

Welcome to IDS 252, Society, Ethics, and Technology

(22 July 2014)

I hope everyone had some time to relax over the summer and is ready for the Fall 2014 semester to begin in a few weeks!

According to the giant computer in the sky, you are enrolled in either the 8:00 to 9:20 (A) or 9:30 to 10:50 (B) section of my classes, Society, Ethics, and Technology (SET), meeting on Tuesdays and Fridays, this semester. Both sections will meet in Armstrong Hall, room 102, except for the times the **Discovery, Invention, Discovery (DID)** team to which you will be assigned meets with me in my Armstrong Hall office, room 101 M, **during a regular class period.**

The dates when those DID team meetings will be held are shown in the class [SCHEDULE](#). Each DID team will focus on one of four major [TOPICS](#) covered in the course. These topics are [Computers and Artificial Intelligence](#), [Globalization and Economic Development](#), [Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering](#), or [Population, Energy, and Climate Change](#). I will assign you to a sub-topic under each of these four areas, based to the extent possible on your expressed interests.

I have put you on the **edelset-I** email list which will be used this semester. Email is more than adequate for the vast majority of our communication needs and I make extensive use of this list in this class. It is also important that everyone follows the usual email protocol during the semester. Key rules have been posted [HERE](#) and should be reviewed. Of course you can contact me at any time by calling X 2783, speaking with me after class or making arrangements to meet at any some other time.

The [CENTRAL FOCUS](#) of this course is the critical role technology has played throughout history, the impact it is having at the present time, and how it might influence the future. Many of the decisions you will have to make relating to the role you want technology to play in your life will involve ethical choices. Understanding the various options and how to weigh them will have a major impact on many aspects of your life and that of other inhabitants of this planet as well.

This course will deal with historical, current, and likely future aspects of society, ethics, and technology. There is no doubt that there are many events happening today which relate in many ways to the themes of this class. Issues such as embryonic stem cell research, global warming, globalization, artificial intelligence and extending life are but a few of the controversial topics generating much interest today.

Since there is an interesting mix of majors enrolled in SET this semester, I expect that there will be a variety of opinions expressed on the various topics to be covered and I look forward to those exchanges. You do not have to be majoring in engineering or science in order to be successful in and benefit from this course. All students have something to contribute and can help make the course more interesting and rewarding. I am confident that everyone will do that.

If you have any spare time before the first class, you might find it useful to check out the [SET home page](#). It contains **EVERYTHING** you need to know about the course.

We will review the key course information in the first class meeting and refer back to the information on the SET web pages as the semester moves along. You should check the [SET home page](#) first for an answer anytime you need some information this course. Contact me after that at either edelbach@tcnj.edu or X 2783 if you need additional information.

You should bring a copy of the course text, **the 2012 updated 4th edition** of [Society, Ethics, and Technology](#) by Winston and Edelbach which has been used in previous semesters, **not the newest 5th edition**, to the first class as well **as paper on which to take notes.**

It is critical that the [ASSIGNED READINGS](#) in the course text be completed by the due dates. I highly recommend that [NOTES](#) be taken when doing readings for this course as well as during all classes as they can be a valuable tool in the learning process. This updated version contains two appendices dealing with technology and ethics in the news as well as codes of ethics, from which a number of items are included on the [ASSIGNED READING](#) list.

I look forward to seeing everyone on the Tuesday, August 26th, the first day of class. Feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions or concerns via e-mail or by phone.

Make certain to let me know if you are having any personal problems during the semester which might

impact your class performance. I have taught long enough to realize the unexpected things happen from time to time and I want to work with you if any problems arise, but it is your responsibility to bring any issues to my attention as soon as possible. My office hours are Tuesday and Friday from 11 to 12:30 but do not hesitate to contact me to discuss any issue at any time. My door is always open to students.

I hope you enjoy the remainder of the summer.

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