GT 2030 Syllabus | Spring 2027

Progress & Service Forum, 3.0 credits

Fridays, 11:00 a.m. – 1:45 p.m., CULC 129

Instructor Information

Dr. Kate Williams

Kate.williams@gatech.edu

Office Hours & Location

Hours TBD, Clough 457

General Course Information

Description

What is "Progress and Service" and how does Georgia Tech prepare leaders who advance technology and improve the human condition? In this course, you will explore the nature of complex problems that impact humanity while investigating your own unique potential to impact these problems. Through interactions with faculty, peers, and community leaders, you will learn to tackle complex problems from multiple perspectives, equipping you with greater insight into the roles and actions that enable leaders to make change. You'll also use tools of reflection to begin developing your own unique identity as a professional, and begin to make connections between you, your role as a professional, and the impact you have on society.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should have the foundational ability to:

- Integrate multiple perspectives in defining complex problems
- Reflect on their identity development as professionals
- Describe how their actions as professionals impact society

Required Text

Designing Your Life by Bill Burnett & Dale Evans

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

None

Leaders in Progress & Service

This course serves as a foundational course for Georgia Tech's Leaders in Progress & Service initiative. Successful completion of the educational sequence will result in the award of a new proposed graduation distinction, "*Leader in Progress and Service,*" to be recorded on the diploma.

The educational sequence will require completion of:

- An approved foundational course with a grade of "B" or better,
- three approved and faculty-mentored "immersive learning" experiences (such as undergraduate research, study abroad, VIP, Create-X, community service) spread over 3 semesters, and
- participation in a campus-wide Progress and Service Summit, hosted by the Leaders in Progress and Service office and attended by invited experts, students, faculty, employers, and other community partners, along with an accompanying final reflection.

Learn more about Leaders in Progress & Service at https://distinguishyourself.gatech.edu. More information about the educational sequence will be provided by your instructor in the first week of class.

Course Requirements & Grading

Assignment	Due Date	Points (out of 1,000 total)
Journal Entries (10 x 35 points)	Throughout semester	350 points
Group Project:		
Poster Presentation	4/23/2027	100 points
Slides	Final Exam Date	200 points
Papers:		
Professional Identity Statement Pt 1	02/05/2026	25 points
Professional identity Statement Pt 2	04/02/2026	75 points
Informational Interview Summary	03/05/2026	100 points
Final Reflection	Final Exam Date	150 points

Description of Graded Components

Journal Entries (10 x 35 points each = 350 points)

Throughout the semester, you will create a journal that will include exercises and reflective writing assignments on topics we have been learning about in class, your own professional identity, or other topics on occasion. While often assigned as homework, some of these journal entries might be created during class. You will generally write these from a first-person point of view. Please use a professional tone and language, good grammar and spelling, and writing generally acceptable for a college-level course. See Canvas for specific journal prompts.

Group Project (300 points)

You will be assigned to a small group to complete a project in which you use the skills and perspectives you've learned in class to define – but not solve - a complex problem. Each group will submit two deliverables for this project:

- Poster presents draft definition to classmates (last class meeting)
- Narrated slide deck presents final problem definition (in lieu of final exam)

Papers

1. **Professional Identity Statement (100 points total)**
    a. **First Draft (25 points)**
    b. **Final Draft (75 points)**

    As you clarify your own values, talents, and interests, you will also begin to reflect on the unique contributions you can make within the profession (or professions) you are thinking of pursuing. The professional identity statement is a professional piece of writing that can help you communicate to yourself and others the unique role you can play – a professional mission statement of sorts. More detail will be provided in class.

2. **Informational Interview Summary (100 points)**

    Part of the purpose of this course is to help you reflect on your own unique identity as a professional, as well as the impact professionals' actions have on society. To advance your learning toward those goals, you will be required to interview a working professional in a field you have an interest in entering. You will draft a summary of your interview for this assignment. More detail will be provided in class.

3. **Final Reflection (Individual assignment following the group project) (150 points)**

    The final assignment for this course is a written reflection that illustrates what you learned over the course of the semester about how one integrates multiple perspectives in defining complex problems. This professional piece of writing will show how you have synthesized your learning in the course. More detail will be provided in class.

Extra Credit Opportunities

Extra credit opportunities may or may not be provided at the discretion of the instructor. Any extra credit opportunities that are provided will be made available to all students in the class.

Extensions & Late Work

While I expect you to submit your assignments on time, I understand an occasional need for an extension. Late journal entries are permitted (with 10-point penalty) without any explanation. Late paper submissions must be pre-approved at least 12 hours in advance. Late group project deliverables will not be accepted.

Grading Scale

You have the opportunity to earn up to 1000 points over the course of the semester. Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale. The average grade must reach an absolute cut-off of 89.50% to be rounded up to an A, 79.50% to round up to a B, etc.

A	900-1000 points
B	800-899 points
C	700-799 points
D	600-699 points
F	0-599 points

Canvas and Communication

Canvas will be used for all assignments, announcements, grading, and for posting documents relevant to the course. I routinely send important class communications using Canvas announcements. Please make sure you have your Canvas settings adjusted so that announcements are delivered to your e-mail inbox when they are sent and not in a digest format as many of my announcements are time-sensitive.

Assignments for this course will be turned in on Canvas. Please note that if you submit a corrupted file on Canvas, you will receive a zero for the assignment with no chance to resubmit. You must verify that the file you submit is viewable prior to submission in Canvas.

All enrolled students have an e-mail account provided by Georgia Tech. This account is a student's official point of contact with the Institute – and with me – and you are expected to check it each school day. https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/3/

Course Policies, Expectations, & Guidelines

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 plagiarizing or cheating on any assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

AI Use

The standard expectation for this course is that students *will not use* generative AI (such as ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, etc.) for drafting, writing, or producing coursework that is submitted for a grade. **Your grades in this course are intended to reflect your own effort, thoughts, and expression.** This means it is a violation of the honor code to use Generative AI to create any portion of your assignments, including journal entries, papers, and the group project deliverables.

While it is inappropriate to use GenAI to create your assignments, you may choose to use AI in limited, supportive ways, such as brainstorming, clarifying concepts, generating questions, testing understanding, and initiating research. **The AI Usage Statement, found in Canvas, must be submitted with every assignment (even if AI was not used).**

Failure to follow these assignment guidelines for generative AI may be considered a violation of Georgia Tech's academic integrity policies.

Collaboration & Group Work

Your work on your assignments should be your own. For the group project, I expect you to work out among your group an equitable division of labor and to work together on the overall direction of the project. If teamwork challenges arise during your group project, please alert me as soon as you recognize that you will need assistance in resolving the issue.

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.

Attendance

Given the small size and interactive nature of this class, attendance is expected at each class meeting. Due to our 1x per week class schedule, missing a single class meeting is equivalent to missing an entire week of coursework. Classes will not be offered virtually due to the interactive nature of the course.

If you are not feeling well or are sick, including a cold, etc., please do not come to class. Let's protect one another from a whole host of contagious illnesses.

Georgia Tech's official attendance policy can be found at https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/. In addition to the GT rules, it states "All students are responsible for obtaining an understanding of each instructor's policy regarding absences." Information about how to notify instructors when you need to miss class and what kind of documentation you should provide is at: http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/student-absence-regulations/ .

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/ for an articulation of some basic expectations that you can have of your instructor 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.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Georgia Tech's Center for Teaching and Learning has noted that, "Research on learning shows that unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means that one student's use of a mobile device (laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc.) can distract another student, thus disrupting their ability to learn. In addition, students using mobile devices often become engaged in matters that are not related to the class they are attending. Further, research indicates that students taking notes on laptops tend to process less as they take notes, and the depth of their learning suffers."

For these reasons, I strongly encourage you to take notes by hand on paper. Understanding that you may prefer to use a tablet or laptop to take notes, they, too, are permitted. However, please put your phones away and on silent during class. If I notice you using a device for anything other than class, you will be asked to put it away.

Food and Drink

We will take a mandatory 15-minute break halfway through the class meeting. Please feel free to bring a snack for this break period.

Additional Resources for Students

I want to see you succeed not just in this course, but at Georgia Tech and during this time of your life in general. If you need assistance in the course, or in other areas, please don't hesitate to reach out for help.

Resources to keep in mind if you're facing challenges while at Tech include the Dean of Students (https://studentlife.gatech.edu), the Counseling Center (https://counseling.gatech.edu), the GT Police (https://police.gatech.edu), Stamps Health Services (https://health.gatech.edu), and the Department of Belonging and Student Support (https://belonging.gatech.edu/studentsupport). Your instructor has also completed Safe Space and QPR training.

If you are having issues with housing, food insecurity, clothing, or other financial issues, please be aware of possible assistance available to you through the STAR Program (Students' Temporary Assistance and Resources). More details on the STAR Program are available at: https://studentlife.gatech.edu/content/star-services

Course Outline and Schedule

UNIT 1: PROGRESS AND SERVICE - WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

Jan 15 | What is Progress and Service?

- Introductions: Review syllabus, course structure and expectations, class agreements/norms including attendance policy
- Progress and Service Icebreaker: What does our motto mean?
- **Due Thursday Jan 22 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 1 Progress and Service at Georgia Tech**

Jan 22 | Intro to Designing Your Life

- Before class today: Read Designing Your Life (abbreviated "DYL") Chapter 1
- Learning through Reflection
- Complete the Life Design Dashboard during class
- Engage in the What's your Story? activity during class
- **Due Thurs Jan 29 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 2 Workview and Lifeview drafts**

Jan 29 | Defining "complex problems"

- Before class today: Read DYL Chapter 2
- What are Wicked Problems? Guest speaker Dr. Rebecca Watts Hull
- **To do this weekend: Read DYL Chapter 3 and begin your 2-week Good Time Journal**
- **Due Thurs Feb 5 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 3 Values Clarification**

UNIT 2: LEADERS IN PROGRESS AND SERVICE - NAVIGATING A COMPLEX WORLD

Feb 5 | Immersive Learning - Service Project

- To foster an early connection between the concept of Progress and Service and immersive learning, the class will engage in an on-campus service project with the STAR Network.
- **Due Thurs Feb 12 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 4 Reflection on Service Project**

Feb 12 | What is "the human condition" and why does GT commit to improving it?

- Before class today: Read DYL Chapter 4
- Bring your 2-week Good Time Journal to class
- Is there a universal human condition? Why or why not?
- What is professional identity development?
- **Due Thurs Feb 19 (11:59pm): Professional Identity Statement**

Feb 19 | Sources of Information

- Before class today: Read DYL Chapter 5
- SatisfyAI game and discussion with guest speaker Moon Kim and Ethan Trewhitt
- Group project prep: Exploring the literature
- **Due Thurs Feb 26 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 5 Reflection on SatisfyAI activity**

Feb 26 | Immersive Learning - Engagement with Partners in Atlanta (location TBD)

- **Due Thurs Mar 5 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 6 Reflection on Immersive Learning Day**

UNIT 3: SYSTEMS OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Mar 5 | Considering Culture

- Before class today: Read DYL Chapter 6
- BaFa BaFa Intercultural Simulation
- **Due Thurs Mar 12 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 7 Reflection on BaFa BaFa**

Mar 12 | Spring Break - SYSTEMS THINKING CONFERENCE, ATL

Mar 19 | Community Connections

- Before class today: Read DYL Chapter 8 (skipping chapter 7)
- Community engagement frameworks as a lens for complex-problems with guest speaker Dr. Sarah Brackmann
- **Due Thurs Mar 19 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 8 TBD**

Mar 26 | Thinking about Systems

- Before class today: Read DYL Chapter 10 (saving chapter 9 for April)
- Systems thinking and DYL Mindsets
- **Due Thurs APRIL 2 (two weeks away): Informational Interview Summary**

UNIT 4: BECOMING LEADERS IN PROGRESS AND SERVICE

Apr 2 | Immersive Experience (Tentative: Coca-Cola Foundation)

- **Due Thurs April 9 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 9 Reflection on Immersive Learning Day**

Apr 9 | Barriers to Progress and Service

- Before class today: Read DYL Chapter 9
- Group Project Prep: What is a poster session?
- **Due Thurs April 16 (11:59pm): Journal Entry 10 TBD**

Apr 16 | Putting the Pieces Together

- Group Project Prep: Group work

Apr 23 | Poster Presentation and Class celebration

- **Group presentations of posters**
- Class reflection and social

Final Exam Period (TBD)

- Submit group project narrated slides and individual final reflection paper