

Professor Paula Droege  
Office: 242 Sparks Building  
Office hours: Tuesday 11- noon, and by Zoom appointment  
Email: [pdroege@psu.edu](mailto:pdroege@psu.edu)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course considers the relations among technology, society and human nature. We will discuss what technology is, and how humans shape and are shaped by complexity and change. Science fiction provides a look into the future of technology and the puzzles of reality, time, and identity we must face in the years to come.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course grades will be based on two exams or essays (30% each), two quizzes (10% & 5%), a Reflection assignment (5%), and course participation (20%). Exam and essay due dates are noted on the schedule. Exams will be composed of definitions, short answer and essay questions. Those who chose to write an essay or are absent for the exam will submit a 5 page essay. Assignment details will be posted on CANVAS.

Course participation will be based on attendance, class assignments, and the quality of contributions to class discussion, including CANVAS postings. Each absence will be noted, although the main penalty for failure to attend class will be poor performance on exams and essays. Readings are difficult and require careful thought. Assigned reading should be completed before class, and ideally should be read again afterward. Class assignments will be given periodically throughout the semester and will be counted as part of the participation grade. Assignments are graded on a pass/fail basis with an occasional bonus for an exceptionally thoughtful submission. Students MUST bring assigned texts to class for reference.

Grading scale: A 100-93, A- 92-90, B+ 89-87, B 86-83, B- 82-80, C+ 79-77, C 76-70, D 69-60

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Penn State defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20).

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction.

Any questions regarding academic integrity can be directed to Robin Robinson (rmb3@psu.edu) in the Undergraduate office of Liberal Arts, 814-865-2545.

## ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The faculty member is entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing his/her subject. The faculty member is, however, responsible for the maintenance of appropriate standards of scholarship and teaching ability. It is not the function of a faculty member in a democracy to indoctrinate his/her students with ready-made conclusions on controversial subjects. The faculty member is expected to train students to think for themselves, and to provide them access to those materials which they need if they are to think intelligently. Hence, in giving instruction upon controversial matters the faculty member is expected to be of a fair and judicial mind, and to set forth justly, without supersession or innuendo, the divergent opinions of other investigators. No faculty member may claim as a right the privilege of discussing in the classroom controversial topics outside his/her own field of study. The faculty member is normally bound not to take advantage of his/her position by introducing into the classroom provocative discussions of irrelevant subjects not within the field of his/her study. [University Policy HR64; Approved November 27, 1950; Revised January 30, 1987]

## DISABILITY ACCESS

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact Student Disability Resources (814-863-1807). For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Student Disability Resources website: <http://equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources>. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

**Extended Absences:** During your enrollment at Penn State, unforeseen challenges may arise. If you ever need to miss an extended amount of class in such a circumstance, please notify your professor so you can determine the best course of action to make up missed work. If your situation rises to a level of difficulty you cannot manage on your own with faculty support, reach out to the Student Care & Advocacy office by phone at (814-863-2020) or email them at [StudentCare@psu.edu](mailto:StudentCare@psu.edu). Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## COVID PROTOCOLS

Penn State University requires everyone to wear a face mask in all university buildings, including classrooms, regardless of vaccination status. **ALL STUDENTS MUST** wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) while you are indoors on campus. This is to protect your health and safety as well as the health and safety of your classmates, instructor, and the university community. Anyone attending class without a mask will be asked to put one on or leave. Instructors may end class if anyone present refuses to appropriately wear a mask for the duration of class. Students who refuse to wear masks appropriately may face disciplinary action for Code of Conduct violations. If you feel you cannot wear a mask during class, please speak with your adviser immediately about your options for altering your schedule.

## TEXTS

THC = Allenby, Braden R. and Daniel Sarewitz. *The Techno-Human Condition* MIT Press, 2013.

SFP = Schneider, Susan, editor. *Science Fiction and Philosophy: From Time Travel to Superintelligence, Second Edition* Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.

PHIL 107  
SPRING 2022 SCHEDULE

I. What is technology?

WEEK 1

1/11 Introduction

1/13 Sentesy, CANVAS

WEEK 2

1/18 Latour, CANVAS

1/20 Johnson, CANVAS

WEEK 3

1/25 Jonas, CANVAS

1/27 Lepore, CANVAS

\*\*QUIZ\*\*

II. The techno-human condition

WEEK 4

2/1 THC, Ch 1

2/3 THC, Ch 2

WEEK 5

2/8 THC, Ch 3

2/10 THC, Ch 4

WEEK 6

2/15 THC, Ch 5

2/17 THC, Ch 6

WEEK 7

2/22 THC, Ch 7

2/24 THC, Ch 8

WEEK 8

3/1 THC, Epilogue

3/3 THC EXAM

3/5 THC ESSAY DUE

SPRING BREAK 3/7-11

III. Future worlds

WEEK 9

3/15 SFP, Ch 3, 4, 13 Plato, Descartes,  
Clark, & Pollack, CANVAS

3/17 SFP, Ch 5 Chalmers

WEEK 10

3/22 SFP, Ch 24 & 25 Bradbury, Sider

3/24 SFP, Ch 27 Deutsch & Lockwood

WEEK 11

3/29 SFP, Ch 6 & 8 Dennett, Parfit

3/31 SFP, Ch 10 Huemer & Dick "The  
Minority Report"

WEEK 12

4/5 SFP, Ch 12 Asimov, & Dennett,  
CANVAS

4/7 SFP, Ch 14 Clark

WEEK 13

4/12 SFP, Ch 15 Kurzweil

4/14 FUTURE WORLDS EXAM

IV. Epilogue/Prologue

WEEK 14

4/19 Selection from *Warmer* Series

4/21 Okorafor, CANVAS

4/23 FUTURE WORLDS ESSAY DUE

WEEK 15

4/26 Film, "Gattaca"

4/28 QUIZ/Reflections

FINAL EXAMS 5/2-5/6