Course website:  http://sociology.morrisville.edu/2014/spring/sts101

Syllabus

STS 101: The Values of Science and Technology
An Introduction to STS (Science, Technology and Society)
Professor Kurt Reymers, Ph.D.

Course Description:
This course explores ethical, social, political, and religious issues associated with science and technology. For many people, the practice of science is the pursuit of knowledge, while the application of technology involves tools that may have a positive impact on society, depending upon the actions of those using them. Students in this course will analyze contemporary challenges to those views, through the use of case studies and theoretical investigations (including fiction and film). The course will confront both science and technology with questions about knowledge, expertise, progress, and neutrality. By the end of the class, students should have a richer perspective on the values and challenges of science and technology within society.

Prerequisite: “C” or better in ENGL 101; Pre- or Co-requisite: Lab science. 3 credits (3 lecture hours)(spring semester)

Course Outcomes and Objectives:
Course outcomes for the student offer the ability to:
• Examine and differentiate approaches to scientific practice;
• Evaluate the explanatory power of these approaches as they apply to science's impact on society;
• Analyze the dialectical relationship between social values and scientific knowledge, along with the dialectic between political power and technological systems;
• Critique the concept of progress with regard to both science and technology;
• Construct a position with regard to the place science and technology should occupy in society.

The chief course objective is to introduce you to the STS perspective, a critical body of work that examines science and technology from a point of view typical of the fields of philosophical, historical, political and social method and theory. From this perspective, science and technology practices can be seen as consistent with social practices and values. While the values and the forms of science and technology may change from society to society and time to time, they always coexist. Becoming familiar with the social study of science and technology should be your objective in taking this course. This will take place through the examination of several issues related to this type of study, such as: How do we distinguish science from non-science (e.g., religion), and what are the implications of this distinction? What are common perceptions of science and technology? Does science reveal nature, or construct a version of nature? In what ways is science a social practice? Is technology neutral or progressive? What might it mean for technology to embody a politics? What impacts do science and technology have on ethical questions and answers? These are the types of questions that will sponsor discussion and debate.

Required Books and Resources:
• Purchase the following book: (available at the College Bookstore or from a reliable online bookseller):
• You are responsible for collecting, downloading, viewing, printing and/or accessing all resources that are provided in handout form, or as URLs, links, and/or videos; be prepared to monitor the course webpage for a list of required readings/viewings;
• Other articles and websites will also offer recommended readings, but you will be responsible only purchasing the above book. You are also required to bring your books to class when requested, to bring some paper for notes, a pen/pencil, and a critical mind with questions that contribute to discussion and debate.
• You will need a notebook and writing implement. Bring it to every class session.
Grades:

Debates (20%)
Several in-class debates will be organized throughout the semester and you will be assigned to a debate team. Every team should have at least two chances to debate. The schedule of debates will appear on the course website. Teams will be reminded to prepare using the available resources prior to Debate Days. Points will be accrued for using principles of logic and good argument, as covered in the lecture, regarding the topic of each debate.

Exams (30%)
Two exams will be made up of a variety of questions based on the course material covered in the preceding weeks. Study early and be prepared! You are not allowed to use any books, notes or materials during the exam. Each exam is worth 15% the final grade.

Writing Assignments (30%)
Several writing exercises will be assigned and graded on a letter basis. You will be responsible for sending your writing assignments electronically. More information and the guidelines and instructions for writing assignments will be outlined on the course website.

STS Symposium Project (10%)
The Annual STS Symposium takes place in the STUAC Theater on the third Thursday in April (April 21st this year) and focuses on issues relevant to STS. This year the theme is “Monsters: Killer Robots, Mad Scientists and Abominations.” A multimedia project, the details about which will appear on the course website, will be 10% of your final grade.

Participation (10%)
Ten percent of the participation grade will be based on your attendance in class. You have two absences available to you without penalty, but unused absences are credited toward your participation. See the Class Policies section for more information regarding attendance.

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<tr>
<th>Grade Distribution:</th>
<th>Asking about grades:</th>
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<tr>
<td>20% of grade: Debates</td>
<td>Feel free to ask your professor in person about your grade in the course at any point during the semester. However, I will not respond to email messages inquiring about specific grades on semester exams, papers, or (particularly) the final exam. This is due to the fact that email is not a confidential medium.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30% of grade: Exams</td>
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<td>30% of grade: Writing Assignments</td>
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<td>10% of grade: STS Symposium Class Project</td>
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<td>10% of grade: Attendance</td>
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<td>General Percent / Letter / Grade Point Converter:</td>
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<tr>
<td>93 to 100 = A = 4.0</td>
<td>90 to 92 = A- = 3.67</td>
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<td>83 to 86 = B = 3.0</td>
<td>80 to 82 = B- = 2.67</td>
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<td>73 to 76 = C = 2.0</td>
<td>70 to 72 = C- = 1.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>63 to 67 = D = 1.0</td>
<td>62 and below = F = 0.0</td>
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Class Policies:

Class Participation and Attendance
Students should make every attempt to attend all classes. Missing any more than two classes impedes your work and may result in a lower grade. Attendance is taken daily and recorded. There is no such thing as an “excused absence.” The three absences allowed are for athletic events, illness, injuries, accidents etc.: it is expected that the three absences allowed will satisfactorily cover these cases. If they do not, please meet with the instructor to explain your case. If and only if you have more than three absences, documented emergencies must be given to me in writing (not by e-mail or verbal agreement) for me to consider removal of the absence from your record. If you have fewer than three absences, your unused absences will be returned to your grade (providing up to a 2 point bonus for 0 absences). Repeated tardiness and absences will be reported to your academic Dean.
Academic Behavior and Honesty

- You are attending class in a college classroom designed specifically to help you seek knowledge. It is not your living room. It is not the lunchroom. Taking cell phone calls or checking text messages, eating, sleeping, reading outside material, working on other classes’ assignments, using a laptop computer, etc., are examples of unacceptable classroom behavior. Talking in class is ok – however, it should relate directly to the class conversation, should take the form of civilized argument or a relevant question, and should never preempt another speaker (one speaker at a time, please).

- Note-taking is a strongly encouraged behavior for which you will be rewarded. Note for laptop/cell users: you will be marked absent for the day if you are found to have your laptop computer running or are on your cell phone (even “just checking messages”) during class time, no matter how briefly. The only exceptions are made for bona fide learning disability needs for laptop note-taking.

- Arriving late disrupts the class, as does leaving early – anyone showing up more than 15 minutes after the start of class, or leaving the classroom during class (with the exception of emergencies only) will be asked to leave, marked absent, and not be permitted to (re)enter the classroom again that day. Every two instances of tardiness will translate into an absence marked off of your attendance of the class.

- Academic honesty promotes continued academic and occupational success. Maintenance of academic honesty and quality education is the responsibility of both faculty and students. Any written assignment (including all electronic media) submitted by a student must be original authorship. Representation of another’s work as his or her own shall constitute plagiarism. See the student handbook for more information.

Plagiarism means theft of intellectual property, obtained from a print or electronic medium. A person has plagiarized if s/he quotes three or more words in sequence from a source and (1) doesn’t use quotation marks (“The quick brown fox…”), and (2) doesn’t identify the source (what is known as “citation”). A person has also plagiarized if s/he records or cites ideas, information, or other material from a source that is not identified, or if the individual paraphrases information from a source that is not acknowledged. Potential penalties for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the college. Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse for plagiarism.

Late/Make-up Assignment Policy

Make-up exams will not be given, unless you make arrangements with me more than 48 hours (2 days) in advance of the exam. If you miss an exam without making arrangements to make it up, you will receive NO CREDIT for that particular exam. Papers handed in late will accrue a letter grade reduction and will be due no later than ONE WEEK after they are originally due. You cannot make up any debates. I do not give extra credit assignments to individuals – any extra credit will be on a class-wide basis (and there is no guarantee of ANY extra credit assignments in any given semester).

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability, who wishes to use academic accommodations you should do the following:

1. Speak with me during the first two weeks of class. (The two week time frame is to encourage students to arrange accommodations early in the semester. Students with disabilities may use accommodations at any point during the semester.)

2. Talk with David Symonds, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities to arrange your test accommodations. You may email him at symondda@morrisville.edu, or visit him (by appointment, please) at the Academic Enrichment Center (Library).

Using Test Accommodations

If you wish to use test accommodations for an exam please speak with me the class before each exam. Doing this will help me to accommodate you. All tests must be completed the same day the test is scheduled. Any other arrangements must be made by agreement between the student and the instructor.