

**IS 122 Technology and European Society**  
**Europe Semester, Fall 2020**  
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**Major Themes for 2020 Europe Semester**

- Technology
- War and Peace
- Global Narratives in Literature
- Current issues in Europe

**Overview of Course**

This course considers social phenomena and the development of technology, particularly in Europe. We will look at how technology has affected social structures such as religion and the family. We will examine technology and innovation as a factor in economics, commerce, and education. We will discuss ethical issues in technology from a Christian perspective.

As we look on the impacts of technology we will study both the historical aspects (the reshaping of local society around the cathedrals that were built, the effect of new forms of transportation on land and sea, the effects of the industrial revolution and modern medicine) as well as contemporary issues of technology (with issues such as the digital divide, the green revolution reducing starvation and poverty, bringing clean water to villages). We will examine cathedrals, castles, bridges, and canals as examples of technology. These achievements, along with code-breaking work done during World War II and newer technologies such as the Internet, will be studied in enough technical detail to broaden appreciation for the innovation and complexity required, and to facilitate the understanding of related societal effects.

We will read and evaluate studies in the area of technology and society, and discuss the credibility of various information sources. We will trace the history of the Internet and World Wide Web, and look at current phenomena such as social networks and blogs.

Much of the historical aspects will be focused on during the travels in Europe while the more contemporary issues will be focused on in summer readings. But both will be discussed in lectures and site visits during the trip giving a chance to deepen understandings as the semester proceeds.

**Sites**

Visits to historical sites and museums will be integral. Example sites include:

- Bletchley Park (early work in computing, breaking of Enigma code)
- Great Fire Monument as scientific instrument and zenith telescope
- Dover Castle and underground tunnels used in World War II
- Stonehenge and Avebury
- Science Museum in London
- Imperial War Museum, Cabinet War Rooms
- Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, Louvre
- Château de Versailles
- L'Observatoire de Paris (book *The Sun in the Church*, J.L. Heilbron)



advances that allowed cholera to be stopped are central to developing European Society. The advance of technology drove the industrial revolution that reshaped Europe but before that, the development of the triangular sail (allowing ships to sail against the wind) and navigation allowed the exploration of the world. These are just a few examples of technology as an explanation for social, political, economic and cultural phenomena. **In your papers you will be expected to connect the technological advances (or in some cases limitations) to the effect on the society as a whole. What was its impact and how did it change the lives of the people at the time.**



foundation in responding to the studies you are expected to use critical thinking to determine the validity of the conclusions drawn.

**Initial Paper: Contemporary Technology (completed by end of time in Berlin)**

In contrast to the final paper which will have more of a focus on historical development of technology and preferably a focus on Europe in particular, this paper will focus on the impact (good and bad) on modern society. It can have a focus on Europe (and examples from the sites in Europe are always encouraged) but doesn't have to. Examples might include:

- Causes and solutions to climate change
- The digital divide: equal access to the Internet?
- Modern agriculture: GMO's: feeding the world or a bane?
- E-commerce vs brick and mortar; Walmart vs Mom and Pop
- Social networking vs privacy
- Science and medicine (cloning? Stem cells?)
- Technology and Politics

**Final Paper (completed at the end of the time in Europe)**

At the end of the time in Europe, students will write a paper in which they reflect on:

- the examples of technology they have seen in Europe,
- the ways in which technology has influenced European society,
- the ways in which European society has influenced the development of technology, and
- the ways in which what they have observed, learned and experienced in Europe relates to their preparatory assignments.

**Grading**

Modern paper 30%

Critique of studies

another is used without acknowledging the original source properly, this is plagiarism.”  
From *Westmont College Plagiarism Policy*,  
<http://www.westmont.edu/academics/pages/provost/curriculum/plagiarism/>.