper should review several articles **not** included in the required readings and critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in assessing some technology. Possible topics include evaluation of electronic, mechanical, and/or biological technologies, new measures or methods for evaluating or predicting the impact of technologies, or historical trends in the evolution of particular technologies and their impacts. Visual media to enhance your class presentation is encouraged.

**Grading**

Grades will be determined by class participation during student presentations (10%), the 2-page commentary (10%), the midterm (30%), the 10-page paper (30%), and the oral presentation to the class (20%).

**Summary of Schedule**

Weeks 1-10: 2-page written commentary on * topics covered in the readings. Due on the day the topic is discussed in class.

Week 3: **Thursday, Sept. 10** -- Provide a tentative title and a one-paragraph description of your paper topic.

Week 6: **Thursday, Oct. 1** -- Provide the title and a 1-page description of your paper topic.

Week 10: **Thursday, Oct. 29** -- Midterm exam.

Weeks 11-16: **Monday, Nov. 2 (or earlier)** – 10-page paper is due. Oral presentations.

Week 17: **Friday, Dec. 11, 4:00 – 5:45 p.m.**: Oral presentations and final discussion of the course.
The required readings for this course (with one exception) will be available electronically on Carmen.

1. Efficiency, complexity, and multi-tasking  (Weeks 1-2)

Usability and complexity


Computer mouse: Speed, accuracy, and muscular stress


*Cell phones: Multi-tasking


2. Happiness and pleasure  (Weeks 3-4)

Behavioral correlates


*Measurement issues


*Adaptation and design implications


*Affective relationships with technology


3. Creativity (Weeks 5-6)


*Enhancing multi-person creativity


*Media effects on conceptual thinking and communication


4. Environmental impact  (Weeks 7-8)


*Sport utility vehicles and the car culture*


*Voluntary simplicity*


5. Social Impact (Weeks 9-10)

Luddites and cultural disruption


*Internet*


*Sports technology*


Academic Misconduct

All students at the Ohio State University are bound by the Code of Student Conduct (see http://oaa.ohio-state.edu/coam/code.html). Suspected violations of the code in this class will be dealt with according to the procedures detailed in that code. Specifically, any alleged cases of misconduct will be referred to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Students with disabilities

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. In addition, if you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the instructor immediately. Students with special needs should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 292-3307 for certification if they have not already done so. Upon such certification, the ODS and the instructor will make every effort to accommodate special needs. However, to ensure that evaluation of student performance in the course is conducted in a manner that is fair to all students, special accommodations will not be granted in the absence of ODS certification.