

HTS 2016 Syllabus

Social Issues and Public Policy HTS 2016, Section A, 3 Credits
Summer 2026 (online asynchronous)

Instructor Information

Instructor

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Email

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General Course Information

Description

Draws on sociological theory and research to understand the major economic, social, and cultural issues facing American society today.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to apply the sociological imagination to differentiate between "personal troubles" and "public issues," analyzing how individual experiences are shaped by broader social structures and historical contexts.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast major sociological theoretical frameworks and concepts and apply them to explain current economic and cultural phenomena in American society.
- Students will be able to evaluate the structural and systemic causes of social inequality and explain how these factors intersect to produce specific social problems.
- Students will be able to critically assess public policy interventions, using empirical evidence to project their potential impacts, unintended consequences, and efficacy in addressing social issues.

Required Course Materials

Erik Olin Wright and Joel Rogers. 2024. *American Society: How It Really Works*. New York: W.W. Norton. (Third Edition).

Grading Policy:

Final Grades Rubric out of 1000 points possible (what appears on your transcript)

- 900 and above = A
- 800-899 = B
- 700-799 = C
- 600-699 = D
- Less than 600 points = F

Assessments:

- Syllabus Quiz (5% of grade)
- Completion rate of lecture videos (10% of grade)
- Weekly video reflections (20% of grade)
- Part 1 Writing Assignment (20% of grade)
- Part 2 Writing Assignment (20% of grade)
- Part 3 Writing Assignment (25% of grade)

Description of Graded Components

- 50 points (5% of grade): There will be a syllabus quiz to evaluate students' understandings of the expectations for the course in the first week
- 100 points (10% of grade): Completion rate of lecture videos (based on watching the entire lecture video)
- 200 points (20% of grade): Weekly video reflections (prompts provided)
- 200 points (20% of grade): Part 1 writing assignment around the economy in the United States (5-6 pages)
- 200 points (20% of grade): Part 2 writing assignment around inequality and justice in the United States (5-6 pages)
- 200 points (25% of grade): Part 3 writing assignment around public policy and politics (5-6 pages)

USG Required Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

This course is online and asynchronous therefore attendance will not be assessed. Completion of assignments will be used to assess participation, including viewing the entire lecture videos.

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 plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Core IMPACTS

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

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students 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 Outcome:

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

Additional Georgia Tech Required Policies

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 special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Course Expectations, Policies, and Resources

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

Not applicable

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

For assignments, you are expected to write using your own words and ideas; however, you can use AI to help brainstorm or outline your papers, which should be properly cited using the questions that you asked ChatGPT and the answers that you received. Using AI like ChatGPT to completely write your papers will result in an automatic zero (0). Do not copy and paste answers from AI generated content into your paper. I will provide more guidance on using AI as a handout during the second week of classes.

We will not be doing collaboration or group work on assignments for this course; however, you are welcome to bounce ideas off classmates if you know them and feel it is appropriate.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Late assignments: Normally, the policy for late assignments is that you will need a documented health, funeral, or university sponsored excuse for completing late assignments at full credit. Assignments completed after their due dates without an excuse will receive up to a drop in letter grade (10% of total score) for every two days beyond their due date and receive a 0 if turned in over 7 days late. Even if you have accommodations for a disability, you should still work with me in advance of deadlines to set up appropriate due dates. Any late assignments must be turned in by the last day of class to be graded.

Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions:

Classes and class recordings may not be recorded or distributed by students without the express consent of the instructor unless it is according to accommodations granted by the Office of Disability Services. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students currently enrolled in the course.

Students may not record or share the materials or recordings, including screen capturing or automated bots, unless the instructor gives permission. Digitally proctored exams may require students to engage the video camera, but those recordings will not be shared with or disclosed to others without consent unless legally permitted.

Course Expectations for Students

- Students are expected to keep up with readings from week to week, which are tentatively listed in the course outline. Skimming readings is justifiable when necessary.
- Students attend lectures and participate in discussions when possible. I would expect, on average, between 6-10 hours of work per week (including watching the video lectures). Most importantly, I expect students to put high-quality work into their assignments.

Course Expectations for the Instructor

- I will foster an environment of mutual respect, fairness, and kindness, regardless of the students' identity and ideological perspective.
- I will do my best to respond to emails from students within 48 hours during Monday to Friday and 72 hours on weekends, except under extenuating circumstances or if I am out of the office.
- I will be prepared for class and typically grade assignments within a week of receiving them, except under extenuating circumstances.