

STV 305: Technology, Society and the Modern City

Section 1; Winter 2021
Online version

Instructor

Dr. Cameron Shelley
Email via Learn

Description

Cities may be humanity's most significant invention, where we shape our vision of the civilized life. At the same time, the demands of cities shape our lives in fundamental ways. As most of humanity now lives in cities, the technology of city living increasingly is the technology of human life itself. The purpose of this course is to examine the technology of civilized life, with the city itself as both a socio-technical system and a scene of technological living. A variety of topics are explored, including food, transport, cars, buildings, urban planning, energy, sanitation, information technology, and sustainability. Emphasis is placed on materials pertinent to Canada.

Class format is discussion-based, so students must come to classes prepared to discuss assigned readings.

Prereq: Level at least 3A or any 100- or 200-level STV course

Objectives

Completion of the course should enable students to:

- Identify and describe cities as socio-technical systems;
- Critique theories of technological progress in cities;
- Recognize how technologies interact in urban settings;
- Analyze social implications of city technologies from a values perspective.

Materials

There is no textbook for this course. Materials will be placed on library reserve or the course LEARN site as required.

Schedule

Weeks.	Dates.	Topics or <i>Events</i> .	Discussions.	Summaries.
Week 1.	January 11–15.	Introduction.	1 & 2.	1.
Week 2.	January 18–22.	Food & transport.	2 & 3.	2.
Week 3.	January 25–29.	Cars.	3 & 1.	3.
Week 4.	February 1–5.	<i>Essay 1.</i>	n/a.	n/a.
Week 5.	February 8–12.	Buildings.	1 & 2.	1.
Week 6.	February 15–19.	<i>Reading week.</i>	n/a.	n/a.
Week 7.	February 22–26.	Urban planning.	2 & 3.	2.
Week 8.	March 1–5.	Energy.	3 & 1.	3.
Week 9.	March 8–12.	<i>Essay 2.</i>	n/a.	n/a.
Week 10.	March 17–19.*	Sanitation.	1 & 2..	1.
Week 11.	March 22–26.	Sustainability.	2 & 3.	2.
Week 12.	March 29–2.	Infocomm.	3 & 1.	3.
Week 13.	April 5–9.	<i>Essay 3.</i>	n/a.	n/a.

*Abbreviated week.

Evaluation

- Discussions 30%
- Self-assessments 5%
- Summaries 5%
- News 10%
- Essays 50%

Discussions and self-assessments

Each discussions week, some students will be assigned to discuss that week's readings on discussion boards on the course Learn site. Each student assigned to discussions is to complete a brief self-assessment upon their completion. Details will be provided in a separate hand-out. NB. All students are encouraged to participate in all discussions but only students assigned to a particular discussion will be graded for their participation in it.

Summaries

Each discussions week, each member of a designated student group is to provide a summary of that week's readings. Each summary is to be posted early to that week's discussion board on the course Learn site to help get discussion started. Details will be provided in a separate hand-out.

News

Each discussions week, students not assigned to discussion of that week's readings are to collaborate on a brief summary of a news article related to the week's topic, as designated by the instructor. Details will be provided in a separate hand-out.

Essays

Each student is to submit three essays in response to questions chosen from lists designated by the instructor. The deadline for each essay will be 11:59 pm of the last day of week designated in the schedule above. Details will be provided in a separate hand-out.

NB. Each student's lowest essay mark will be dropped from the calculation of their final grade.

Workflow

For all non-essay weeks, classwork will follow the scheme below:

Monday.	Tuesday.	Wednesday.	Thursday.	Friday.	Saturday.	Sunday.
n/a.	Discussions.				n/a.	n/a.
n/a.	News.				n/a.	n/a.
n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	n/a.	Self-assessments.	n/a.	

Deadlines are all at 11:59pm of the final day of the period given. Deadlines will be extended a day in cases of conflict with civic holidays.

It is each student's own responsibility to track and honour all deadlines that apply to them.

Late submissions

Late submissions for evaluation are not accepted except on grounds of illness, religious observance, or service interruptions. See the University Policies section below. In such cases, contact the instructor within 48 hours of the missed deadline in order to discuss alternative arrangements.

Communications

Announcements

The *Announcements* widget on the course Learn page is used during the term to communicate new or changing information regarding due dates, instructor absence, etc., as needed. Students are expected to read the announcements on a regular basis.

To ensure you are viewing the complete list of announcements, you may need to click "Show All Announcements."

Ask the Instructor forum

There is an *Ask the Instructor* forum in the discussions area of the course Learn page. Use this forum when you have a question that may benefit the whole class, such as questions about administration, scheduling, etc. Check this forum if you have such a question as it may have been asked and answered already.

Email

Email the TA or instructor with questions regarding issues specific to yourself, such as your grades, illnesses, and any other questions of a personal nature.

Every effort will be made to check emails each weekday and respond to them within 24 hours. Please include "STV 202" in the subject line.

Appointments

For questions or concerns that warrant complex answers, both the TA (if any) and instructor are available for synchronous consultation via the Virtual Classroom (under the Connect menu) on

Learn, Microsoft Teams, or other means. Contact the TA or instructor to make appropriate arrangements.

Technical support

Technical problems with Learn can be addressed by email at learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca. See the [Learn Help Student Documentation](#) also.

Student resources

Information connected with academic advice, student success, WatCards, Library services, etc., can be found at the [Student Resources website](#).

Writing and Communication Centre

The [Writing and Communication Centre](#) works across all faculties to help students clarify their ideas, develop their voices, and write in the style appropriate to their disciplines. Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence.

The Centre now offers [many services online](#), including: [one-on-one appointments](#), [virtual drop-in appointments](#), [virtual writing cafés](#), [live write-ins](#), [live Instagram Q&As](#), and the [WCC subreddit](#).

I highly recommend this service for students whose English or essay-writing skills are not secure.

University policies

The following sections are University of Waterloo policies that apply to every undergraduate course and should appear on every syllabus. The text is provided directly by the university in most cases.

Final grades

In accordance with [Policy 46 - Information Management](#), the Centre does not release final examination grades or final course grades to students until the examination period ends. Students must go to Quest to see all final grades. Any grades posted in Waterloo LEARN are unofficial. Midterms written in the final week of class are considered final examinations for purposes of this policy.

Academic integrity & discipline

In order to maintain a culture of [academic integrity](#), members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals and grievances

A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71 - Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#). A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt please contact your academic advisor for further assistance.

Students with disabilities

[AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations, please register with AccessAbility at the beginning of each academic term. It is also your responsibility to contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Religious accommodation for tests

Students who require religious accommodation for tests in this course should contact the instructor immediately at the beginning of term and consult the [UW "Examination Regulations and related matters" policy](#).

Service interruptions

Under the [University of Waterloo Service Interruption policy](#), an interruption must usually last four or more hours and/or overlap with a deadline before accommodations are required.

Turnitin

Turnitin.com: Text matching software ([Turnitin®](#)) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

It is the responsibility of each student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.

Coronavirus Information

[Coronavirus Information for Students](#) provides updated information on COVID-19 and guidance for accommodations due to COVID-19.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. We encourage you to seek out mental health supports when they are needed. Please reach out to [Campus Wellness and Counselling Services](#).

We understand that these circumstances can be troubling, and you may need to speak with someone for emotional support. [Good2Talk](#) is a post-secondary student helpline based in Ontario, Canada that is available to all students.

[AccessAbility Services](#)

[AccessAbility Services](#) (A.A.S.) is the University's centralized office for the provision of academic accommodations for students with a known or unknown disability, illness, or condition. Even if students are unsure of whether they qualify for A.A.S. support, an A.A.S. consultant can talk them through next steps, and refer them elsewhere if appropriate.