

Science, Technology & Modern Life

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Spring 2020 HUMA 2595

Science, Technology and Modern Life

Meeting Times: Wed & Fri, 16:30-17:50 Rm. 4503

Instructor: Prof. Jenny Leigh Smith (hmsmith@ust.hk)

Teaching Assistant: Dennis Prooi (dprooi@connect.ust.hk)

Canvas Website:

Instructor office: Rm 2378

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 PM Wed & Fri and by appt.

This course provides cultural and historical context to ethical dilemmas that have occurred in the history of 20th century science & engineering, including the decision to drop the atomic bomb, the rise and regulation of the pharmaceuticals industry, high-profile failures of space exploration vehicles, and the rise of surveillance technologies.

Grading:

- Participation (Question of the Day): 20%
- Reading Quizzes (4): 24% (to be administered online)
- Group or Solo Project: 20% (to be presented online or in person)
- Book/ Article Review: 16%
- Final: 20%

Ground Rules:

- There is a participation grade, not an attendance grade. As such, please don't bother with doctor's notes, etc...
- Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will not be tolerated in this class. They violate institute regulations. Learn more about HKUST's policies: <http://tl.ust.hk/integrity/student-1.html> [Links to an external site.](#)
- While your texts are largely available for free online through canvas, occasionally students will need to access a film that is behind a paywall. This paywall may require an online payment. These are required assignments and you are expected to pay for them, just as you would a textbook or other course materials.

Learning Outcomes: In this course students will...

- Gain an understanding of topics in the history of science, technology & engineering
- Improve knowledge about current issues and debates in the history of science & technology
- Understand, synthesize, and analyze major themes and debates in the topic
- Work individually and as a team to produce well-researched and in-depth final projects

Class format: For Spring 2020 this class adopts a mixed format where students will listen to a pre-recorded lecture or video associated with the course content, and then convene during the originally assigned classtime via Zoom with the professor and other students for an interactive recap and question and answer session. Since

a significant part of the student's grade depends on participating in these Q&A sessions, students should plan to attend each Zoom session. Until April 20, the Zoom session is the only option. Late April classes will have the option once a week of meeting for an in person classroom session. Online classwork and Zoom meetings will continue.

Module I: science, technology & ethics

Wednesday, February 19: course intro, technology, modern warfare and ethics

Friday, February 21: Ethics in wartime: Guernica, Unit 731, Nuremburg

Wednesday, February 26: Ethics in Medicine: Tuskegee, Leper colonies

Friday, February 28: Ethics in Wartime: Guatemala Syphilis experiments, Agent Orange and Tear Gas

Wednesday, March 4: Quiz overview and Tuskegee Experiment

Friday, March 6: Quiz #1 and sign up for presentations

Module II: Science, Technology & Psychology

Wednesday, March 11: Stanley Milgram and revisions to his conclusions

Friday, March 13: Ron Jones and the Stanford Prison Experiment

Wednesday, March 18: Panopticons

Friday, March 20: Surveillance in the 21st Century

Wednesday, March 25:

Friday March 27: Quiz for Module II

Module III: Normal Accidents and Unintended Consequences

April 1: What is a Normal Accident?	April 3: Risk and Nuclear Semiotics
April 8: Unintended Consequences	April 10: Unintended Consequences: case studies
April 15: Risk Society	
Module IV: Sorting things out	April 17: Systems of classification
April 22:	April 24:
April 29: the ownership of life	(April 30-May 6: student presentations)
Module V: Biopolitics	May 1: Holiday: no class
May 6: Quiz on Modules 3 & 4	May 8: biological citizenship
May 13: self-optimization	May 15: Quiz on Module V
Final: Date will be announced soon	