SCI 199Y L0161
The Impact of Society Upon Computers
2005 – 2006

The introduction of computers, new types of computers, or new software into an arena often causes dramatic changes. That is the impact of computers upon society.

But there is always someone who is inserting computers into a particular situation to accomplish some purpose; it doesn't happen by itself. In fact, a particular computing technology is originally developed (invented) because someone wants to accomplish something with that technology. This is the impact of society upon computers.

This course will explore the impact of society upon aspects of computing technology and its precursors, from previous centuries through the present. Computing technologies have been developed to serve the purposes of war, social planning, the suppression of certain groups, the empowerment of suppressed groups, societal stratification, basic science, communication, and many other endeavours. Sometimes technological research directions are determined by what is physically possible; but often people make explicit choices of what technologies to use and to develop. Societies throughout time and space have differed in what is commonly believed to be possible, desirable, or inevitable, with regards to computing technology just as with all other matters.

Lecturer: Alan J Rosenthal
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Lectures: Tuesdays, 3:10-5:00, SS 621

Lecturer office hours during the fall term:
        Mondays, 4:30-5:30, and Tuesdays, 12:30-1:30, or by appointment.
In my office in BA 4234. We may move to a larger room sometimes, in which case I will leave a note on my door.

Office hours for the winter term to be announced (probably the same).

Course web page: http://www.dgp.toronto.edu/~ajr/199/

Tutorials: Thursdays starting Sept 22, 3:10-4:00, SS 621

Grading scheme:
        15% for class participation in lecture time
        15% for class participation in tutorial time
        10% for debates and other activities in tutorial time
        Fall term project:
                10% class presentation
                10% written project (submitted by mid-January)
        Winter term project:
                10% class presentation
                10% written project (submitted by the end of classes)
        5% each for four short reports / critiques (submitted by the end of October, end of the fall term,
                                end of the week after reading week, and end of March, respectively)

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Plagiarism warning

Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's creative work as your own. If you submit a report or essay containing someone else's work, this constitutes the academic offence of plagiarism and will be taken very seriously!

Students have been prosecuted and convicted for handing in work written for hire, written by personal tutors, copied from the web, or just a bit too much text borrowed from a friend. Possible penalties range up to expulsion from the university.

Note that it is also an academic offence to assist others in committing plagiarism.