Note: Course includes a one-day field trip on Jan 31.

Georgia Tech-Europe, European Campus of the Georgia Institute of Technology
HTS 2084 RMZ - Technology and Society
Spring 2025
Course Syllabus

Instructor
Dr. Timothy Stoneman
School of History and Sociology
Office 226, GTL Building
tim.stoneman@hsoc.gatech.edu

Time and Place
9:30-10:45am, Red Room

Course Attributes
HTS 2084 fulfills the social science and ethics requirements at Georgia Tech.

Course Description
Technologies have formed the basis of material culture and influenced the course of social change throughout human history. Yet the shape of technologies' influence on society has varied significantly with time and place and usually goes unnoticed by engineering students. The present course combines the history of technology with world history, focusing on Europe and the city of Metz. Through a series of historical case studies – prehistoric fire, medieval cathedrals, artisanal French bread, railways, and smart phones – we will see how technical practices ("engineering," broadly defined) evolved over major eras of the past. In the process, we address three deceptively basic questions concerning technology and society. First, what exactly is innovation – how does it occur and how does it differ from the way we talk about the topic? Second, what are the social roots, or origins, of innovation – what role do various social groups and institutions, including business, the state and church, scientific and engineering professions, and consumers, as well as various ideas and forms of idealism, play in encouraging or inhibiting technological change? And, third, what are the social consequences (and costs) of "innovation" and who benefits from its gains – put differently, how should we discuss technological and social "progress"? We cannot answer any of these questions in the abstract. Instead, we must address them in specific historical contexts. While the word "innovation" is modern, we will see that creative technical activity, resulting in changing social practices, is as old as humankind.

Course Objectives
Students will accomplish the following objectives:
- Students will describe relationships among languages, philosophies, cultures, literature,ethics, or the arts.*
- Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forcesthat influence social behavior.*
- Students will develop a critical perspective on changes in the relationship between technology, culture and society over major periods of human history.

- Students will integrate aspects of their living experience while in Europe with their classroom study and develop self-awareness of their identity as travel consumers.
- Students will demonstrate proficiency in the process of articulating and organizing rhetorical arguments in written, oral, visual, and nonverbal modes, using concrete support and conventional language.*
- Students will be able to judge factual claims and theories on the basis of evidence.*
- Students will develop effective oral and written communication skills.

(* Language is taken directly from the General Education Mission Statement of Georgia Tech'sCore Curriculum, available on the Registrar website.)

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 Outcome:
- 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

Ethics Requirement
In order to fulfill the ethics requirement at Georgia Tech, HTS 2084 will align course-level objectives, content, and assessments with the following criteria of student success:
- An ability to recognize ethical and professional responsibilities in real-world contexts.
- An ability to assess actions or decisions based on established ethical principles and theories, or through deliberative processes.
- An ability to consider the implications of actions, both broadly (e.g. global, economic, environmental, or societal) and for individuals.

Grading
Georgia Tech Europe is a serious academic program. Attendance is strongly encouraged at all classes. Please let me know in advance if you cannot attend for an official reason. Students are expected to pay attention in class and actively discuss readings. Please do not use electronic devices in class, including laptops and cell phones.

To receive grades of excellence, students must demonstrate close understanding of course concepts and knowledge of relevant historical material covered in readings, videos, and class discussion. Final grades will not be available through Oscar until the Monday following the end of the exam period. Please do not ask to have grades changed.

For details on grading, see the "Grading policy" document on Canvas under Files/Course documents.

Field trips

We will take a single required field trip to class-related historic sites in Metz on *Friday, January 31*, including the cathedral, as well as a trip to Metz's train stations on *Tuesday evening, February 25*. You will receive class time credits for the field trips (two classes).

Honor Policy

Students are expected to abide by the Georgia Tech honor code. All infractions will be handledthrough the Office of the Dean of Students and treated with the utmost seriousness.

Statement on Inclusion

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society. (Statement taken from Ivan Allen College Dean's Office.)

Course Materials

There are no required textbooks. All reading material and course communication will occurthrough Canvas.

Course Units

> Introduction
> Case studies
>> Tools
>>> Paleolithic fire
>> Crafts
>>> Gothic cathedrals
>>> Artisanal French bread
>> Industrial machines & systems
>>> Railways
>>> Smartphones
> Research presentations
> Debate