

# Modern European Intellectual History

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Last Updated: Mon, 01/12/2026

**Course prefix:** HTS

**Course number:** 3032

**Section:** A

**CRN (you may add up to five):**  
33128

**Instructor First Name:** David

**Instructor Last Name:** Morton

**Semester:** Spring

**Academic year:** 2026

## **Course description:**

This course covers the history of the major intellectual movements of the modern era in the West from the Renaissance to the late 20th century, focusing on developments in science, the arts, and political philosophy in western Europe. The course covers major issues in philosophy, the arts (fine art, music, and literature) and popular thought in the context of their times. The course reviews the birth of philosophical thought in the ancient Western world through the Middle Ages. It then covers Renaissance challenges to traditional thinking, the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, early political philosophy, the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Conservatism, Liberalism, Democracy, Socialism, modern irrationalism in political thinking, nationalism, antisemitism, fascism, totalitarianism, communism, modernism, post-modernism and other strands of Western thought. Student will read about these movements along with selections written by the original authors (in English translation).

## **Course learning outcomes:**

Philosophical literacy - students will achieve and demonstrate an understanding of the major figures, questions, and ideas in the history of modern European philosophy, including ethics, metaphysics, theory of knowledge, and the philosophy of the mind. Students will demonstrate the ability to understand, analyze, and respond to questions about key concepts and questions in the history of philosophy and popular thought, such as the nature of existence, knowledge, morality, and consciousness, a basic understanding of epistemology, metaphysics, and political and ethical philosophy, and major intellectual movements, ideologies, trends in culture and art, and specialized topics such as social Darwinism, psychoanalysis, and sociological theory. Students will compare, contrast, and write persuasively about the course material, defend ethical positions, and be able to relate

major ideas to their historical context(s).

**Required course materials:**

Required textbook: Marvin Perry, *An Intellectual History of Modern Europe*. Additional readings, maps, timelines, audio and video recordings, and other materials to be provided by the instructor and available online.

**Grading policy:**

There will be several short quizzes (10 points total), six tests (approximately bi-weekly, 72 points total), and a comprehensive final exam with a writing component (18 points), for a total of 100 points. Quizzes are linked to individual reading, listening, or viewing (video) assignments, consist of just a few questions, and are timed. Students will have 15-45 minutes to complete the quizzes, depending on the length of the assignment. Tests will be available during a scheduled, 24-hour period, and students will have one hour to complete each one. The final exam will be available for 2 hours, 50 minutes and will be available during a 24 hour period (to be determined) during the regular exam week. All quizzes, tests, and the exam will be available online. Student grades will be available through the Canvas LMS within 72 hours of the cut-off time for the graded exercise.

The maximum scores for all quizzes, tests, and the exam for the course will total 100 points, with final assigned grades to be based on the following scale:

90-100 points = A

80-89 points = B

70-79 points = C

60-69 points = D

0-59 points = F

**Attendance policy:**

Since the course is taught asynchronously, there is no attendance policy and students can work at their own pace. However, each week during the course, the instructor will release a new module to students, in an effort to pace their progress through the course.

**Academic honesty/integrity statement:**

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.

**Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):**

This course is defined by Georgia Tech as 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 Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.