

HTS 3102 Syllabus

Social Theory and Structure HTS 3102, Section I, 3 Credits
Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor

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General Course Information

Description

This course explores the original writings of Karl Marx, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and W.E.B. Du Bois, whose work collectively maps the main threads of sociological research. Selected texts include the concepts that have proven most useful and durable in social scientific research.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify major theorists in the classical sociology cannon and describe the theoretical perspective associated with each.
- Position social thinkers in an intellectual lineage and explain how these lineages form a scholarly conversation, one with another.
- Assess the logical integrity, underlying assumptions, and inherent implications of different theoretical positions.
- Apply social theories to explain contemporary phenomena and postulate future trajectories.
- Evaluate contemporary political, economic, and social claims relative to established theoretical traditions.

Required Course Materials

Books:

- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*.
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Division of Labor*.
- Tucker, Robert C. (ed.) *The Marx-Engles Reader*.
- Weber, Max. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Additional articles/excerpts/book chapters:

- 1) "What Is Enlightenment?" by Immanuel Kant
- 2) *The Wealth of Nations*, chap 1-3, by Adam Smith
- 3) Excerpt from *Suicide*, by Emile Durkheim
- 4) Excerpt from *The Writings of Max Weber*.

Grading Policy:

- Participation (40% of grade)
- Reflection Essays (20% of grade)
- Mid-Term (20% of grade)
- Final Exam (20% of grade)

Description of Graded Components

- **Participation:** In accordance with the Institute's Student-Faculty Expectations, students are expected come to class on time and prepared to engage actively in discussion of the assigned readings. Students begin the semester with a 95 in participation. Points may then be added or lost. Evident deficiencies from normal expectations will cause point deductions, which may accrue exponentially.
- **Reflection Essays:** Students must write one reflection essay about each theorist we are reading (Marx, Weber, Durkheim, and Du Bois). In this essay you should explain the relevance of the theorist we are studying for analyzing some dimension of contemporary life. Apply the concepts of the theorist to a current event. Students can pick the concept and the issue, but there they must then do solid intellectual labor in explaining both the concept and how it relates to contemporary events. Reflection essays should be about 3 pages (2 full pages minimum; and I will stop reading at page 5). They must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, with 1" margins. There is no specific due date for these essays, but they must be completed within one week of finishing that section of the semester. In other words, one cannot turn in an essay about Marx while the class is discussing Durkheim. The deadline for each reflection essay is listed on the syllabus and on Canvas.
- **Exams:** The mid-term and final exams are designed to be pedagogical for the entire class, while also assessing student mastery of course content. The exam will be oral and it will take place during class and in front of the entire class. Prior to the exam, students will be provided a list of concepts that we have covered in class up to that point in the semester. On the days of the exam, students will be randomly assigned one or two concepts to explain. (In other words, students will not have to demonstrate mastery of all concepts, but they must prepare to demonstrate mastery of all concepts). After the student explains the concept, the professor and other students may ask clarifying questions to further gauge mastery. Then all members of the class will individually assign a grade to the student's answer with a brief explanation. The professor will make the final determination of the exam grade, but I will take student assessments into account. To receive full credit for the exam, students must attend the entire exam time period (not just their own brief concept explanation) and must provide assessments for all the other student exams. You will be graded on the quality of your peer assessments.

Grade Point Breakdown

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

*If taking this course as pass/fail, the threshold for passing the course is 70.

Use of Generative AI is Prohibited

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. Using Generative AI at any stage of the writing process without attribution is plagiarism. While some faculty allow students to use generative AI as long as it is properly cited, I do not. For the purposes of this course, the use of generative AI is absolutely prohibited.

Technology Policy

Students are not allowed to have computers or phones out during this class without permission from the instructor. You are expected to take notes by hand, unless you receive a disability-related accommodation.

Late Assignments

Reflection Essays will drop 10 points if not completed by the deadline, and a further 20 points for each 24-hour period beyond it. Essays will not be accepted three days after the deadline. Please remember, you do not have to wait until the deadline to write the reflection. You may write it at any point during the weeks we are discussing that theorist. You have ample time to complete this assignment. Exams will take place during class, and you are expected to attend the entire class periods and participate fully in the examination process. If you have an institute-approved excused absence, you will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam. Otherwise, you will receive a zero.

USG Required Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

Students are expected to attend class and attendance will be taken. Students may miss two class periods without excuse or penalty. Each subsequent absence will lower the participation grade, and deficiencies may accrue exponentially. Repeated tardies will also impact the participation grade. Absences excused by the institute do not count toward the tally once I receive official notification. For more information on the Georgia Tech attendance policy, please visit: <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/> . Forms for requesting institutional approval for absences may be found here:

<https://registrar.gatech.edu/info/institute-approved-absence-form-for-students>

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 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

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 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.

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.

This syllabus is subject to change.