



# MM103/104 Christians in a Disruptive and Digital World

Dr Lai Pak Wah/ Dr Tan Seng Kong | 1.5/ 3 CR

## Course Purpose

Disruptions have been a key concern for business leaders in the last two decades, as noted in Clayton Christensen's *Innovator's Dilemma* (1997). Since then, we have seen not only traditional businesses disrupted but also the pace of disruption accelerating due to the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). As the recent COVID19 pandemic has shown, the Church is also not immune to disruptions. Christian leaders now find themselves grappling with how to disciple Christians in a rapidly changing world, up against challenges as wide ranging as the stress of remote work, economic recessions, shifts in geopolitics and economic structures, and the unfamiliarity of ministering in a digital world.

The aim of this course is to survey the above challenges and to introduce the theological, spiritual, and interdisciplinary resources that can enable the Church to disciple Christians and to further God's kingdom in this new normal. Students will also have opportunities to dialogue with industry experts and practitioners on the challenges of digital disruptions and consolidate their learning through a group project.

### Dates (2022)

Feb 15

Mar 1, 15, 29

April 12, 23 (Sat AM)

May 10, 24 (3 CR only)

### Time

(7.15-10pm)

April 23 Sat

(9.30am-12.30pm)

### Credits

1.5 CR or 3 CR

### Class Format

- Self-Paced+Live (In-Person)
- Self-Paced+Live (Online)**
- Self-Paced+Live (In-Person+Online)

**Pre-requisite: NIL**

### Location

Zoom Room

### Fees\*

S\$225/ S\$450(Credit)

S\$120/ S\$240 (Audit)

## About the Lecturers

**Dr Lai Pak Wah** is a lecturer of Church History and Historical Theology at BGST. A graduate from BGST (Grad Dip CS) and Regent College, Vancouver (MCS, ThM), Dr Lai completed his PhD at Durham University, where he specialised in Christianity in Late Antiquity, that is, the history, theology and spirituality of the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> century church fathers (also known as Patristic Studies). Besides his research on John Chrysostom, Dr Lai has also published on the interface between theology & medicine in *The Dao of Healing: Christian Perspectives on Chinese Medicine*. Previously, Dr Lai was a full-time lecturer at the School of Business, Singapore Polytechnic, and engaged in investment promotion work with the Singapore Economic Development Board. He is the current Principal of BGST.



**Dr Tan Seng Kong** is our Lecturer of Systematic and Spiritual Theology. He is a graduate from Regent College, Vancouver (MA, Spiritual Theology). Seng Kong completed his PhD in Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he focused his research on Jonathan Edwards's doctrine of salvation. Seng Kong was trained as an architect and with his family, worships at Bethel Assembly of God.



## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- 1) not only understand present and future disruptions from a theological perspective but have the spiritual resources to navigate and flourish, despite the challenges.
- 2) Be able to understand and apply the theological, ethical and inter-disciplinary frameworks needed to discern the values and dangers of digital disruptions.
- 3) Understand the value and potential of digital technologies for your personal and church ministries.

## Course Outline

	Topic (Instructor)	Details	Project Exercises & Milestones	Readings
1	Christians in a Disruptive World  (LPW, Feb 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Course &amp; Class Introduction</li> <li>● Forming Project Groups (2-3 pax/ group)</li> <li>● Survey the History of Disruptions in the Bible and Church History for theological and spiritual perspectives to such disruptions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discussion:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider the impact of COVID19 on your church and ministry. How do your learning points apply here?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The Disruption Dilemma</i> by Joshua Gans (135 pp.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Read (optional):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Post Corona: From Crisis to Opportunity</i> by Galloway</li> </ul>
2	Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) & the Future of Work  (LPW, Mar 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● History of the Industry Revolutions</li> <li>● The impact of the 4IR on the future of work: what does this mean for Christians, Church &amp; Society? Discuss.</li> </ul>	<p>Review the following videos before class: <u>Future of Work</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The Big Debate About the Future of Work, explained<sup>1</sup></li> <li>2) The Future of Work: Is your Job safe (Economist)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>3) What is the great</li> </ol>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Videos on the future of work and gig economy</p> <p><b>Read (optional):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Shaping the Future of the 4IR</i>, by Schwab (skim Section 2 and Conclusion)</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUmyygCMMGA&t=78s>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUc5oN\\_ffRo&t=565s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUc5oN_ffRo&t=565s)

			<p>reset?<sup>3</sup></p> <p><u>Gig Economy</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) How to fix the Gig Economy (BBC)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>2) Why the Gig Economy is a Scam<sup>5</sup></li> <li>3) Gig Economy (Stanford)<sup>6</sup></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The Gig Economy</i>, by Woodhock &amp; Graham (Chapter 1 &amp; Conclusion)</li> <li>- <i>Work in the Future</i>, by Skidelsky &amp; Craig (Parts 4 &amp; 5, pp. 269-365)</li> <li>- <i>Machine, Platform, Crowd</i> by Brynjolfsson &amp; McAfee (chapters 1-11)</li> </ul>
3	<p>Theological &amp; Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Digital Technologies</p> <p>(TSK, Mar 15)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philosophical, Sociological &amp; Theological Understandings of Technologies</li> </ul>	<p>Watch the following videos before class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) “Philosophy in the Age of Technology,” CGTN interview with Dermot Moran (20 mins)<sup>7</sup></li> <li>2) “What’s The Impact of Artificial Intelligence and Technology on Society,” Interview with James Susskind (14 mins)<sup>8</sup></li> <li>3) “Transhumanism: Could we live forever?” (BBC, 14 mins)<sup>9</sup></li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify one digital technology that was used by your Church or work during the COVID19 pandemic. Evaluate its merits and weaknesses according to the paradigms introduced</li> </ul>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Moran, Susskind, and BBC videos</p> <p><b>Read:</b> Ch. 2, “The Characterology of Technique,” in the <i>Technological Society</i>, pp. 61-147, by Ellul (on Moodle)</p>
4	<p>Responding to Digital Technologies: Ethics and</p>	<p>Paradigms and tools for spiritual formation &amp; discernment in a digital world (COVID19</p>	<p>Watch the following videos before class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Moshe Vardi, “What Does Technology</li> </ol>	<p><b>Watch:</b> Vardi video</p>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPYx12xJFUQ>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNOHbWiege4&t=62s>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xImchLtd52w>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb4SR-uoEUM>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4sJSZn9i2c>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4\\_jRurLz0m4&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_jRurLz0m4&feature=emb_logo)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STsTUEOqP-g&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STsTUEOqP-g&feature=emb_logo)

	Spiritual Perspectives on the Digital World  (TSK, Mar 29)	backdrop)	Mean for Society?” (5 mins) <sup>10</sup>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review this interactive site. Identify 2-3 digital deadly sins that have greatly impacted you and your community (church, workplace, family, etc.). Suggest a spiritual/ethical practice that might be a useful remedy.<sup>11</sup></li> <li>Digital Ethics Case Study Discussions: Based on Ott Chapters 1-3.</li> </ul>	<b>Read:</b> Chs. 1-3 of <i>Christian Ethics for a Digital Society</i> , pp. 17-98, by Ott (on DTL)
5	The Hybrid Church: Worship & Ministry in a Digital Age  (LPW, Apr 23, 9:30 AM-12:30 PM)	Preview the following videos: 1) <i>Is the Digital Church really a Church?</i> (Pete Philips) (1 hr)  2) <i>Mediated Faith: Digital Media, Christian Life, and Theological Reflection</i> <sup>12</sup> (Teresa Berger) (53 mins)  3) <i>From Social Media to Social Ministry</i> (Nona Jones) <sup>13</sup> (30 mins)  The Hybrid Church Case Study -	Guest lecture by Dr Nora Hughes on organisational change. (*Please note change in day and time to cater for different time zones.)  Students will work on and present a Hybrid Church Case Study	<b>Watch:</b> Videos by Philips, Berger & Jones  <b>Read:</b> <i>@Worship: Liturgical Practices in a Digital World</i> , pp. 1-48, by Berger (See DTL)
6	Project Presentations May 10	Individual/ group presentations, pt. 1		
7	Project Presentations May 24	Individual/ group presentations, pt. 2		

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1FVS6Z1dKU>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/ng-interactive/2014/jun/06/-sp-digital-deadly-sins>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SjQb-EbVm74>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDPaaHXi7LM>

## Course Requirements (1.5 and 3.0 cr.)

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### 1. Reading Journal (30/20%)

- Read 4 out of 5 prescribed texts (you should cover a total 500 pages).
- Select 2 texts/books. Summarise 2-3 main learning points from your readings and respond with your own theological reflections for each point (500 words per book). A total of 2 reading summaries.

### 2. Session 5 Case Presentation (10/10%)

- Evaluation Criteria: based on the theological and pastoral justifications for the worship and ministry strategies & plans proposed.
- 3-5 pax per group presentation.

### 3. Project Presentation + Essay (60/50%)

- Identify 2 changes or disruptions that have or will transform the way you live, work, or do church.
- Your assignment should analyse the impact of these changes/ disruptions using the interdisciplinary perspectives (philosophical, sociological, theological, ethical, and spiritual) you have learnt in the course.
- The assignment will have 2 components:
  - a) A 15-min project presentation in either Session 6 or 7, based on one of the digital disruptions you have identified (20/10% of total marks).
  - b) An essay of 2,000 words (1.5 cr.) (40% of total marks, 1.5 cr.). Please abide by Chicago/Turabian bibliographical guidelines.<sup>14</sup> [For 3 cr. students, please refer to additional wordcount in item (5) below.]
- The changes or disruptions that you can focus on are:
  1. The Future of Work and Church (e.g., automation, and the Gig economy)
  2. Digital Technologies
  3. Artificial Intelligence, Robotics & Automation
  4. Transhumanism (Altering the Human Being)
  5. The Gig Economy and its Impact on the Church
  6. If you wish to do a different topic, please obtain the consent of your lecturers before proceeding.

## Additional Course Requirements (ONLY for 3.0 cr.)

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### 3b. Essay

- For item (3) above, "Project Presentation + Essay," you should submit a 4000-word essay, (40% of total marks)

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<sup>14</sup> [https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

#### 4. Book Review (20%)

- Select ONE book from the reading list below and submit a book review of 1000 words (20% of total marks):
1. Ott, Kate. *Christian Ethics for a Digital Society*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. (Available online on DTL.)
  2. Berger, Teresa. *@Worship: Liturgical Practices in the Digital World*. London: Routledge, 2018. (Available online on DTL.)
  3. Brynjolfsson, Erik, and Andrew McAfee. *Machine, Platform and Crowd: Harnessing Our Digital Future*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2017. (Available online on NLB & DTL.)
  4. Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. Introduction by Robert K. Merton. Translated by John Wilkinson. New York: Vintage, 1964. (Available online on DTL.)
  5. Vallor, Shannon. *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*. Oxford University Press, 2016. (Available online on Overdrive.)
  6. Dyer, John. *From the Garden to the City: The Redeeming and Corrupting Power of Technology*. Kregel, 2011. (Available online on Overdrive.)
  7. Schuurman, Derek C. *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer Technology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL.)
  8. Gay, Craig M. *Modern Technology and the Human Future: A Christian Appraisal*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018. (Available online on Overdrive.)
  9. Feenberg, Andrew. *Between Reason and Experience: Essays in Technology and Modernity*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL.)
  10. Campbell, Heidi A., et al. **Networked Theology Negotiating Faith in Digital Culture**. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL.)
  11. Shatzer, Jacob. *Transhumanism and the Image of God: Today's Technology and the Future of Christian Discipleship*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019. (Available online on Overdrive.)
  12. Lowe, Stephen D., and Mary E. Lowe. *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth through Online Education*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL.)
  13. Moyse, Ashley John, and Scott A. Kirkland, eds. *The Art of Living for A Technological Age*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 2021. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL.)
  14. Sisto, Davide. *Online Afterlives: Immortality, Memory, and Grief in Digital Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020. (Available online on Overdrive.)
  15. Smith, Brian Cantwell. *The Promise of Artificial Intelligence: Reckoning and Judgment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019. (Available online on Overdrive.)

- The selection will be based on the order in which it is chosen (“first-come, first-served”). It must exclude the two books that you have elected for your “Reading Journal.” (See item (1) above). Also, the main subject matter of the book should not be substantially similar to your essay topic. The review should be summative and critical, following the guidelines outlined under “Critique/Review Assignments” in BGST’s “Guidelines for Academic Papers.”<sup>15</sup>

### Summary of Course Requirements:

	Assignments	1.5 cr		3 cr.	
1	Reading Journal	1000 words	30%	1000 words	20%
2	Session 5 Case Presentation	Group	10%	Group	10%
3a	Project Presentation	Individual	20%	Individual	10%
3b	Essay	2000 words	40%	4000 words	40%
4	Book Review	-	-	2000 words	20%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3000 words</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>6000 words</b>	<b>100%</b>

## COURSE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

1. For **style and formatting** of assignments, please refer to the document “General Formatting for all Assignments” available on your course Moodle page.
2. ALL assignments are to be submitted by uploading via Moodle.
3. *Unless otherwise indicated*, students must submit their assignments 3 months after the first day of the month following the last class/session (“first deadline”). After the first deadline, students will be granted a further 3-month extension automatically (“second deadline”). However, students who submit after the first deadline will incur the **penalty of a one-third grade deduction** on the specific late assignment (e.g., B+ will be downgraded to B). After the second deadline, the status of the incomplete course will be **converted from Credit to Audit**. This conversion will *not* affect overall GPA.

**First Deadline: 1 September 2022**

**Second Deadline: 1 December 2022**

#### NOTE FOR STUDENT PASS HOLDERS:

The first and second deadlines are shortened to 1 month and 2 months respectively.

Students are advised that BGST **strongly discourages plagiarism**. For more information on this point (what plagiarism is, how BGST penalises it), please consult the BGST’s “Guidelines for Academic Papers.”

<sup>15</sup> See Philip Satterthwaite, “guidelines for Academic Papers”; available for reading and download at <https://bgst.edu.sg/guidelines-academic-papers>.

# Course Bibliography

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## Required Texts:

1. Gans, Joshua. *The Disruption Dilemma*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2016. (Available online at NLB & DTL.)
2. Schwab, Klaus. *Shaping the Future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2018. (Available online at NLB.)
3. Woodhock, Jamie, & Mark Graham. *The Gig Economy: A Critical Edition*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2020. (Available online at NLB.)
4. Skidelsky, Robert, and Nan Craig. *Work in the Future*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020. (Available online at NLB.)
5. Brynjolfsson, Erik, and Andrew McAfee. *Machine, Platform and Crowd: Harnessing Our Digital Future*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2017. (Available online at NLB & DTL.)
6. Ellul, Jacques. *The Technological Society*. Introduction by Robert K. Merton. Translated by John Wilkinson. New York: Vintage, 1964. (Available online at DTL; scanned pages on Moodle.)
7. Ott, Kate. *Christian Ethics for a Digital Society*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. (Available online on DTL.)
8. Berger, Teresa. *@Worship: Liturgical Practices in the Digital World*. London: Routledge, 2018. (Available online on DTL.)

## Other Texts

Autor, David et al. *The Work of the Future*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2020.

Borgmann, Albert. "Contemplation in a Technological Era: Learning from Thomas Merton." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 64, no. 1 (Mar 2012): 3-10.

Borgmann, Albert. "The Collision of Plausibility with Reality: Lifting the Veil of the Ethical Neutrality of Technology." *Educational Technology* 52, no. 1 (Feb 2012): 40-43.

Borgmann, Albert. "The Here and Now: Theory, Technology, and Actuality." *Philosophy & Technology* 24 (2011): 5-17.

Brynjolfsson, Erik, and Andrew McAfee. *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in the Time of Brilliant Technologies*. New York & London: W.W. Norton, 2014.

Campbell, Heidi A., et al. **Networked Theology Negotiating Faith in Digital Culture**. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL, 138 pp.)

Dyer, John. *From the Garden to the City: The Redeeming and Corrupting Power of Technology*. Kregel, 2011. (Available online on Overdrive, 192 pp.)



Erisman, Albert, and Tripp Parker. "Artificial Intelligence: A Theological Perspective." *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 71, no. 2 (Jun 2019): 95-106.

Feenberg, Andrew. *Between Reason and Experience: Essays in Technology and Modernity*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2010. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL, 284 pp.)

Galloway, Scott. *Post Corona: From Crisis to Opportunity*. NY: Penguin Random House, 2020.

Gay, Craig M. *Modern Technology and the Human Future: A Christian Appraisal*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018. (Available online on Overdrive.)

Goodwin, Tom. *Digital Darwinism: Survival of the Fittest in the Age of Business Disruption*. London & New York: Kogan Page, 2018.

Higgs, Eric, Andrew Light, and David Strong, eds. *Technology and the Good Life?* Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Jerónimo, Helena M., José Luís Garcia and Carl Mitcham. *Jacques Ellul and the Technological Society in the 21st Century*. Philosophy of Engineering and Technology. Vol. 13. New York: Springer, 2013.

Kane, Gerald C., Anh Nguyen Phillips, Jonathan R. Copulsky, and Garth R. Andrus. *The Technology Fallacy: How People Are the Real Key to Digital Transformation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019.

Lowe, Stephen D., and Mary E. Lowe. *Ecologies of Faith in a Digital Age: Spiritual Growth through Online Education*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL, 250 pp.)

Michelman, Paul, ed. *Who Wins in a Digital World? Strategies to Make Your Organization Fit for the Future*. MIT Sloan Management Review. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019.

Molhoek, Braden. "Sensuality and Altering Anthropology in Artificial Intelligence and Transhumanism." *Theology and Science*, 14, no.1 (Feb 2016): 99-104.

Moyse, Ashley John, and Scott A. Kirkland, eds. *The Art of Living for A Technological Age*. Minneapolis, Minnesota : Fortress Press, 2021. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL, 225 pp.)

Osterwalder, Alexander, Yves Pigneur, Fred Etienne, and Alan Smith. *The Invincible Company: How to Constantly Reinvent Your Organization with Inspiration from the World's Best Business Models*. John Wiley & Sons, 2020.

Phillips, Peter M. *The Bible, Social Media and Digital Culture*. Routledge Focus on Religion. Routledge, 2019.

Philips, Peter. *Hybrid Church: Blending Online and Offline Community*. Cambridge: Grove Books, 2020. (Available as ebook on <https://grovebooks.co.uk>)

Russell, Stuart, Sabine Hauert, Russ Altman, and Manuela Veloso. "Ethics of Artificial Intelligence." *Nature* 521 (28 May 2015): 415-8.

Schumacher, Sarah. *Reimagining the Spiritual Disciplines for a Digital Age*. Cambridge: Grove Books, 2020. (Available as ebook on <https://grovebooks.co.uk>)

Schuurman, Derek C. *Shaping a Digital World: Faith, Culture and Computer Technology*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. (Available online on Overdrive & DTL, 138 pp.)

Shanahan, Murray. *The Technological Singularity*. MIT Press Essential Knowledge. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015.

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Smith, Brian Cantwell. *The Promise of Artificial Intelligence: Reckoning and Judgment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019. (Available online on Overdrive, 184 pp.)

Vallor, Shannon. *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting*. Oxford University Press, 2016. (Available online on Overdrive, 328 pp.)

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