

Science, Technology, and the Modern World

Last Updated: Mon, 07/28/2025

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 2100

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
89972

Instructor First Name: Taylor Elizabeth

Instructor Last Name: Dysart

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course's purpose is to examine how historical and modern developments in science and technology refract and shape culture, politics, and society on a global scale. It does so through the history and anthropology of drugs. This course asks how drugs—across many forms and meanings—have been central to major historical developments around the globe. It also explores whether and to what extent human engagements with drugs—as objects of study, consumption, wonder, art, power—are a facet of modernity. This course examines how drugs have been variously understood, defined, studied, and legislated across time and space. This course begins with an exploration of the economic changes spurred by colonial commodities, moves to the medical impact of nineteenth-century pharmaceutical sciences, traces the spiritual technology of modern psychedelics, and ends with the future promise of “magic bullets.”

Course learning outcomes:

With the successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Compare how understandings of drugs have changed across time and space
- Define the roles that drugs have played in major cultural, political, and social historical developments
- Reflect on how drugs are embedded in their own historical moment

Required course materials:

All materials will be free and available on Canvas.

Grading policy:

Assignments and Assessments

1. Introductory Survey – 2%
2. Syllabus Quiz – 3%
3. Participation – 15%
4. Reading Reflections – 10%
5. Comparative Analysis 1 – 20%
6. Comparative Analysis 2 – 25%
7. Reflexive Essay – 25%

Grading Scale

I will provide a specific rubric for each assignment that you can find on Canvas.

90 – 100% = A, superior performance

80 – 89% = B, high-quality performance

70 – 79% = C, average performance

60 – 69% = D, poor performance

0 – 59% = F, unacceptable performance

Attendance policy:

Participation is a crucial part of this course and attendance will be taken in every session. Your participation grade is based on in-class participation. For each class session, our time together will unfold with some combination of lectures, small and large group discussion, silent reflection, group and individual analyses of primary and secondary sources, and debates, amongst other forms of engagement. You are expected to be fully engaged in each of these activities. Being fully engaged can look like listening closely, responding thoughtfully, asking questions, taking on an assigned group role, evidence of completed readings, etc.

If you are worried about your participation, please come talk to me and we can discuss strategies to help you in engage in our classroom.

Students can have a total of three unexcused absences over the course of the semester with no questions asked. More than three missed sessions will result in a reduction of the final participation grade. Exceptions are allowed for Georgia Tech-approved absences and documented emergency circumstances.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Scholarship is an intellectual, ethical, and social endeavor. It can be a great joy to discuss and debate assignments, ideas, theories, and readings with your peers. For this class, I

encourage you to reflect on course materials, workshop ideas, and proofread drafts with your peers outside of our scheduled class time. However, you also have a responsibility to properly and clearly cite any ideas, language, or theories that you did not generate. It is a form of plagiarism to misrepresent another scholar's work as your own without proper attribution, even if such misrepresentation is unintentional. See below for proper citation practices, including a reference for the Chicago Manual of Style.

Any instances of academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action, which may include a required resubmission, a failing grade, or a report to the Office of the Dean of Students. Violations include cheating, plagiarizing, or the inappropriate use of online software, including AI.

If you have any questions or you're in doubt, please ask me. It is our shared responsibility to foster an environment where you can debate, discuss, take risks, make mistakes, improve, learn, and grow.

For more information, please see Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct.

<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code>

<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/student-code-conduct>

Citation Requirements

For all assignments, please reference the citation guidelines for the Chicago Manual of Style, 18th edition, unless otherwise explicitly stated.

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Science area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

This course carries the Georgia Tech-specific Ethics attribute.

To carry the Georgia Tech-specific ethics attribute, a course must demonstrate alignment of course level objectives, content, and assessments with each of the following:

1. An ability to recognize ethical and professional responsibilities in real-world contexts.
2. An ability to assess actions or decisions based on established ethical principles and theories, or through deliberative processes.
3. An ability to consider the implications of actions, both broadly (e.g. global, economic, environmental, or societal) and for individuals.