

PHIL 3127 Syllabus

Course Name:

- **Sci, Tech & Human Values (i.e. “Science, Technology & Human Values”)**
- **Fall 2026**
- (Multiple Sections)
- (3 Credits)

This class is taught by different instructors, and there is great variation in content between instructors. Prof. Klein's version of this class carries the subtitle:

- **“The Contemporary Enlightenment”**

Instructor Information

- **Instructor: Prof. Hans Klein**
- **Email: hans@gatech.edu**

General Course Information

Description

PHIL3127 explores the philosophical theme of enlightenment. Philosophers throughout the ages, from ancient Greece to contemporary times, have maintained that human consciousness suffers from error, be it in our store of formal knowledge, our beliefs and values, or our interests and desires. In this view, we live in a world of “false” consciousness or *illusion*. In the enlightenment view, illusion is not accidental but is created with *intent*, produced and propagated by society’s institutions of education, religion, business, and government. Through *critique* individuals can come to recognize illusion, both as they have internalized it and as it manifests itself in the world around them. In a state of greater enlightenment, individuals may work to reform the illusion-creating systems, thereby attaining a higher degree of *freedom*.

This is not a class in ethics per se, but it addresses core issues in ethics, most notably the presuppositions of ethical behavior. Rather than grounding ethical action on the presupposition of a rational agent acting on the basis of higher principle, such as utility maximization (Mill) or universality (Kant), we consider human rationality to be incomplete but to be capable of development and improvement. We examine cognitive impediments

to ethical action (“false consciousness”), various accounts of the origins of such impediments, methods for the critique of consciousness, and visions of freedom. Readings will draw not only on philosophy but also on literature and social science.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Question some of your certainties about the world around you, your values, and your personal aspirations.
- Identify institutions that form and influence your thinking.
- Apply methods to identify illogical or contradictory accounts of the world, i.e. perform "critique".
- Identify institutions and methods through which you can obtain less-false knowledge.

Required Course Materials

- Film: *The Matrix*
- Readings include works by:
 - Plato
 - Arthur Schopenhauer
 - Aldous Huxley
 - *The American Conservative* magazine
 - Edward Herman & Noam Chomsky
 - Adam Smith

Grading Policy:

- Quizzes (40%). There are 5 quizzes. Lowest quiz score (of the first four quizzes) is dropped.
- Papers (50%). There are 2 short papers (7-10 pp.) They count equally.
- Participation (10%). Evaluated in the once-weekly discussion sections.
- Absences. Two absences (excused or unexcused) are allowed. Each further unexcused absence drops your final grade by 1 percentage point.

Description of Graded Components

- Quizzes consist of approximately 10 short-answer questions (multiple choice, fill in the blank, True/False.)

- Papers are 7-10 pages long. The first paper addresses theoretical issues, the second paper relates theoretical issues to the world around us.

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

- Two absences (excused or unexcused) are allowed. Each further unexcused absence drops your final grade by 1 percentage point.
- Excused absences (with documentation) do not count against the final grade.

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.

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.

Extra Credit Opportunities

- Extra credit is often awarded when over 90% of the class performs a CIOS review.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

- Use of AI to write papers is not allowed. Papers must be run through AI detection software provided by the instructor.

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

- Work must be completed by the deadline. Students with excuses may be given more time.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

- No mobile devices may be used during class.
- Students may use laptops during class, but if you are observed doing email, you will be counted as absent.

Additional Course Policies

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:

“A list of resources for undergraduate students’ academic success and information about advising can be found at [Success at Tech](#). Of particular importance is:

- Academic Support: Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at success.gatech.edu/tutoring, email us at tutoring@gatech.edu, or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

Student Well-Being:

This warning is included at the request of past students:

- *Education is a mind-altering experience, and philosophy is powerful stuff. This class will encourage you question your reality and your very existence. It can be destabilizing. Some students have had to withdraw from the class because of this. If you are in a vulnerable period in your life, this class may not be for you.*

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and

maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being
([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))

More resources on supporting student well-being on the syllabus and beyond are available through the [Learning Well Initiative](#).

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