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Nanotechnology, Society, and Freshman, Oh My! CHARLES TAHAN, Physics Dept., WENDY CRONE, Engineering Physics, KARIN ELLISON, Graduate School, RICKY LEUNG, Sociology, CLARK MILLER, Science and Technology Studies, GRETA ZENNER, Materials Research Science and Engineering Center; University of Wisconsin-Madison — Nanotechnology has emerged as a broad and exciting, yet ill-defined, field of scientific research and technological innovation. Important questions have arisen about the technology's potential economic, social, and environmental implications by prominent technology leaders, nanotechnology boosters, science fiction authors, policy officials, and environmental organizations. We have developed a freshman-level seminar course that offers an opportunity for students from a wide range of disciplines, including the natural and social sciences, humanities, and engineering, to learn about nanoscience and nanotechnology and to explore these questions and reflect on the broader place of technology in modern societies. The course is built around active learning methods and seeks to develop the students' critical thinking and research skills, written and verbal communication abilities, and general knowledge of nanotech. Continuous assessment is used to gain information about how effective the class discussions are and how well the overall course enhances students' understanding of the interaction between nanotechnology and society.

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