STV 210/HIST 312: *The Computing Society*

Draft Syllabus – for planning and informational purposes only

Winter 2020

Scott Campbell

Description: This course examines the historical relationship between computer technology and society, to review the impact and consequences of computing from a social perspective but also to consider the various non-technical factors and values that have shaped computing technology and practice. The scope ranges from early mechanical aids, through the mid-20th century invention of electronic digital computers, to the networks and mobile applications of the 21st century, and includes technological studies relating to gender, education, employment, and war. Material artifacts will be used as a core element of the course.

Objectives:
When students have finished the course they should be able to:

- Identify and recognize the historical events relating to various computing technologies, people, places, and activities and the circumstances that shaped these events.
- Describe various social and technological practices, relationships, and values that are connected to the rise and use of computing technologies in past and modern societies.
- Use sound historical and interdisciplinary arguments about significance, evidence, continuity, causation, perspective, and ethics to explain or contextualize past and current computer-related events.
- Analyze textual and material artifacts, carry out straightforward historical research, and compose arguments of a historical nature.

To achieve these objectives, students should be prepared to set aside at least four to five hours a week (three hours for lectures, and one to two hours to prepare for class and review notes), plus additional time to complete assignments and studying for tests. Keeping on top of readings and showing up to class will minimize time spent preparing for the tests.

Evaluation (tentative, not fixed yet):
- Two open-book in-class tests; no final exam. 50%
- Weekly in-class engagement assignments. 30%
- Two individual assignments. 20%

Readings:
A textbook or courseware package will be available in the bookstore. Weekly readings should be done before class to do well on in-class assignments.