

**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**Undergraduate Course Outline 2022-23**

**PHILOSOP 4310**  
**Philosophy of Technology**

Fall Term  
M 1:30-3:30 / W 2:30-3:30  
STVH 3166

Instructor: **Eric Desjardins**  
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**DESCRIPTION**

Technology occupies such large a part of our existence that we often forget how much we rely on it. While most of us are appreciative of how various technological developments make our lives easier, we also understand that it can be used for good and bad purposes. As such, it is a common conception that technology is a tool that we create, wield, and optimize to enhance our limited physical and cognitive abilities. Is this commonly received view well supported? Is technology just a tool, or is it constitutive of who we are and how we understand the world? Is it a neutral object that acquires value only in context? How does it evolve? What is the relationship between technological progress and well-being? This course will be the occasion to reflect upon these questions (and many others!). Students will be encouraged to bring their own favorite examples of technology to address these philosophical issues.

**TEXTS**

Agar, Nicholas. *The Sceptical Optimist: Why technology isn't the answer to everything*

**OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to allow students to discover and question various philosophical perspectives on technology, but also to develop their own reflection on issues that they will find most engaging. The course is structured like a seminar and requires a lot of autonomy and engagement during class. It is also a great opportunity for students to develop advanced critical thinking and communicative skills, such as:

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will be accepted for credit in a course. Instructors will be required to return assignments to students as promptly as possible with reasonable explanations of the instructor's assessment of the assignment.

### **ACADEMIC OFFENCES**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:  
[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **PLAGIARISM CHECKING**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES**

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. Immediate help in the event of a crisis can be had by phoning 519.661.3030 (during class hours) or 519.433.2023 after class hours and on weekends.