

# Senior Seminar: Technology and Identity

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SM2013: TR SCH-121 10:00 AM

## Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary Spring 2018

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### *Course Description:*

This seminar investigates current moral and theological issues occasioned by advances in technology, and evaluates how technology impacts human identity and relationality. Students will survey a variety of writings on technology, identify a particular issue to research, and reflect theologically on the issue. To this end, students will design and maintain an eportfolio that documents their investigation of the technology, analysis of the ethical issues occasioned by the technology, and theological engagement with the issue.

The seminar has three main thematic emphases. First, the course examines technology. This section consists of an overview of ethical issues in science and technology. Second, the course identifies resources in theology and ethics that can help students to discern what is really going on and assess how technology promotes and undermines human dignity, relationality, and just community. Third, the course invites students, as practical theologians, to reflect critically and constructively about technology in light of the meaning-making and justice-making activities of Christian discipleship. These thematic emphases are linked to course learning outcomes.

### *Student learning outcomes (SLOs)*

- **SLO 4:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of their denominational heritage.
- **SLO 5:** Students will demonstrate a beginning ability to read and interpret a variety of cultures.
- **SLO 8:** Students will demonstrate an ability to think theologically, strategically, imaginatively, and contextually about ethical issues.

### *Course objectives:*

- 1) Articulate an understanding of ethical issues in technology and identify the impact(s) of the digital divide in a digital age (**SLO 5**).
- 2) Assess the relevance and efficacy of technology for building just community (**SLO 5**).
- 3) Demonstrate awareness of the role of culture in technology (**SLO 5**).
- 4) Demonstrate knowledge of the interlocking and oppositional commitments of Christian ministry and technological development for human fulfillment (**SLO 8**).

- 5) Demonstrate an ability to initiate and sustain peer dialogue with critical issues central to understanding the ethical complexity of technology.
- 6) Demonstrate an ability to identify one's denominational heritage (**SLO4**) and the Christian movement as resources for assessing technology (**SLO 8**).

### *Course Requirements*

I. **Preparation and Participation** (5%) evaluated by the following criteria:

- Preparation for class: write a 100-word paragraph that engages a reading for 10 of 14 class sessions that address a particular tech issue (2/15 - 4/17). Your paragraph should raise at least 1 question. Paragraphs are to be emailed to the professors no later than 1-hour before class begins. Paragraphs will not be graded or returned.
- In class: openness to reflect critically and dialogue on the ideas that we discuss.

II. **ePortfolio** (95%) evaluated by the following categories:

- **Issue**. Identify a type of technology and discuss the ethical issues associated with it.
- **Method**. Discuss how you can use the disciplines of ethics and theology to evaluate technology.
- **Religious heritage**. Identify key moral norms and ecclesial values of your religious heritage that can provide guidance on technology.
- **Identity and Relationality** (1) Discuss theological anthropology and the implications of technology for persons. (2) Discuss the beloved community and discuss how technology can function as an instrument of beloved community.

### *Bibliography:*

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*Class Schedule:*

<b>February 1:</b>	<b>Introductions and Overview</b>
<b>February 6:</b>	<b>ePortfolios and Research Strategies</b>
<b>February 8:</b>	<b>Ethical Issues in Science and Technology</b>
<b>February 13:</b>	<b>Theological Ethics and Theological Anthropology</b>
<b>February 15:</b>	<b>Identity</b>
<b>February 20:</b>	<b>Relationality</b>
<b>February 22:</b>	<b>Technology and the Common Good</b>
<b>February 27:</b>	<b>(Black Church Studies Consultation)</b>
<b>March 1:</b>	<b>Social Media</b>
<b>March 6:</b>	<b>Privacy Issues</b>
<b>March 8:</b>	<b>Human Enhancement</b>
<b>March 13 &amp; 15:</b>	<b>*RESEARCH AND STUDY*</b>
<b>March 20:</b>	<b>Digital Divide and Inequality</b>
<b>March 22:</b>	<b>Artificial Intelligence</b>
<b>March 27:</b>	<b>Virtual Incarnation and Christianity as a Mediated Religion</b>
<b>March 29:</b>	<b>*EASTER RECESS*</b>

<b>April 3:</b>	<b>Big Data</b>
<b>April 5:</b>	<b>Technology and the Healthcare Industry</b>
<b>April 10:</b>	<b>Student-Selected Tech Issue(s)</b>
<b>April 12:</b>	<b>Student-Selected Tech Issue(s)</b>
<b>April 17:</b>	<b>Mindful Tech</b>
<b>April 19:</b>	<b>ePortfolio presentations</b>
<b>April 24:</b>	<b>eportfolio presentations</b>
<b>April 26:</b>	<b>ePortfolio presentations</b>
<b>May 1:</b>	<b>ePortfolios presentations</b>
<b>May 3:</b>	<b>SUMMATION</b>

### *LPTS Policy Statements*

#### **1. Use of Inclusive Language:**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance, [http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp).

#### **2. Academic Honesty:**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

### **3. Special Accommodations:**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center [bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu](mailto:bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### **4. Citation Policy**

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:  
Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.  
*The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

### **5. Attendance Policy**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session.