Syllabus
37:575:313:90
Technological Change and the World of Work

Online 15 weeks format

Instructor

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Office hours on campus by appointment in advance

Catalog Description

The application of computer and microchip technologies couples with enormous range and flexibility of developing telecommunications systems and their effect on workers, labor unions, industry, and labor management relations.

Course Objectives

This course provides an overview of different issues relating to how technological developments change the nature of the world of work and how the demands of work can also shape the kinds of technological progress that a society makes. At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify various theoretical frameworks for analyzing the inter-relationships and inter-dependencies between new technologies and the workplace and perform a critical analysis of a real world technology adoption and its impact on a particular organization or group of workers.
- Describe some of the historical patterns of how new technologies shape the workplace for specific social groups.
- Given information about a new technology being used in a contemporary workplace, students should be able to identify potential points of conflict and change in that workplace’s hierarchy, ethical decision making, etc.

Required Readings

There is one required book for the course.


Additional readings as listed in class schedule below. Most readings are available from either the Doc Sharing tab or the Webliography tab in the course shell (http://ecollege.rutgers.edu).
Class Schedule

Week 1: 9/2-9/7 - Class Activities

- Introduction / Syllabus Review
- Syllabus and Policies Review
- Introductions discussion
- Course resources review
- Discussion: What role does technology play in the creation of economic and social inequality?

Readings:

- Rutgers Plagiarism Policy Materials: [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers) also [http://libguides.rutgers.edu/content.php?pid=156454&sid=3294037](http://libguides.rutgers.edu/content.php?pid=156454&sid=3294037)

What's Due:

- Online quiz to ascertain prevailing ideas about the inter-relationship of technology and work, previous research experience, etc. – due before Friday, January 31

Week 2: 9/8-9/14 - Class Activities

- Are rising levels of inequality in the U.S. related to technological innovation?
- In what ways is the U.S. economy becoming more unequal?
- How does technology play a role in this process and are there more factors at work?
- What are some of the underlying assumptions in this question?
- Discussion: Is the under-performance of the U.S. economy in creating jobs during the recovery from the related to the adoption of new technologies in the workplace? Given the complexity of factors contributing to rising levels of inequality, what would be some reasonable steps to take as a worker? As a student? As a voter? As an employer?

Readings


What’s Due:

- Book choice posting – due before Tuesday, September 9th

Week 3: 9/15-9/21 - Class Activities

- Exploring the relationship of technological change to changes in the workforce
- Video: Hans Rosling and the miracle of the washing machine
• Introduction of the book project requirements
• Discussion: what’s your book about?

Readings

• Craft of Research, chapters 1-3

Week 4: 9/22-9/28 - Class Activities

• Historical perspectives on the inter-relationship between technology and work
• The newness of words, where does “technology” come from?
• Overview of key episodes in human history where technology changes work patterns, rise of agriculture, introduction of printing press, Industrial Revolution, etc.
• Video: Kevin Kelly, Ted talk
• Discussion: Is technology historically what makes us human?

Readings

• Craft of Research, chapters 4-6

What’s Due:

• “Book questions” write up – due on Sunday, September 28

Week 5: 9/29-10/5 - Class Activities

• Supporting our arguments with evidence
• Guest: Julie Moscinski, Library Director, Carey Library
• Doing better research: how to make more effective use of the resources available from the Rutgers Libraries to provide better evidence for arguments.
• Using APA citations exercise: what are citations, what task do they perform, and how have they changed with technological changes in information production?
• Activity: Looking at census information to see how jobs in your town in NJ have changed over 70, 100, and 140 years.

Readings

• Census data packets, available from eCollege course shell, additional census information is available from ancestry.com or the Rutgers libraries.
• APA review, available from https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/664/1/
• Craft of Research, chapters 7-10

Week 6: 10/6-10/12 - Class Activities

• Diffusion of Innovations
• What is diffusion theory? What particular aspects of technology adoption (or non-adoption) affect the workplace and the workforce?
• Research project check in activity, determining the submission requirements for the initial data delivery of primary source material.
Readings


What's Due:

- Short paper on Census Project – due Sunday, October 12

Week 7: 10/13-10/19 - Class Activities

- **Quiz #1 / Theoretical Perspectives as Tools**
  - Quiz #1 to be taken on Sunday, October 19th between 3 and 9 p.m.
  - New data, new tools exercise

Readings


Week 8: 10/20-10/26 - Class Activities

- **Frameworks for analyzing the interactions between technology, society, and work**
  - How do theories of technology help us to understand how society/work and technology shape each other?
  - Labor process theory, SCOT theory, technological determinism
  - Discussion: What's a theory good for anyway? Using theories to try to make sense of new situations.

Readings


Week 9: 10/27-11/2 - Class Activities

- **IT and Work: New relationships between workers and employers**
  - Outsourcing and the changing demographics of who is affected
  - The “gig” economy
  - Discussion: Inequity, worker protection, and new forms of employment.

Readings


What's Due:

- Preliminary Bibliography – due Sunday, November 2
Week 10: 11/3-11/9 - Class Activities

- Creating new positions and destroying old ones
- How do job types get created and re-created? The case of teachers.
- Deskill and different-skilling: the case of early computer programmers.
- What kinds of jobs are being created around us today? The case of drone pilots.
- Discussion: What are some examples of new jobs created by technology? What do you think the chances are that you will work in one? Are new job categories more desirable? Why or why not?

Readings


What's Due:

- Draft argument – due Sunday, November 9

Week 11: 11/10-11/16 - Class Activities

- Quiz #2 / Gender and Work and Technology
- Quiz #2 to be taken online on Sunday, November 16 between 3 and 9 p.m.
- Discussion: How do jobs get identified as being “men's” or “women's” work and how does technology play into this process?
- More work for mother: technology and housework and women’s roles.

Readings


Week 12: 11/17-11/23 - Class Activities

- Gender, Technology, and Work
- Discussion: Women and work in IT-rich environments.

Readings


What's Due:

- Optional Paper draft submission due Sunday, November 23rd

Week 13: 11/24-11/30 - Class Activities

- The blurring lines between the personal and the professional, between home and work
• When did leisure become a commonplace in U.S. society? How did unions assist in the creation of this change? What role did U.S. industry play?
• Employee monitoring through technology: the company town writ large.
• Discussion: Telecommuting and the creation of new forms of work.
• Review activity: What makes a good presentation? What are some effective strategies for presenting your research findings?

Readings


Weeks 14 & 15: 12/1-12/10 - Class Activities

• Presentations of Research Project Findings
• Reflections on the course: what can we say about the role of technological change in the workplace?

What's Due:

• Book Project Paper – due Tuesday, December 2
• Book Project Presentations – due Friday, December 5
• Reflection assignment – due Wednesday, December 10

**Methods of Assessment**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30% Class Participation and online activities</td>
<td>Quality of responses, timeliness of responses, following of directions and, where applicable, complete and timely submission of deliverables to drop-boxes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10% Census Project Short Paper</td>
<td>Clarity of writing, support of argument with evidence from both a primary and a secondary source, and correct use of APA citation format to cite sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>25% Quiz #1 and #2</td>
<td>Quality of answers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5% Initial assignments for the Research Project</td>
<td>Timeliness of submission, clarity of writing, following of directions for the assignment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Book Project Preliminary Bibliography</td>
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<td>Book Project</td>
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Presentation on December 5\textsuperscript{th} (25% of project grade) Reflection assignment due on December 10\textsuperscript{th} (5% of project grade)

Things I care about when it comes to the Class Participation portion of the grade:

- Ultimately, being in a class entails responsibilities: to yourself, to your instructor and to your classmates. I use Class Participation as part of your final grade so that I can encourage you to engage in behaviors likely to produce good outcomes for you and for the class as a whole. I do not intend it as an “E for effort” approach, consequently I am spelling out what matters to me when I am assessing this portion of your grade. Please do not consider this as an invitation to lobby me at the end of the class to change my mind about your devotion to the subject; for me the largest part of this grade is actually very straightforward.
- Class Participation includes doing the intellectual work of the class, which means doing the readings and coming to class prepared to participate in discussions and activities each week. Consequently, even if your reasons are very, very good for missing class meetings this is ultimately not excusable. Missing more than three class meetings, ignoring online activities such as discussion threads or wiki reviews, or coming to class unprepared for any reason less than hospitalization will drive this portion of your grade to a 70 or lower.
- If you miss an in class graded assignment such as a quiz or a presentation, anything short of a well-documented medical emergency will result in a 0 for that assignment.
- Late work policy: If you have extraordinary circumstances that you know about in advance, please reach out to me via email and we will see if accommodations can be arranged with regards to turning in assignments late. If work is turned in late without agreed to accommodations in place, you can expect a 5 to 10 point deduction from the assignment grade for each day late.
- If you expect to be unavailable due to illness or family emergency, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.
- If you need to miss class work for religious observances you will be required to make up all class work immediately; expect that failure to complete the coursework makeup in a timely fashion will impact your Class Participation grade.
- If you have difficulties logging into the eCollege server, you should contact help@ecollege.rutgers.edu, or phone one of their help lines - (732) 932-4702 is generally the best one to try – to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. You are expected to be checking in with the course shell every 2-3 days throughout the semester. Not logging in to the server to complete assignments or download readings will result in a lower Class Participation grade, so I expect that you will resolve any problems quickly.
### Written Work Guidelines

These guidelines must be followed for all assignments and papers. Papers that do not meet these standards will be returned to the student for resubmission before grading, and the grade will be marked down.

- All homework assignments must be posted to the course shell’s dropbox on or before the date on which they are due.
- All assignments posted to should have your last name and the assignment title as part of the file name (i.e., muller_final_paper.doc not muller.doc or paper.doc)
- Late work will be marked down 5 points per day late unless the student has obtained permission of the professor to submit the work late (in the case of illness, etc.) **prior to the due date**.
- I will usually be using Turnitin.com on the dropboxes for most assignments longer than 500 words. If the Turnitin search fails to produce a report, it is the responsibility of the student to upload a second copy of the file.
- Assignments are to be in 12-point type, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with at least 1” margins on all sides of the paper, with pages numbered.
- You must have your name on the first page of the assignment. I do not typically need a title page.
- Brevity and clarity are highly valued attributes for all reports and assignments. I’m serious about staying within the word counts posted for the assignments, if you’re more than 10% high or low on the required word count in the assignment description expect to see deductions between 5 to 10 points taken off of your grade.
- Papers are to be free from spelling, grammatical, and typographical errors – use spell checker and grammar checker and having someone else do a second read of your work for clarity is recommended. Please proofread carefully before submitting.
- **Appropriate use of references is required for all assignments.**
- Bibliographical citations must use the APA format. Some examples of the APA format for print and electronic citations are available from the Purdue University Online Writing Lab, [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/sources/reference.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/sources/reference.html) and the Cornell Univeristy Library [http://www.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/apa.html](http://www.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/apa.html)

### Quiz Guidelines

There are a number of online quizzes in this course, comprising about a third of the total course grade. These quizzes are primarily short answer/fill in the blank questions with one essay per quiz, and will be given three times during the semester. They are cumulative in nature; anything on an early quiz is fair game for a later quiz.

To perform well on this portion of the course:

- Plan to use the full hour available to work on the quiz.
- Make sure you are available for at least that hour during the “window” you will have for each quiz.
- Also make sure you have access to a hard-wired connection to take the quiz on.

### Statement on Plagiarism
I want to make it very clear that plagiarism is not tolerated by either the University or myself. If you have questions on what exactly constitutes plagiarism, a good place to start is the Rutgers Plagiarism Policy listed in this syllabus. If you still have questions, please make an appointment with the Writing Program for a tutorial on the subject, review the Rutgers University Libraries tutorials linked in the Webliography of the course shell or make an appointment to talk to me during office hours.

For my purposes while grading I do periodically check sentences and phrases without citation against several different search engines. If they come back with hits I read further on to see if the material has been substantially lifted from an online source and I also employ turnitin.com to determine if there has been significant copying. If this is the case, I consider this an act of direct plagiarism.

If there are major ideas in your work which are not ideas you thought up they should be appropriately cited. If they are not, even if they are substantially re-worded, I would consider this an act of indirect plagiarism.

If you are detected in an act of direct plagiarism, your grade for the project in question will be a zero and your grade for the course will be an F. Needless to say you will also be subject to any additional penalties the department and school choose to issue.

If you are detected in the act of indirect plagiarism, your grade for the project will lose 5-10 points for each instance I find. If more than three instances are found, I will consider it to be an act of direct plagiarism and the penalties listed above apply.

### Accessibility

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form).