Course Title: Philosophy of Technology
Course Code: PHI 534
Recommended Study Year: -
No. of Credits/Term: 3
Mode of Tuition: Lecture and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours: 3 hours
Category in Major Programme: Philosophical Thinking
Prerequisite(s): -
Co-requisite(s): -
Exclusion(s): -
Exemption Requirement(s): -

Brief Course Description
In this course we will examine the social phenomenon of technology from a philosophical angle. Among the questions discussed will be (1) the question of the exact relationship between a particular society, its institutions, and its technologies; (2) How technologies shape our way of thinking and our perception of the truth; (3) Ethical questions posed by technology, for example whether and how technology affects democracy, or the consequences of the technological divide between technology users and parties which are, for various reasons, excluded from using them.

Aims
The course aims at:

- Providing students with an understanding of some of the main directions in technology studies and the philosophy of technology.
- Presenting some of the classical discussions and arguments related to the relationship between technology and society.
- Enabling students to understand the relationship between technology, science, truth, and self-perception in a historical context.
- Enabling students to understand central moral and political implications of technology, particularly the influence of technology on democracy and issues concerning the technological divide.
- Enabling students to question their own conceptions of technology in an informed, argumentative way.
- Providing students with a broader view of the subject, which, besides Western theories of technology, includes Luddism and classical Eastern approaches to technology.

Learning Outcomes
After completing this course, students will be able to:

- appraise the main influences of technology on the development of cultural traditions and patterns of thought
- evaluate critically the influence of particular technologies on society and the reverse influence of society on technological design
- reflect on the moral and political implications of technology, and to alternative evaluations of its usefulness and the dangers posed by it

Indicative Content

Part I – What is Technology?
1. Introduction – History of Technology (Overview).

**Part II – Technology and Human Thought**
5. The Bureaucracy of the Mind.
7. Cybernetics, the Epistemology of Radical Constructivism, and its Influence on the Theory of Technology.
8. Philosophical Luddism.
9. Eastern Approaches to Technology.

**Part III – Moral and Political Dimensions of Technology**
10. Technology and Ethics.
11. The Technological Divide.
12. Technology and Democracy (1).
13. Technology and Democracy (2).
14. Does the Future Need Us?

**Teaching Method**
Each session of 3 hours will be divided into 3 parts. Depending on the topic, the parts will include a student presentation, class discussion, lecture, tutorials, small groups assignments, and essay writing. Students keep a journal throughout the course, in which they collect their assignments and notes, and which is later used for grading.

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes**
1. Students will discuss on assigned topics in the tutorials. They are expected to be able to reflect deeply and in an informed manner on the issues related to the session's topic.
2. Students will write a term paper. They are expected to be able to integrate what they have learned in class with their own research in news and scholarly publications in order to apprehend concrete situations. The paper will assess students' understanding of the classical debates of the philosophy of technology, and their own critical evaluation of them.
3. In the class discussions and discussions of journal entries, students will show their appreciation and reflection upon the contributions of other students.

**Assessment**
Attendance and in-class participation: 30%
Student journal with assignments/essays: 20%
Presentation: 20%
Final paper: 30%

**Required Readings (Selections)**


Supplementary Readings


Krippendorf, Klaus. "Cybernetics's Reflexive Turns." Cybernetics and Human Knowing, Vol. 15, No. 3-4, 2008. Available at: http://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1135&context=asc_papers


