**SOC 4850
CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS IN SOCIOLOGY:
TECHNOPOLITICS AND SOCIETY**

Seminar: Tuesdays 2.35 – 5.25pm ; Location: TBC

COURSE AIMS AND THEMES

Political sociology is typically concerned with the analysis of social movements and parties, states and civil societies, and transformations in citizenship and identity. What possible connection do dams, satellites, molecules, drones, expressways, sewers and cyborgs have with political sociology then? This course tries to answer this question by examining the place of technological processes, engineered objects, technical expertise and infrastructures within modern politics. The specific focus is what certain authors have called 'technopolitics' (Hecht 2001; Mitchell 2002). The course will explore the place of technological practices and ideas within discourses of nationalism, projects of state- and empire-building, utopias of globalization, dystopias of mass surveillance, and much else besides. It will examine intersections of technology, ethics and politics mostly in the context of Western liberal democratic states, but also within regimes of postcolonial rule, fascism and communism.

The course will approach technopolitics not as something fixed or settled but a rubric under which a series of investigations can be undertaken. In other words, we will approach it with a somewhat experimental attitude. The course does not break down into distinct sections on 'theories', 'methods' and 'cases', in part because much of the material we will be reading has refused these forms of classification. Many of the readings are all three at the same time! Nevertheless, different emphases are present in the course. In some weeks we examine distinctive ways of theorizing technopolitics (weeks 3,4,5 and 6), in others we look at changing styles and modes of technopolitics (week 8), and in others we ask what a perspective of technopolitics might bring to distinctive political phenomena such as political economy and modernization (week 7), the public sphere (week 9) and imperialism, war and violence (week 10).

The course will survey the forms of technopolitics that dominated the landscape of societies in the early and middle decades of the twentieth century, a technomodernist landscape characterized by massive state-directed projects like dam-building, highway construction and nuclear power. But it also examines the question of technopolitics today. What is the fate of technopolitics within 'risk societies' marked by public skepticism about the progressive claims of technoscience? Is there a technopolitics specific to neoliberalism and its dream of a society fully governed in the image of the market? Does the fact that it has come to be associated with the worst excesses of modernization, urbanization and environmental degradation force certain

mutations in the style and the conduct of technopolitics? Do they even spell the death of technopolitics?

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. <u>One in-class presentation</u> (10 mins) based on one of the set readings. *N.B. The exercise is not to present or summarize a particular reading.* Instead, you will identify something – a technology, a controversy, an event, etc. – that the reading might help you analyze. For example, how might Winner's (week 2) discussion of the politics embedded in the design of bridges and highways be used to think about other everyday infrastructures? Or, how might Palmer's (see week 3) discussion of the Soviet ideology of aviation illuminate the place of aviation in the Canadian national imagination? You are encouraged to incorporate visual material (e.g., webcast, maps, powerpoint, etc.) in your presentation as a means of exemplifying and concretizing your points. (We will have at our disposal a fully equipped 'electronic' classroom). (Weight: **10%**).

2. <u>Preparation</u> for and <u>active participation</u> (i.e., a lot more than just breathing!) in weekly seminar (**10%**). You are expected to do all the required readings each week.

3. <u>Short essay</u>. (**2000 words,** plus a bibliography). *Question: 'What is technopolitics?' Answer by thinking about the response that three out of the following authors might give to this question: Bijker, Haraway, Hecht, Wajcman, Latour.* **(Due in class: Oct 23) (25%)**

4. <u>Research paper proposal.</u> Follow the template for constructing a proposal (this will be available online) (**500 words** plus an annotated bibliography - 5 books or articles with a paragraph on each). **(Due in class: Oct 30)** (**10%**).

5. <u>Conference Presentation</u> (absolute max. 15 mins) of your work-in-progress at one of the <u>mini-conferences</u> during weeks 11 and 12 (**15%**). This will build on the paper proposal and form the basis for your research paper.

6. <u>Research paper</u>. (**4000 words** including footnotes but not including bibliography). Use some of the concepts, themes and concerns we have discussed in class to frame your own research project. Ideally, this should investigate a particular site of technological politics and draw upon primary and secondary sources. (**30%**) **(Due in the Sociology Dept: noon, Dec 10)**

7. <u>Late penalties:</u> you will lose half a grade if your paper is handed in the day following the deadline, another half on the second day, and so on.

COURSE TEXTS

All required readings are either available through the library's electronic journals holdings, openly available on the internet, or as PDFs. Further reading will be held on reserve in the library as far as possible.

THEMES AND READINGS

1. Introduction (Sept 11)

2. How can we theorize technology and power? (Sept 18)

- *Marcuse, H. 1982 (1941) 'Some Social Implications of Modern Technology', in A. Arato and E. Gebhardt (eds) *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, New York: Continuum: 138-166.
- Winner, L. 1999 (1980) 'Do Artifacts have Politics?' in MacKenzie, D. and Wajcman, J (eds) *The Social Shaping of Technology*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 28-40. http://zaphod.mindlab.umd.edu/docSeminar/pdfs/Winner.pdf
- *Bijker, W. 2006 'Why and How Technology Matters' in Robert Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 681-706.

Additional Reading

Bijker, W. 2007 'Dikes and Dams: Thick with Politics', *Isis* 98(1): 109-123.

MacKenzie, D. and Wajcman, J. 1999 'Introductory Essay: The Social Shaping of Technology' in MacKenzie, D. and Wajcman, J (eds) *The Social Shaping of Technology*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 3-27.

3. Technopolitics, Culture and Identity (Sept 25)

- *Hecht, G. 2001 'Technology, Politics and National Identity in France' in M. Allen and G. Hecht (eds.) *Technologies of Power.* Cambridge and London: MIT Press: 253-294.
- Palmer, S. 2000 'Peasants into Pilots: Soviet Air-Mindedness as an Ideology of Dominance', *Technology and Culture* 41(1): 1-26.

Additional Reading

Vernon, J. 2005 'The Ethics of Hunger and the Assembly of the School: The Techno-Politics of the School Meal in Modern Britain', *American Historical Review* 110(3): 693-725.

Schafer, S. 1999 'Late Victorian Metrology and its Instrumentation: A Manufactory of Ohms', in M. Biagioli (ed) *The Science Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge.

Barker, J. 2005 'Engineers and Political Dreams: Indonesia in the Satellite Age', *Current Anthropology* 46(5): 703-727.

Mrázek, R. 2002 *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony*, Princeton Princeton University Press.

Tobey, R. C. 1996 *Technology as freedom : the New Deal and the electrical modernization of the American home*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

4. Actor-Network Theory, Material Objects and Politics (Oct 2)

- *Law, J. 1987 'On the Methods of Long-Distance Control: Vessels, Navigation and the Portuguese Route to India', in J. Law (ed) *Power, Action and Belief,* London: RKP.

- Latour, B. 1992 'Where are the Missing Masses? The Sociology of a Few Mundane Artifacts' in Wiebe E. Bijker and John Law, eds., *Shaping Technology/Building Society: Studies in Sociotechnical Change* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), pp. 225–258. www.bruno-latour.fr/articles/article/50-MISSING-MASSESrepub.pdf

Additional Reading

Latour, B. 2005 *Reassembling the social : an introduction to actor-network-theory*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Latour, B. 1987 *Science in Action*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Latour, B. 1987 'The Powers of Association', in J. Law (ed) *Power, Action and Belief* London: RKP.

Callon, M. 1999 'Some Elements of a Sociology of Translation: Domestication of the Scallops and the Fishermen of St. Brieuc Bay', in M. Biagioli (ed) *The Science Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge.

Callon, M. and Law, J. 1995 'Agency and the Hybrid Collectif', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 94(2): 481-507.

Kendall, G. 2004 'Global Networks, International Networks, Actor Networks', in W. Larner and W. Walters (eds) *Global Governmentality: Governing International Spaces*, London: Routledge.

Law, J and Hetherington, K. 2001 'Materialities, Spatialities, Globalities', Department of Sociology, University of Lancaster, http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/law-hetherington-materialities-spatialities-globalities.pdf

5. Foucault, Technologies of Government and Politics (Oct 9)

- *Osborne, T. 1996 'Security and vitality: Drains, Liberalism and Power in the Nineteenth Century, in Barry et al (eds) Foucault and Political Reason (Chicago UP).

- *Barry, A. 1996 'Lines of Communication and Spaces of Rule', in Barry et al (eds) *Foucault and Political Reason,* London: UCL Press: 123-142.

- Cullather, N. 2007 'The foreign policy of the calorie'*, American Historical Review* 122(2): 337-364. Available at http://ahr.oxfordjournals.org/content/112/2/337.full.pdf

Additional Reading
Thrift, N. 2007 'Overcome by space: reworking Foucault' in J Crampton and S Elden (eds) Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography (Ashgate)

Amoore, L. 2006 'Biometric Borders: Governing Mobilities in the War on Terror', *Political Geography* 25: 336-351.

Barry, A. et al 1996 'Introduction', *Foucault and Political Reason,* London: UCL Press.

Rabinow, P. 2003 Anthropos Today, Ch. 3

Rose, N. and P. Miller. 1992. 'Political power beyond the state; problematics of government', *British Journal of Sociology* 43(2): 173-205.

6. Technology, Gender and Politics (Oct 16)

- *Wajcman, J. 2006 'The Gender Politics of Technology' in Goodin et al (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 707-721.

- *Haraway, D. J. 1991'A Cyborg Manifesto' in her *Simians, Cyborgs and Women,* London: Routledge, 149-82

Additional Reading

Wajcman, J. 2004 *TechnoFeminism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Martin, E. 1999 'Toward an Anthropology of Immunology: The Body as Nation State', in M. Biagioli (ed) *The Science Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge.

Lerman, N. et al (eds) 2003 *Gender and Technology: A Reader*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Martin, M. 1991 *"Hello Central?" Gender, Technology and Culture in the Formation of Telephone Systems*, Montreal: McGill-Queens Press.

Gooday, G. 2008 *Domesticating Electricity: Technology, Uncertainty and Gender, 1880-1914*. London: Pickering and Chatto.

7. Techno-Political Economy? Oil and Water (Oct 23)

- Swyngedouw, E. 2007 'Technonatural Revolutions: The Scalar Politics of Franco's Hydro-Social Dream for Spain, 1939-1975', *Transactions. Institute of British Geographers* 32(1): 9-28.
- Mitchell, T. 2009 'Carbon democracy', *Economy and Society* 38(3): 399-432

Additional Reading

Bijker, W. 2007 'Dikes and Dams: Thick with Politics', *Isis* 98(1): 109-123.

Dunn, E. 2005 'Standards and Person-Making in East Central Europe', in A. Ong et al (eds) *Global Assemblages:* 173-193.

Buck-Morss, S. 2000 *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Olds, K. and Thrift, N. 2005 'Cultures on the Brink: Reengineering the Soul of Capitalism - On a Global Scale', in A. Ong et al (eds) *Global Assemblages* Malden, MA: Blackwell: 270-290.

Barry, A. 2006 'Technological Zones', *European Journal of Social Theory* 9(2): 239-253.

8. Styles of Techno-Politics: From Technocracy to Risk Society? (Oct 30)

- *Scott, J. 1998 'The High Modernist City' in his *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, New Haven: Yale University Press: 103-146.
- *Callon, M. Lascoumes, P. and Barthe, Y. 2009 'Hybrid Forums' in their *Acting in an uncertain world: An essay on technical democracy*, MIT Press: 13-36.

Additional Reading

Beck, U. 1992 'From Industrial Society to the Risk Society: Questions of Survival, Social Structure and Ecological Enlightenment', *Theory, Culture & Society* 9: 97-123.

Berman, M. 1988 *All that is solid melts into air; the experience of modernity*, New York: Penguin: 290-312.

Mythen, G. 2004 *Ulrich Beck: A Critical Introduction to the Risk Society*, London: Pluto

O'Malley, P. 2005 *Governing Risks*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Mythen, G. and Walklate, S. (eds) 2006 *Beyond the Risk Society: Critical Reflections on Risk and Human Security*, New York: Open University Press.

9. Mediating Technopolitics: Assembling and Avoiding Publics (Nov 6)

- *McKee, Yates 2007 'Biotechnology and Publicity' in M. Feher (ed.) *Nongovernmental Politics*, New York: Zone Books: 268-281.

- Masco, J. 2002. 'Lie detectors: On secrets and hyper-security in Los Alamos', *Public Culture* 14(3): 441-467.
  http://ceas.iscte.pt/ethnografeast/Joseph%20Masco/%20Lie%20Detectors.pdf

- Maares, N. 2007 'The issues deserve more credit: pragmatist contributions to the study of public involvement in controversy', *Social Studies of Science* 37(5): 759-780.
  http://engl.iastate.edu/programs/rhetoric/areas/rst/readinggroup/pdf/marres2007.pdf

Additional Reading

*Latour, B. 2005 'From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik, or How to Make Things Public' in B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds) *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Barry, A. 2002 'The Anti-Political Economy', *Economy & Society* 31(2): 268-84.

Barry, A. 2001 *Political Machines: Governing a Technological Society*, London: Athlone: 153-174. (the chapter on "political chemistry').

Various essays in B. Latour and P. Weibel (eds) *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Latour, B. and Sanchez-Criado, T. 2007 'Making the *Res* Public', *Ephemera* 7(2): 364-371.

Rafael, V. 2003 'The Cell Phone and the Crowd: Messianic Politics in the Contemporary Philippines', *Public Culture* 15(3): 399-425.

Kellner, D. 1997 'Intellectuals, the New Public Spheres, and Technopolitics', *New Political Science* 41/2: 169-188.

10. Technopolitics of War and Violence (Nov 13)

- *Weizman, E. 2010 'Forensic architecture: Only the criminal can solve the crime', *Radical Philosophy* 164: 9-24

- Shaw, I. and Akhter, M. 2012. 'The unbearable humanness of drone warfare in FATA, Pakistan', *Antipode: Journal of Radical Geography* (in press).

- Anais, S. 2011 'Ethical interventions: non-lethal weapons and the governance of insecurity', *Security Dialogue* 42(6): 537-552.

Additional reading

*Hecht, G. and Edwards, P. 2007 *The Technopolitics of Cold War: Toward a Transregional Perspective*. Washington DC: American Historical Association.

Hecht, G. 2006 'Negotiating Global Nuclearities: Apartheid, Decolonization, and the Cold War in the Making of the IAEA', *OSIRIS* 21: 25-48.

Barry, A. and Walters, W. 2003 'From EURATOM to "Complex Systems": Technology and European Government', *Alternatives* 28(3): 305-29.

Edwards, P. N. 1997 *The closed world: computers and the politics of discourse in cold war America*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

11. Mini-Conference I (Nov 20)

12. Mini-Conference II (Nov 27)

Academic Regulations, Accommodations, Plagiarism, Etc.
University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:
http://www.carleton.ca/cu0708uc/regulations/acadregsuniv.html

Requests for Academic Accommodations
For Students with Disabilities:
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations are required to contact a co-ordinator at the Paul Menton Centre to complete the necessary *letters of accommodation*. The student must then make an appointment to discuss their needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first class or ITV test. This is to ensure sufficient time is available to make the necessary accommodation arrangements.
- The deadlines for contacting the Paul Menton Centre regarding accommodation for final exams are November 7th 2008 for all December examinations, and March 6th 2009 for all April examinations.
For Religious Obligations:
Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event.
Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.
Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.
For Pregnancy:
Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the passing off of someone else's work as your own and is a serious academic offence. For the details of what constitutes plagiarism, the potential penalties and the procedures refer to the section on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar.
What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?
A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including: expulsion; suspension from all studies at Carleton; suspension from full-time studies; and/or a reprimand; a refusal of permission to continue or to register in a specific degree program; academic probation; award of an FNS, Fail, or an ABS.
What are the Procedures?
All allegations of plagiarism are reported to the faculty of Dean of FASS and Management. Documentation is prepared by instructors and/or departmental chairs.
The Dean writes to the student and the University Ombudsperson about the alleged plagiarism.
The Dean reviews the allegation. If it is not resolved at this level then it is referred to a tribunal appointed by the Senate.

Assistance for Students:
Student Academic Success Centre (SASC): www.carleton.ca/sasc
Writing Tutorial Services: www.carleton.ca/wts
Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS): www.carleton.ca/sasc/pass_home/index.html

Important Information:
- Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted.
- All final grades are subject to the Dean's approval.

- Please note that you will be able to link your CONNECT (MyCarleton) account to other non-CONNECT accounts and receive emails from us. However, for us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid CONNECT address. Therefore, it would be easier to respond to your inquiries if you would send all email from your connect account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting https://portal.carleton.ca/