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 for a given semester.

Feel free to contact the Psychology Advising Office for any questions regarding psychology courses either by email (psychadvising@osu.edu) or phone (614.292.5750).

Thank you!
Psychology 5620: Technology, Efficiency, and Happiness

Class:
3 credit hours
Course number: 33034 (Undergraduates) and 33033 (Graduates)

Overview of the Course

This course will examine various ways of evaluating behavioral aspects of new technologies (e.g., mobile communication devices, social media, social robots, transportation innovations, sports equipment). Many new products seem like they might improve our lives through increased efficiency, convenience, or power in performing specific tasks. However, it is difficult to predict whether new technology will make us happy, enhance social interactions, increase creativity, or generally improve our quality of life. Technology often has hidden costs and benefits such as unexpected effects on cultural manners, new forms of distributed cognition and social cooperation, increased multi-tasking, and destabilizing environmental impacts. This course will consider many behavioral dimensions of technology that may impact decisions about designing, choosing, and using new devices. Graduate and upper level undergraduate students from all departments are welcome.

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 13, November 15. 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.
   a. A one-paragraph description of your tentative paper topic is due on Thursday of Week 3, Sept. 6.
   b. A one-page description of your paper topic is due by Thursday of Week 6, Sept. 27.
c. The full paper is due no later than Tuesday of Week 11, Oct. 30. 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. 7, 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%). The approximate overall course grading scale is A (90% and higher), B (80 – 89%), C (70-79%), D (60-69%). Grades for each assignment will be posted on Carmen (Canvas) and will be averaged numerically to determine the overall course grade.

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. 6 -- Provide a tentative title and a one-paragraph description of your paper topic.

Week 6: Thursday, Sept. 27 -- Provide the title and a 1-page description of your paper topic.

Weeks 11-16: Tuesday, Oct. 30 (or earlier) – 10-page paper is due. Oral presentations.

Week 13: Thursday, Nov. 15 -- Midterm exam.

Week 17: Friday, Dec. 7, : Oral presentations and final discussion of the course. (This is the time reserved for the final exam.)

The required readings for this course (with one exception) are available electronically on Carmen (Canvas).

1. Efficiency, complexity, and multi-tasking (Weeks 1-2)
Cell phones: Multiple dimensions of technology

Cognitive constraints


*Cultural constraints


Emergency communication


*Usability and complexity

Physical constraints: Speed, accuracy, and muscular stress


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 and distributed cognition*


*Media effects on conceptual thinking and communication*


4. Environmental impact (Weeks 7-8)


*Sport utility vehicles, trucks, and the car culture


*Voluntary simplicity


5. Social Impact (Weeks 9-11)

Luddites and cultural disruption


*Internet


*Sports: Technology and culture


Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic
misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12--31--07.pdf.

Students with disabilities

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.