

Fall 2026 CS 4803/8803—The Future of Work

Course Information

Instructor

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Office hours: 10am Mondays and by appointment

Course Description

Technology can shape work in divergent ways. On one hand, it could reduce burdensome or tedious work, enable us to focus on the more satisfying aspects of our jobs, and perhaps even free us from work entirely. On the other hand, it could degrade job quality and satisfaction, and increase alienation.

These tensions persist today, as artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and platform mediation have significant implications for many aspects of work and employment. Social factors such as ongoing impacts from COVID-19 or discourse about the value of human labor also shape the effects of these emerging technologies.

This course introduces students to the relationship between work and technology, and inquires into how various stakeholders (including us, as future developers, designers, and workers ourselves) might shape the futures of work and workers. We will examine how the design, implementation, and outcomes of technological change are shaped by multiple forces.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be equipped to:

- Understand the historical role of technology in shaping work
- Use this understanding to unpack and analyze key contemporary issues around work and technology
- Imagine pathways to possible futures of work and the role of various stakeholders in those pathways
- Develop your analytic skills so that you can evaluate an intellectual position and synthesize research to support a coherent argument

Required Course Materials

None

Assignments

The total grade for the class will be based upon the following factors and weights:

- 20%—Participation
- 20%—Paper presentations
- 20%—Reading reflections
- 40%—Final project

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

- 90-100%—A
- 80-89%—B
- 70-79%—C
- 60-69%—D
- 0-59%—F

Participation

Almost everything in class is learned from engaging with the readings and showing up, so this is a significant component of the course grade. I will grade your participation in a holistic manner out of 10 points at the end of the semester. You get a 10 by:

- consistently showing up to class
- giving 24-hour notice for absences
- having no more than 2 unexcused absences (these [guidelines](#) define excused absences)
- getting to class on time
- submitting assignments on time (can use two late days)
- staying engaged in online and in-class discussions and exercises
- doing the readings every week

If any of these forms of participation is repeatedly lacking throughout the semester, it will impact your participation grade. If at any point students are wondering what their participation grade looks like, they should ask.

Paper presentations

For each class's readings, a group of students will collaboratively present the readings in a ~15 min presentation. Students will unpack the readings, sharing historical and author context, and seed the class discussion with critical or thought-provoking questions. Students are encouraged to discuss ideas for the presentation with the teaching team if needed.

Reading reflections

All students are required to read the papers for the week and submit a weekly reading reflection (see [How to Read a Book](#) for guidance on reading). Each reading reflection is worth 2 points. You get 1.5 points for submitting a ~200 word reflection on Slack by Mondays 9am, and .5 point for engaging with 2-3 other reflections on Slack by the next Monday's class. These are lightweight assignments, intended for students to (a) engage deeply with weekly readings, (b) express thoughts in writing, since not everyone will have the chance or willingness to speak in class, and (c) engage with similar and different perspectives of others in the class. Note that these written assignments are especially key for those who are inclined to participate less vocally in class. Through these reflections, students are encouraged to connect ideas they pick up in class with ideas outside that they have encountered in their lives, work experiences, etc.

Final project

Pitch — a 10-minute presentation of a proposed project and final deliverable, including references (10 points)

Final Proposal — updated slides reflecting feedback from pitch (5 points)

Peer Feedback — teams will give each other feedback during class (5 points)

Presentation — 10-minute presentation in class (10 points)

Report — final deliverable (20 points)

The project is meant to bring together everything that the students learn in class with the real world. This is the main deliverable for the class and it is meant to challenge and encourage students to step out of their comfort zone/their normal ways of thinking about the world. The pitch will entail a description of what the project team wishes to study (and why), while the final proposal will incorporate the feedback received from the instructor and class Q&A. During peer feedback later in the semester, teams will give each other constructive feedback on what they could do more of, or do differently. In the end-of-semester presentations, students will

summarize their lessons learned for the term. Finally, the report at the end of the term will be a project report or a paper. Detailed instructions for each of the above will be provided in class.

There are three options:

1. Students can choose to do a case study, analyzing a particular tech intervention based on research conducted online, and deep engagement with the texts assigned for reading during the semester. Should involve 1 member, max 2.
2. Students can choose to do a design project, taking up a “problem” they would like to “solve”. They would need to identify experts in the area that they can talk to in the process. They will need to also test their ideas/prototypes with experts/target users. Should involve 2 members, max 3.
3. Students can do a research paper, taking up a topic they would like to investigate via an interview study or a detailed survey. They would need to identify the participants for this. Findings would need to be analyzed from the perspective of the course. Should involve 1-2 members.

Course Policies, Expectations, & Guidelines

In general, all students and teaching staff should abide by [Georgia Tech's Student-Faculty Expectations](#). Below are additional expectations and policies around conduct.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. [Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also then email me in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs; I will make every effort to accommodate.

Discussion and Respect

In this class, we will present and discuss a diversity of perspectives. Although you may not always agree with others' perspectives, you are required to be respectful of others' thoughts and experiences. Repeated inappropriate or abusive comments and/or behavior will be cause for disciplinary action. If you feel that your perspectives are being slighted, or you in any way feel uncomfortable in the classroom, please contact me immediately.

Well-being

Life can bring challenges and stressors that can impact learning and overall well-being. Seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself. If you are struggling, you can contact me so that we can find solutions together. Georgia Tech also offers resources for student well-being through the [Center for Mental Health Care and Resources](#).

Sexual Harassment (Title IX)

All faculty members are considered "Responsible Employees" per Georgia Tech's [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#). I am, therefore, required to report allegations of sexual misconduct to the Title IX office. You can reach out to the Title IX Coordinator with questions at 404-894-5698. If you need to speak in confidence with someone who does not have an obligation to report to the Title IX Office, please contact:

- VOICE Advocates: 404.385.4451 | 404.385.4464 404.894.2500 (on-call advocate available outside of business hours) healthinitiatives.gatech.edu/well-being/voice
- The Center for Mental Health Care and Resources | 404-894-3498 | www.care.gatech.edu
- Women's Health at 404-894-1434, or any other clinician in Stamps Health Services at 404-894-9980

AI-based Assistance

We treat AI-based assistance, such as ChatGPT, the same way we treat collaboration with other people: you are welcome to talk about your ideas and work with other people, both inside and outside the class, as well as with AI-based assistants. However, all work you submit must be your own. You should never include in your assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper citation (including quotation marks and in-line citation for direct quotes). Including anything you did not write in your assignment without proper citation will be treated as an academic misconduct case. If you are unsure where the line is between collaborating with AI and copying AI, we recommend the following heuristics:

Heuristic 1: Never copy content from your conversation with an AI assistant. Learn from your interaction with the AI assistant, then let your assignment reflect your improved understanding.

Heuristic 2: Do not have your assignment and the AI agent open at the same time. Again, use your conversation with the AI as a learning experience, then close the interaction, open your assignment, and let your assignment reflect your revised knowledge.

I strongly discourage the use of AI-based assistance for gleaning insights about people and generating design ideas. Part of the reason we do field work is to question misconceptions and stereotypes and gather evidence about people's actual lives and perceptions. Relying on AI-generated information not only robs you of the opportunity to practice skills, but also [risks perpetuating stereotypes](#).

Please note that tools for checking grammar and spellings, such as Grammarly, are allowed.

If you are using AI-based assistance, you must cite and describe how, where, and in what capacity you use it. If we discover the use of AI-based assistance outside of what is cited, you will be graded 0 for the assignment. If you did not use AI-based assistance, you must state that.

Acknowledgements

This syllabus draws on resources and advice from instructors of similar/adjacent courses, including Benjamin Shestakofsky, Neha Kumar, Jey Saung, and Bhumika Chauhan.