FYSM 1611C
Democracy and Technology

This course will be held remotely
Course Delivery: **Online Synchronous**
Weekly Class Meeting: Wednesdays at 11:35-14:25

Instructor: Taylor J. Green
Email: taylorj.green@carleton.ca
Office hours: Fridays 11:00-12:00 via Zoom or by appointment through **Brightspace**

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to two concepts in political science: democracy and technology. Technology is a phenomenon often not looked at through the lens of democracy. Is democracy enhanced or hindered by technology? How is democracy changing due to technological innovation? In the age of social media, do we defer to technical experts or become more active and engaged citizens? The goal of this course is to question the tenets of modern technology to understand its lasting impact on democracy.

As a first-year seminar, this course is designed for active learning. We will work together in approaching issues of democracy and technology. The course looks at the history of political thought, which is a subfield of political science referred to as political theory. A brief overview of democracy and political thought is examined to understand different theoretical approaches to what is referred to as the rule of the many throughout history. This course will encourage dialogue on many challenging subjects to improve the student's discussive, interpretive, and analytical skills. This course starts with a brief overview of how democracy has been shaped and contested in history. Then, we move into the second part of the course, which examines technology's theoretical role in modern society. The last part of the course provides a survey of some of key issues in technology today.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- ❖ Critically engage with the concepts of technology and democracy in the modern day and throughout history
- ❖ Develop reading and writing skills for an independent analysis
- ❖ Evaluate argumentative texts through critical interpretation

- ❖ Engage in class debates of modern issues in technology and democracy
- ❖ Assess and contest core issues in political science
- ❖ Compare and contrast key democratic themes in the history of political thought

Required Textbook:

- *Democracy and the History of Political Thought* edited by Patrick N. Cain, Stephen Patrick Sims, and Stephen A. Block (Landham: Lexington, 2021).

- **ONE** book chosen for the Book Review Assignment (see book review assignment details).

The textbook is on order at the Carleton University Bookstore for physical or digital copies. Check the Carleton University Bookstore website for what is available digitally. All other reading materials are available through **Brightspace and Ares**.

Email Policy

Please use the following template to email the course instructor:
Subject Line: FYSM 1611C
Address: Dear Mr. Green or Hello Taylor
Please use your Carleton email
Sign off: Please include your name and Carleton student number

You can expect a reply within 48 hours of your email inquiry. If your email cannot be answered in a short response, please drop by office hours.

Course Evaluation

Assignments:

- a. Critical Reflection 10%.....(Due October 1)
- b. Book Review 20%.............(Due November 3)
- c. Presentation 10%...............(Pick one week to present)
- d. Participation 25%..............(Ongoing)
- e. Final Paper 35%................(Due December 10)

There is no Final Exam for this course

Critical Reflection Assignment (10%)

Choose one chapter in either the required or the recommended reading from Weeks 1-4 from the textbook *Democracy and the History of Political Thought*. Write a 1-2 page double-spaced reflection piece on the chosen chapter and subsequent class discussion. **Due October 1st**.

Book Review Assignment (20%)

Choose **ONE** of the following books (available for purchase online or through Carleton University Bookstore for physical or digital copies):

1. William Magnuson, *Blockchain Democracy: Technology, Law, and the Rule of the Crowd* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

2. Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in an Age of High Technology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

3. David Edward Tabachnick, *The Great Reversal: How We Let Technology Take Control of the Planet* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

4. Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of Biotechnology Revolution* (New York: Picador, 2003).

5. Ray Kurzweil, *The Age of Spiritual Machines: When Computers Exceed Human Intelligence* (London: Penguin, 2000).

Instructions for assignment: First, the student is to acquire and read the entire book. Second, the student is to critically assess the arguments of the book. The student should reflect on what the book is trying to say and summarize the main points. Then, answer some of the following questions in your review: What is the main argument of the book? What evidence does the author use in the chapters to back up their argument? What conclusion does the book come to? Do you agree with the claims of the book? Why or why not? What do the author's conclusions mean for the future of technology or democracy?

4 pages. Double spaced, include title page, consistent referencing. The only reference for this assignment is the chosen book for review. **DUE: November 3rd.** (Late papers will lose 3% per day).

Presentation (10%):

The student is to choose one week during Weeks 5 – 14 of the course to lead the class discussion. The student may be paired up with a partner depending on class enrollment size. For the week of presentation, aim to give a 10-minute presentation on the readings of that week. The student is to

provide a summary of the main arguments and themes of the text, while trying to relate to readings from previous weeks. Focus on keywords and highlight concepts you did not understand to bring up in class for discussion. More instructions to follow in class.

Participation (25%):

Being a First-Year Seminar, the course format is meant to foster student **active learning**. The student's participation must contribute positively to the learning environment. Attending class regularly and demonstrating that you have done the week's reading is essential to receiving a high grade. This class is meant to help you develop arguments and rationalize about current political issues with your classmates. Arrive to class on time having read the required readings to critically discuss the concepts and topics. To be a successful seminar, you play an active role through participation. Attendance to class is mandatory.

Final Paper (35%):

Choose themes from the course and write an essay (7 pages) on how technology impacts democracy. Proper and consistent citations. Using some readings from this course, evaluate themes we have discussed and write an academic paper on technology and democracy. More instructions to follow in class.

Instructions for paper: 7 pages. Please include the following: thesis statement, theoretical evidence, conclusion, double spacing, title page, and consistent referencing. Also include 2 references from the course material and 3 references outside the course material, for a total of at least 5 references. **DUE: December 10th.** (Late papers will lose 3% per day).

Academic Skills Component

Each week in class, the instructor will give a brief academic skills component workshop to help the student with their final paper and with succeeding in academics. These skills components will range from how to read and write at an academic level to constructing a thesis statement with sound arguments as evidence. The skills components will only be covered in live sessions for those students in attendance.

Course Schedule:

Contesting Democracy Through History

In the first weeks we examine how the concept of democracy has been conceptualized and contested throughout history. You will need the textbook starting Week 2:

Week 1: September 8 – Introduction: A Democracy of Corporate and Technical Experts

- ➢ Class introductions
- ➢ Overview of the course structure
- ➢ Review of syllabus

Week 2: September 15 – Ancient and Medieval Democracy

Required Reading: Textbook, Chapters 5 and 8

- ➢ Plato – Chapter 5 – pages 69-86
- ➢ Augustine – Chapter 8 – pages 117-129

Recommended Reading: Aquinas – Chapter 10 – pages 149-157

Academic Skills Component: plagiarism

Week 3: September 22 – Making of Modernity

Required Reading: Textbook, Chapters 13 and 15

- ➢ John Locke – Chapter 13 – pages 201-213
- ➢ Rousseau – Chapter 15 – pages 233-243

Recommended Reading: Machiavelli – Chapter 11 – pages 159-174

Academic Skills Component: referencing

Week 4: September 29 – The American Founding

Required Reading: Textbook, Chapters 19 and 20

- ➢ Madison – Chapter 19 – pages 299-309
- ➢ Jefferson – Chapter 20 – pages 313-326

Recommended Reading: Hamilton – Chapter 18 – pages 281-295

Academic Skills Component: summarizing

Critical Reflection Write-up Due October 1

Technology and Politics

Week 5: October 6 – Crafting Politics

Required Reading:

➢ "Techne and Politeia" in Langdon Winner, *The Whale and the Reactor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) pp. 40-59.

Academic Skills Component: writing a strong thesis statement

Week 6: October 13 – Political Imagination and Technique

Required Reading:

➢ William H. Vanderburg, "Political Imagination in a Technical Age" in *Democratic Theory and Technological Society* edited by Richard B. Day et al. (Routledge, 2015) pp. 3-31.

*Academic Skills Component: Visit from librarian **Aleksandra Blake** to teach about conducting research and using the library*

Week 7: October 20 – Technology and Political Education

Required Reading:

➢ Leah Bradshaw, "Technology and Political Education" in *Techne* vol. 9:1 Fall 2005. https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/SPT/v9n1/pdf/bradshaw.pdf

Academic Skills Component: effective notetaking

Week 8: Fall Reading Week – October 25-29

Week 9: November 3 – The Technological Frame

Required Reading:

➢ David Edward Tabachnick, *The Great Reversal: How we let technology take control of the planet* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013) pp. 96-111.

Academic Skills Component: making an argument

*****Book Review Due November 3*****

Modern Issues in Technology

<u>**Week 10: November 10 – Social-Media and Populism**</u>

Required Reading:

➢ "Social Media, Populism and Regulatory Action" in Petros Isoifidis and Nicholas Nicoli, *Digital Democracy, Social Media and Disinformation* (Routledge, 2020) pp. 26-39.

➢ Malcolm Gladwell, "Will the revolution be tweeted?" https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell

Academic Skills Component: time management, minimizing procrastination

<u>**Week 11: November 17 – Cryptocurrency, a Democratic Blockchain?**</u>

Required Reading:

➢ "The Origins of the Blockchain" in William Magnuson, *Blockchain Democracy: Technology, Law, and the Rule of the Crowd* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020) pp. 9-40.

Academic Skills Component: writing your first draft

<u>**Week 12: November 24 – Space Travel for Billionaires?**</u>

Required Reading:

➢ Hannah Arendt, "Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man" in *The New Atlantis*, No. 18, Fall 2007, pp. 43-55 https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-conquest-of-space-and-the-stature-of-man

Academic Skills Component: creating an outline, proofreading, editing

Week 13: December 1 – The Computer and its Impact

Required Reading:

➢ "The computer does not impose on us the way it should be used" in George Grant, *The George Grant Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998) pp. 417-434.

Academic Skills Component: writing clear and concise

Week 14: December 8 – Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering

Required Reading:

➢ "Why We Should Worry" in Francis Fukuyama, *Our Posthuman Future* (New York: Picador, 2002) pp. 84-102.

Academic Skills Component: developing critical thinking

Final Essay due December 10

WEEK/ CLASS DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING	ACADEMIC COMPONENT
1 (Sept. 8)	**Introduction: A Democracy of Corporate & Technical Experts**	N/A	• Class introductions • Overview of the course structure • Review of syllabus
2 (Sept. 15)	**Ancient & Medieval Democracy**	**Textbook, Chapters 5 and 8** ➢ Plato – Chapter 5 (pp. 69-86) ➢ Augustine – Chapter 8 (pp.117-129)	• Plagiarism
3 (Sept. 22)	**Making of Modernity**	**Textbook, Chapters 13 and 15** ➢ John Locke – Chapter 13 (pp. 201-213) ➢ Rousseau – Chapter 15 (pp. 233-243)	• Referencing
4 (Sept. 29)	**The American Founding**	**Textbook, Chapters 19 and 20** ➢ Madison – Chapter 19 (pp. 299-309) ➢ Jefferson – Chapter 20 (pp. 313-326)	• Summarizing
Critical Reflection Write-Up Due October 1			
5 (Oct 6.)	**Crafting Politics**	➢ Langdon Winner, "Techne and Politeia"	• Writing a thesis statement
6 (Oct. 13)	**Political Imagination & Technique**	➢ William Vanderburg, "Political Imagination in a Technical Age"	• Visit from Librarian, conducting research with library resources

7 **(Oct. 20)**	**Technology &** **Political** **Education**	➢ Leah Bradshaw, "Technology and Political Education"	• Effective Notetaking
8 **(Oct. 25)**	**Fall Reading Week—No Class**		
9 **(Nov. 3)**	**The** **Technological** **Frame**	➢ David Tabachnick, "Responses to the Great Reversal"	• Making an argument
	Book Review <mark>Due November 3</mark>		
10 **(Nov. 10)**	**Social Media &** **Populism**	➢ Isoifidis and Nicoli, "Social Media, Populism and Regulatory Action" ➢ Malcolm Gladwell, "Will the Revolution be Tweeted?"	• Time Management, minimizing procrastination
11 **(Nov. 17)**	**Cryptocurrency,** **a Democratic** **Blockchain?**	➢ William Magnuson, "The Origins of the Blockchain"	• Writing your first draft
12 **(Nov. 24)**	**Space Travel for** **Billionaires?**	➢ Hannah Arendt, "Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man"	• Creating an outline, proofreading, editing
13 **(Dec. 1)**	**The Computer** **& its Impact**	➢ George Grant, "The Computer does not Impose on us the Way it Should be Used"	• Writing clear and concise
14 **(Dec. 8)**	**Biotechnology** **& Genetic** **Engineering**	➢ Fukuyama, "Why we Should Worry"	• Developing critical thinking
15 **(Dec. 13)**	*****Final Essay <mark>Due December 10</mark>*****		

Appendix

Covid-19 Information

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) and mandatory self-screening prior to coming to campus daily.

If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately, self-isolate, and complete the mandatory symptom reporting tool. For purposes of contact tracing, attendance will be recorded in all classes and labs. Participants can check in using posted QR codes through the cuScreen platform where provided. Students who do not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the COVID-19 website.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food or drinks are permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the University's COVID-19 webpage and review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy. Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf.

Religious accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more information, please visit carleton.ca/pmc.

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf.

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Plagiarism

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions,

chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

Carleton Political Science Society

The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.