HPSC40012 Beyond the Spin:Technoscientific Failure

Credit Points:	12.50
Level:	4 (Undergraduate)
Dates & Locations:	This subject is not offered in 2013. Standard
Time Commitment:	Contact Hours: 2 (1x 2 hour seminar each week) Total Time Commitment: An average of 10 hours per week.
Prerequisites:	None.
Corequisites:	None.
Recommended Background Knowledge:	Students enrolling in this subject must have completed a Bachelor of Arts degree or equivalent.
Non Allowed Subjects:	None.
Core Participation Requirements:	For the purposes of considering request for Reasonable Adjustments under the disability Standards for Education (Cwth 2005), and Students Experiencing Academic Disadvantage Policy, academic requirements for this subject are articulated in the Subject Description, Subject Objectives, Generic Skills and Assessment Requirements of this entry.The University is dedicated to provide support to those with special requirements. Further details on the disability support scheme can be found at the Disability Liaison Unit website: http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/disability/
Contact:	**Dr Michael Arnold (http://www.findanexpert.unimelb.edu.au/researcher/person14731.html)** **mvarnold@unimelb.edu.au (mailto:mvarnold@unimelb.edu.au)**
Subject Overview:	There is much to be learned from failure, and the application of science and technology has in recent years provided no shortage of examples - the Ford Pinto, Bhopal, Challenger, thalidomide, Cane Toads, Chernobyl, the M16 rifle, Three-Mile Island, the Zeebrugge Ferry. Through a series of case studies, from the perspective of various stakeholders and publics, and from a variety of theoretical perspectives, students will appreciate the educative value of failure. will critically examine the dimensions of failure. the contested accounts of causes and explanations of failure. and will assess the political, institutional, and public-sphere responses to failure. Students who successfully complete this subject will be able to convincingly interpret and respond to cases of technoscientific failure through an understanding of: the contexts in which judgments of failure are made. the range of empirical factors and causes that may be implicated in failure. the theoretical grounds upon which causal claims are made and are contested, and critically assess common responses to technoscientific failure. Students will also conduct a case study of their own.
Objectives:	Students who successfully complete this subject will # develop an appreciation of the educative value of failure for our understanding of technoscience, and for our understanding of our current social, cultural and economic condition. # demonstrate the ability to convincingly critique responses to failure, in terms of the ontology of failure, and in terms of claims of causality. # comprehend the dimensions of failure and the terms in which failure is said to occur. # develop a sound knowledge and understanding of key examples of technoscientific failure. # develop an understanding of the methods and analytical skills required to conduct a small scale case study.
Assessment:	An essay of 1000 words 20% (due 1/3 through the semester), a case study report of 2000 words 40% (due at the end of semester), an essay of 2000 words 40% (due at the end of semester). Hurdle Requirement: Students are required to attend a minimum of 75% of classes in order to pass this subject. Assessment submitted late without an approved extension will

	be penalised at 2% per working day. After 5 working days late assessment will not be marked. In-class tasks missed without approval will not be marked. All pieces of written work must be submitted to pass this subject.
Prescribed Texts:	Readings will be provided on-line.
Recommended Texts:	Horton Forest W. and Dennis Lewis (Eds.) *Great information disasters: twelve prime examples of how information mismanagement led to human misery, political misfortune and business failure.* London, England, 1991. Landauer, Thomas. *The Trouble with Computers,* London, MIT Press, 1997. James C. Scott,*Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. Tenner, E. *Why things bite back : technology and the revenge of unintended consequences,* New York : Knopf, 1996. Winner, Langdon. *The Whale and the Reactor,* Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1986. Lyytinen, K. and R. Hirschheim 1987. 'Information Systems Failures: A Survey and Classification of the Empirical Literature'. *Oxford Surveys in Information Technology (4)*: 257-309. Hall 1980. *Great Planning Disasters.* London:Weidenfeld and Nicolson. Perrow, C. 1984. *Normal Accidents: Living with High-Risk Technologies.* New York: Basic Books. Vaughan, D. 1996. *The Challenger Launch Decision : Risky Technology, Culture, and Deviance at NASA.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Breadth Options:	This subject is not available as a breadth subject.
Fees Information:	Subject EFTSL, Level, Discipline & Census Date, http://enrolment.unimelb.edu.au/fees
Generic Skills:	Students who successfully complete this course will # have developed research skills. # have developed critical thinking and analysis. # be able to think in theoretical terms. # be able to understand social, ethical and cultural contexts. # be able to communicate knowledge intelligibly and economically. # have developed written communication skills. # have developed public speaking skills. # have developed good time management and planning. # be able to work as a team.
Links to further information:	http://hps.unimelb.edu.au/
Related Majors/Minors/ Specialisations:	100 Point Master of Journalism 150 Point Master of Journalism 200 Point Master of Journalism