

Georgia Institute of Technology

Scheller College of Business

MGT4074 – Fintech & Crypto Tokens

Fall 2026 (Aug 24th – Dec 7th)

Syllabus

Updated August 22, 2026. All scheduling details are subject to change as the course proceeds.

Instructor: Professor Pauline Liang
Email: pauline.liang@scheller.gatech.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, 12:30pm – 1:30pm, Scheller Room 4228 (starts on Aug 31)
TA: Jacob Hornberger
TA Email: jacob.hornberger@gatech.edu
Meeting Times & Location:
Section A: Mon & Wed, 9:30am–10:45am, Scheller College of Business, Room 314
Section B: Mon & Wed, 2:00pm–3:15pm, Scheller College of Business, Room 202

1 Course Description and Objectives

Digital innovation is disrupting financial functions such as payments and retail banking. Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ether are cumulatively worth trillions of dollars. In MGT4074, we will trace how money moves, and who is permitted to move it, from the traditional financial system (“TradFi”) to blockchains, cryptocurrencies, smart contracts, and decentralized finance (“DeFi”). The bulk of your grade will be earned in two handwritten midterm exams and one final project. You will leave this class with a foundational understanding of what technological facts have shaped the development of the traditional financial system and its regulation, the low-level details of how blockchains work and what problems they have (and have not) solved in finance, and where the cutting edge of financial technology is located in the year 2026.

2 Enrollment Requirement

Prerequisite(s): Management 3062 (Financial Management) or Management 3078 (Finance & Investments) with a D or better.

3 Instruction Method

The course is taught in person only, at the scheduled time and location. This course is held in Technology Square, so please allow at least 30 minutes of travel time between this class and classes on the main campus. Pop quizzes will be given frequently and without advance notice at the

beginning of class. There will be no make-up opportunities for students who are late or absent. Quizzes and midterm exams are closed-book, handwritten, and administered in person. Students may also be cold-called without advance notice, so please come to every class prepared to participate and answer questions.

3.1 Communication

Questions are welcome. The easiest way to get an answer is to catch me after class, and office hours are the right place for anything that needs more time. You can also email me with “[MGT4074]” in the subject line, and I will usually reply within 24 hours on weekdays.

3.2 Electronic Devices

No electronic devices – phones, laptops, tablets, or similar – may be used in class. Please silence your devices before class begins.

3.3 AI Policy

No AI or other outside resources may be used on quizzes or exams. You may use AI for homework, the final project, and your reading preparation, but you must understand everything you submit and you remain fully responsible for it.

3.4 Study Groups

I strongly encourage you to form study groups to review the material and quiz each other in preparation for pop quizzes and exams. Final projects are done in groups, so it helps to get to know your classmates early in the semester.

4 Course Materials

4.1 Required Readings

All required readings will be posted on Canvas. They will include news articles, short essays, and academic papers. Short readings will be made available at least 2 days before I will quiz you on them. Longer readings will be made available at least 5 days before I will quiz you on them. I will make clear the due date for each reading when it is posted.

4.2 Lecture Slides

Lecture slides will be posted on Canvas after class. The slides are your best resource for studying for exams. The answers to the exams and pop quizzes will come directly from the lecture slides and from the required readings. The exams and pop quizzes are closed-book, so you will need to commit the information from the slides and readings to memory.

4.3 Canvas

All course announcements will be posted on Canvas: please check Canvas regularly. On a regular basis, I will also send emails to the entire class about logistical matters, such as reminders of deadlines. Please check your email regularly.

4.4 Suggested Textbooks

There is no required textbook for this class, but some students prefer to have an extensive source for reference and background reading. There are two excellent textbooks that will enhance your understanding of this subject:

- Narayanan, Arvind, Joseph Bonneau, Edward Felten, Andrew Miller, and Steven Goldfeder (2016), *Bitcoin and Cryptocurrency Technologies: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Princeton University Press.
- Di Maggio, Marco (2025), *Blockchain, Crypto, and DeFi: Bridging Finance and Technology*. Wiley.

5 Grading Policy

There is no curve by default. You are collaborators, not competitors. Your percent grade is based on the following:

Category	Percent
Homework	20%
Quizzes	10%
Midterms ($\times 2$)	40%
Final Project	25%
Attendance & Participation	5%
Total	100%

Your percent grade will then be converted to a letter grade according to the following schedule:

Letter Grade	Percent Grade
A	$90\% \leq \text{grade}$
B	$80\% \leq \text{grade} < 90\%$
C	$70\% \leq \text{grade} < 80\%$
D	$60\% \leq \text{grade} < 70\%$
F	$\text{grade} < 60\%$

Canvas may automatically calculate some kind of weighted grade for you – please ignore it. Your grade in this class is calculated by this rubric alone.

Bonus credit for course feedback: Your honest feedback helps the students who take this course after you. If your section reaches an 85% response rate on the Course Instructor Opinion Survey (CIOS) by Dec 10, every student in that section will receive 0.5% bonus credit added to their final percent grade. The survey is anonymous: I see only the section's response rate, never who responded, and I read your comments only after final grades are submitted.

5.1 Homework

Homework assignments will be posted on Canvas periodically and discussed in class. All assignments will be available for at least 7 days before they are due, and all work must be submitted through Canvas. Late work loses 10% per calendar day, starting at the due time.

5.2 Quizzes

Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class at my discretion without pre-announcement or warning. Please come to class on time. They will cover slides from past classes and any readings that I may from time to time announce in class and on Canvas as "required". Quizzes will be closed-book and handwritten in person. Your lowest quiz score of the semester will be dropped.

5.3 Exams

Two midterm exams will be given according to the class schedule contained in this document. Each exam is worth 20%, for a total of 40% of your grade. Exams will be closed-book and handwritten in person. The format of the exams will be a combination of multiple-choice and short response. The exams are designed to be completed in fewer than 60 minutes, but all 75 minutes of class time are available for you to complete the exams. Exams are not cumulative. There is no final exam.

5.4 Final Project

The final project counts for 25% of your grade. You will work in groups, and you may choose either to defend a mini-thesis or to build a smart contract. Full details, including group size and the grading rubric, will be available after the second midterm. Every group presents in one of the final four sessions. Attendance is expected at all four, not only on the day your group presents.

5.5 Class Attendance

Attendance is expected at all class sessions, including every date on which an assignment is due. I will take attendance starting the second week of class, and up to 5% of your final grade is earned through attendance and class participation.

It is your responsibility to have an absence Institute-approved, and deadlines apply, so submit your request early. Both the Institute-approved absence form and the personal emergency request form are linked at <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/dean-students/class-attendance>. You may not request approval retroactively. I will excuse an absence only if I receive notification from the Registrar's Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

For an approved absence you may make up the work you missed. A quiz missed during an approved absence will be excluded from your quiz average rather than rescheduled, since quizzes are unannounced. It is your responsibility to be present and to earn your grade. There is grace built into the grading policy: your lowest quiz score will be dropped.

6 Academic Rules and Policies

6.1 Academic Honor Code

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code ([link](#)). I am required to report any possible honor code violation to the Office of Student Integrity.

6.2 Accommodations for Disabilities

If you have established accommodations with the Office of Disability Services, please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. Any accommodations granted will begin after you present the documentation. Accommodations for a specific event will be considered after the request but before the event. No retroactive accommodations will be made. If you have a need but have not yet established accommodations through Disability Services, you should contact Disability Services at 404.894.2563 or dsinfo@gatech.edu or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu>. Disability Services offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and Disability Services. Should a new disability be identified during the term, the instructor will work with Disability Services to accommodate your needs from that time forward.

6.3 Student-Faculty Expectations

At Georgia Tech, we 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. I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

7 Support Services and Resources

In your time at Georgia Tech, you may find yourself in need of support. Below, you will find some resources to support you both as a student and as a person.

7.1 Academic Support

Center for Academic Success

- 1-to-1 tutoring: <https://success.gatech.edu/tutoring>
- Peer-Led Undergraduate Study (PLUS): <https://success.gatech.edu/tutoring/plus>
- Academic coaching: <https://success.gatech.edu/academic-coaching>
- More: <http://success.gatech.edu>

Communication Center

- Individualized help with writing and multimedia projects
- More: <http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu>

7.2 Personal Support

The Office of the Dean of Students

- link: <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/dean-students/about-dos>
- Phone: 404-894-6367
- Location: Smithgall Student Services Building 2nd floor
- More: <https://studentlife.gatech.edu/request-assistance>

Counseling Center

- link: <http://counseling.gatech.edu>
- Phone: 404-894-2575
- Location: Smithgall Student Services Building 2nd floor
- Services include short-term individual counseling, group counseling, couples counseling, testing and assessment, referral services, and crisis intervention. Their website also includes links to state and national resources.
- Students in crisis may walk in during business hours (8am–5pm, Monday through Friday) or contact the counselor on call after hours at 404-894-2204.

Students' Temporary Assistance and Resources (STAR)

- link: <https://star.studentlife.gatech.edu>
- Can assist with interview, clothing, food, and housing needs

Stamps Health Services

- link: <https://health.gatech.edu>
- Phone: 404-894-1420
- Primary care, pharmacy, women's health, psychiatry, immunization and allergy, health promotion, and nutrition

8 Tentative Course Outline

Date	Topic
Part I History of Fintech, TradFi, and Payment Systems	
M Aug 24th	Course Introduction and the History of Fintech I
W Aug 26th	The History of Fintech II
<i>Reminder: Fall 2026 Phase II registration closes on Aug 28.</i>	
M Aug 31st	The Traditional Finance Industry I
W Sep 2nd	The Traditional Finance Industry II
M Sep 7th	Labor Day – No Class
W Sep 9th	Bank-Railed Payment I
M Sep 14th	Bank-Railed Payment II
W Sep 16th	Innovation in Payment
Part II Cryptocurrency and DeFi	
M Sep 21st	Bitcoin, Blockchain, and Cryptocurrencies I
W Sep 23rd	Midterm Exam I (covers Part I)
M Sep 28th	Bitcoin, Blockchain, and Cryptocurrencies II
W Sep 30th	Bitcoin, Blockchain, and Cryptocurrencies III
M Oct 5th	Fall Break – No Class
W Oct 7th	Smart Contracts and Ethereum I
M Oct 12th	Smart Contracts and Ethereum II
W Oct 14th	Fungible and Non-Fungible Tokens
M Oct 19th	Decentralized Finance I
W Oct 21st	Decentralized Finance II
M Oct 26th	Midterm Exam II (covers Part II)
Part III Selected Topics in Fintech	
W Oct 28th	Risks, Frauds, and Government Regulation I
<i>Reminder: Withdrawal deadline is Oct 31. Grade mode change deadline is Nov 2.</i>	
M Nov 2nd	Risks, Frauds, and Government Regulation II
W Nov 4th	Stablecoins and Tokenized Deposits I
M Nov 9th	Stablecoins and Tokenized Deposits II
W Nov 11th	Digital Banking and Open Banking I
M Nov 16th	Digital Banking and Open Banking II
W Nov 18th	Cross-Border Payment
M Nov 23rd	Final Project Presentations I
W Nov 25th	Student Recess – No Class
M Nov 30th	Final Project Presentations II
W Dec 2nd	Final Project Presentations III
M Dec 7th	Final Project Presentations IV
<i>Reminder: Complete Course Instructor Opinion Survey.</i>	

There is no final exam.

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