Optional Ph.D. Emphasis in Technology and Society

Students pursuing a Ph.D. in this department may petition to add an Emphasis in Technology and Society. The Emphasis brings together doctoral students in engineering, social sciences, and the humanities to engage in multidisciplinary coursework and research into the cultural and societal changes resulting from the use of new information technologies. The Emphasis features a structured set of courses that may be taught individually and collaboratively by faculty across disciplines: Anthropology, Communication, Computer Science, English, History, Media Arts and Technology, Political Science, and Sociology.

To be eligible for admission to the Emphasis, students must be enrolled in good standing in the department. Petitions for adding the Emphasis can be made at any time in a student’s graduate career, but typically will be made after at least one successful year of study in the home department. Work completed prior to admission that meets Emphasis requirements (as determined by the Ph.D. Emphasis Faculty Executive Steering Committee) may be counted towards its completion.

Requirements for completing the optional Emphasis in Technology and Society include:

- Gateway Technology and Society Colloquium: Students must complete a 1-unit colloquium that brings together students and faculty from multiple disciplines to explore various approaches to studying technology and society. In addition to helping students understand similarities and differences in conceptualization and knowledge production across disciplines, the seminar promotes interaction among students from different departments.
- Graduate Coursework: Students must complete four 4-unit courses with a grade of B or better, two each from Area 1 (Culture and History) and Area 2 (Society and Behavior). Area 1 courses explore the humanistic study of cultures, histories and meanings as they intersect with technology. Area 2 investigates the social scientific study of technology in relationship to human behavior, organizations, and social structures. One course from the student’s home department can be applied toward meeting this requirement. Students can petition to substitute a non-listed course, subject to approval by the Technology and Society Faculty Executive Committee.
- Dissertation: A student’s dissertation must have relevance to at least one of the two Emphasis areas. In addition, the student’s dissertation committee must include a member from another department participating in the Emphasis. Exceptions are subject to approval by the Technology and Society Faculty Executive Committee.

For additional information and a current list of courses, please contact the graduate advisor or visit http://cits.ucsb.edu/education.