

GT 1000: First-year Seminar

Course Details

Fall 2026

Section NS2

CRN: 87008

Neuroscience Majors

Instructor: Dr. Matthew Nusnbaum (he/him)

Academic Faculty in the Neuroscience Undergraduate Program

Associate Director of the Undergraduate Neuroscience Program

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Information about your Team Leaders and drop-in hours can be found on the Canvas course page!

General Course Information

Course Description

This seminar course is designed to help you make a successful transition to college by becoming better acquainted with the academic and social environments here at Georgia Tech. Through the course, you will acquire strategies that promote academic, social, and professional success. This is a highly interactive course that requires active student participation and working collaboratively in small groups.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Develop self-awareness and self-knowledge, particularly as it relates to academic interests and professional goals.
2. Describe their path to graduation and identify opportunities for academic and professional enrichment with the assistance of a faculty member or advisor.
3. Demonstrate the ability to lead and productively participate in collaborative projects.

Required Materials

None

Technology Requirements

Technology will be used to deliver content, provide resources, assess learning, and facilitate interaction. Primarily we will be using our course management system, **Canvas**, for offering class-related content and submitting class assignments. **You can access Canvas at <http://gatech.instructure.com>** and you will need to log in with your GT Account information. If you do not have regular access to a computer, GT computer areas are available on campus, and the library has equipment resources available for check-out (see <https://library.gatech.edu/computing>).

Grading

Grading for the course will be broken down as follows. Each category has multiple assignments due throughout the semester, each worth a portion of the total category. A full breakdown of points is located *Course Assignments* section of the syllabus.

Participation, Attendance, & Homework	250
Team Project	250
Design Your Academic Plan	250
Career Exploration Project	250
Total	1000 points

Grade Scale

A	900-1000 points (90-100%)
B	800-899 points (80-89%)
C	700-799 points (70-79%)
D	600-699 points (60-69%)
F	<600 points (<60%)

Assessment of your learning

Course Assignments

Attendance and Participation (250 points): This class is designed for students to become active, engaged participants, so it's vital that all students attend each class session and are fully engaged in all class activities. The success of our class depends on student participation, so you'll earn points for your class participation. This means that you'll need to do more than just show up at the appointed time and place—you'll also need to come to class prepared to participate.

- **Each class meeting is worth 10 POINTS.** You will earn 10 points for attendance and active engagement in the activities that day. There are 14 class meetings (14x10=140pts), and only the top 13 days will count towards your final grade (**130 POINTS**).
- In addition to active in-class engagement, there will be two engagement assignments that are expected to be completed *outside of* class (**2x35 points each=70 POINTS**). These are clearly outlined on the class schedule and in Canvas.
- In November, we will dive into GT's campus and its traditions, and the project associated with that will be completed during class time and is worth **50 POINTS**.

Team Project (250 points): One of the most important skills any person can learn is the ability to collaborate productively with a team and to demonstrate the ability to lead. This project is designed to help you develop the skills you'll need to effectively work with your peers in a collaborative environment—whether that's in a class group project, your research lab or capstone experience, or in the professional world. The members of your team will present the project to the class and be expected to answer questions. This project is broken down into smaller components outlined below:

- The first assignment each team will complete is a Team Contract (**15 POINTS**). The group will work collaboratively to develop the contract, and it will outline the goals and expectations of the team for the semester. Each team member is expected to sign the contract and uphold the agreed upon expectations throughout the semester.
- Teams will work together to find a neuroscience lab at neuro.gatech.edu/research/research-area that they want to learn more about. Teams will submit their chosen lab with a brief (2-3 bullet points) on the research focus of that lab (**15 POINTS**).
- Teams will craft a professional email to request a brief virtual or in-person interview with a member of their chosen lab (e.g., graduate student, postdoc, faculty) (**20 POINTS**). Teams will develop 3-4 questions ahead of time to ask the lab member about their research and lab experience (**25 POINTS**). All members of the team are expected to participate in the interview process.
- Teams will work together to develop a presentation about the lab. Presentations are expected to be ~5-8 minutes and will be given on the last day of class. Both oral (**50 POINTS**) and visual (**50 POINTS**) aspects of the presentation will be assessed. All group members are expected to participate in all aspects of the presentation.
- At the end of the semester, each team member will complete an evaluation of their group (**25 POINTS**) and a reflection on their experience on the team (**50 POINTS**).

Design Your Academic Plan (250 points): This assignment will help you to map out your path to graduation and to think about how your current major aligns with your interests, strengths, and goals. For this assignment, you will delve deeper into your academic plan. This assignment will include multiple elements, all designed to help you on your path to graduation.

- Part of academic planning is having a strong foundation in time management and an honest sense of what can be done in a given week. To start off college off strong, each student will develop a Weekly Schedule (**25 POINTS**) and complete the Semester-at-a-Glance (**50 POINTS**) for their Fall 2026 schedule.
- Your academic advisor is a crucial part of your academic success team! To help facilitate this relationship, each student will be required to meet with their academic advisor before Phase I registration to discuss their 4-year plan. After the advising meeting, students will annotate the advisors notes from Navigate360 with tangible plans for next steps (**25 POINTS**).
- After your advising appointment, you will submit your 4-year plan for additional feedback (**100 POINTS**).
- Reflection is a huge part of growth. Students will engage in specific reflection prompts about their academic plan (**50 POINTS**).

Career Exploration Project (250 points): This project is designed to help you think critically about your goals, values, and sense of purpose as you begin—or perhaps continue—to consider your plans after Tech. This assignment will ask you to reflect on your goals, think about how your interests and skills align in your major and future career, and take an active step forward in your career readiness plan. This assignment has three parts:

- A resume (draft **50 POINTS**; final **100 POINTS**)
- LinkedIn profile review (**50 POINTS**)
- A reflection essay (**50 POINTS**)

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

This class is designed for students to become active participants, so it's vital that all students attend each class session and are fully engaged in all class activities. This means that you'll need to do more than just show up at the appointed time and place—you'll also need to come to class prepared to participate.

Please attend every scheduled meeting on time. That said, if you are exhibiting any symptoms of illness (fever over 100.4 F, coughing, nausea, etc.), please stay home to rest, seek medical attention if appropriate, and contact me as soon as possible. Excessive lateness and absences (3 or more per semester) can negatively impact your final grade outcome. If you have extenuating circumstances, I will try and work with you to address those challenges. Please communicate early and often if you are struggling with issues that may call for accommodations.

Criteria for Successful Completion and Acceptable Student Conduct

Creating an engaging and productive class experience is the responsibility of both the instructor and the students involved. To ensure you are getting the most out of our class and contributing positively to our learning environment, please be mindful of the following:

1. Please create a habit of checking your GT e-mail and Canvas daily. Important class announcements and information will be posted to Canvas, and you want to make sure you're fully equipped for success.
2. Grades will be posted to Canvas throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to keep track of your submitted assignments and grade progress throughout the semester. If something seems missing or off to you, please reach out to me to discuss.
3. GT 1000 is designed to be informative, helpful, and fun! However, the class is graded and does carry one credit towards your degree. For that reason, it is important that all assignments you submit be high quality. Please double check your work for spelling, capitalization, and grammatical errors. This practice is also good for creating a habit of professionalism.
4. You can expect that as your GT 1000 instructor, I will come to class each day ready to engage you in learning about Georgia Tech and learning how to be successful academically and professionally. Each session will be structured to encourage your active participation, so please come prepared to participate and contribute to the class.
5. To ensure everyone feels safe, heard, and able to learn in our class, please demonstrate appropriate classroom behavior at all times. This means that you should speak and act in a respectful manner towards your classmates, your Team Leader, and your instructor. To review the Student Code of Conduct, please visit <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/student-code-conduct>.

Academic Integrity Statement

GT 1000 is a class based in your own discovery, exploration, and reflection of what you want your time at Tech and professional life to be. Unpacking your thought processes based on information you acquire through campus resources is a major component of the assignments. Therefore, the use of AI is strongly discouraged. If you wish to use AI as part of your brainstorming process, that is fine; however, per the Georgia Tech Honor Code, no work produced via AI should be submitted as your own. If you have questions about what constitutes acceptable use, please see the instructor.

The Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code applies to all work submitted in this course. To review the Honor Code, please visit <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-code>.

Georgia Tech Values Statement

At Georgia Tech, we see different backgrounds and perspectives as essential to learning, discovery, and creation. We strive to remove barriers to student success, and to build a welcoming community where everyone has the opportunity to contribute to our mission. As outlined in our strategic plan (<https://strategicplan.gatech.edu/values>), we want to create an environment of holistic learning where all individuals can grow and learn to lead healthy, purposeful, impactful lives.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please notify me as soon as possible so we can resolve the issue. Students with disabilities should also contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), whose purpose is to collaborate with students, faculty, and staff to create a campus environment that ensures all students have an equal opportunity to access the Georgia Tech community. ODS can be reached at 404.894.2563, dsinfo@gatech.edu, or <https://disabilityservices.gatech.edu>. Please contact me ahead of time to discuss any issues related to disabilities. I am happy to work with you.

Student Use of Artificial Intelligence

GT 1000 is a class based in your own discovery, exploration, and reflection of what you want your time at Tech and professional life to be. Unpacking your thought processes based on information you acquire through campus resources is a major component of the assignments. Therefore, the use of AI is strongly discouraged. If you wish to use AI as part of your brainstorming process, that is fine; however, per the Georgia Tech Honor Code, no work produced via AI should be submitted as your own. If you have questions about what constitutes acceptable use, please see me.

Communication

As your professor, I welcome having conversations with you whenever possible. The best ways to reach me are before or after class, in drop-in hours, or by email. When emailing, you usually can expect a response within 24 hours. Communications received Monday through Thursday after 5:00 p.m. generally will be returned the next day. On the weekend or when I'm away from campus, my response may be longer in coming.

When corresponding by email, I will communicate with you using only your GT email account. This is to protect your sensitive personal information, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Please check your email account every day, so that you do not miss important information regarding the class or other key announcements.

Collaboration and Group Work

Our class will often engage in collaborative discussion and activities. You also will participate in a group project. In general, collaborating with your classmates is an encouraged practice. However, other than the Team Project contract and presentation materials, the work you submit under your name should be your own--not that of others or of AI. If you have any questions about what constitutes allowable collaboration, please see me to discuss.

Extensions and Late Assignments

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the assignments, catch up on the required material, and complete the work. Exchanging contact information with a classmate or two at the start of the semester can help in case you need to reach out to someone about notes or covered content. If you will be absent for an Institute-approved reason or religious observance, let's discuss in advance a plan for you to keep up with class.

All assignments are due at 6:00pm on the due date (Fridays) unless otherwise noted in Canvas. However, sometimes life can throw you a curve ball, and you could use some extra time to finish up. Assignments can be turned in up to one week after the due date. However, late assignments will earn a 10% grade deduction per day unless an extension has been arranged in advance. If you would like to request an extension for an Institute-approved absence or with official documentation from the Dean of Students, please do so at least one day before the assignment deadline.

Welcome to Georgia Tech and to GT 1000! Let's make the semester a great one!