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STS 201-006: Understanding Technological Society

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STS 201 Understanding Technological Society Spring 2021
New Jersey Institute of Technology

Section 006 T, F 12:30-1:50
Section 010 T, Th 11-12:20

Webex [120 198 2633](#) pass TechSoc#21
Webex [120 899 8602](#) pass TechSoc#21

Instructor: Miran Božičević (he, they)

E-mail: miran@njit.edu

Office hours: Friday 11-12 Webex ID: [120 059 2549](#) Password: 2021#Spring

Course Description

“A problem-centered and task-oriented course that integrates social science theory and practice into the leading public issues of a technological society. Students learn critical thinking through hands-on assignments. The course emphasizes student understanding of social institutions that directly affect technological development and professional careers. This course satisfies the three credit 200 GER in History and Humanities.” (Undergraduate Catalog)

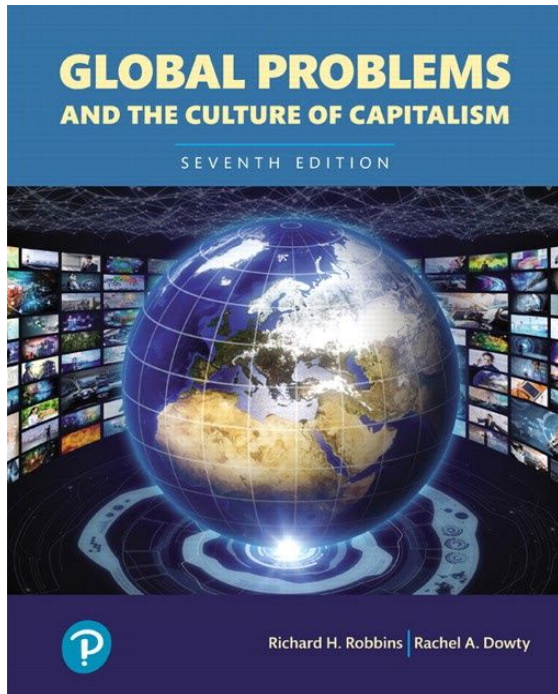
This course introduces the student to the perspectives of the social sciences, applied to understanding today’s global society. The point of view of anthropology serves as the basis.

Textbook

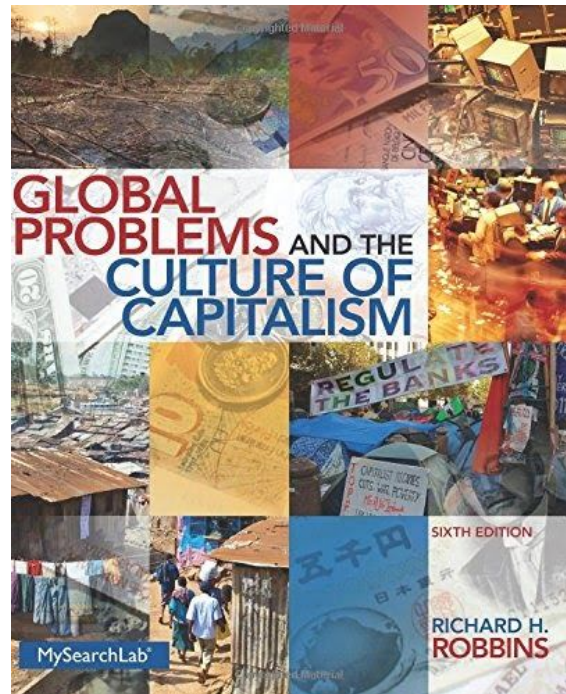
The textbook is **required**. You can use either of the two latest editions. Additional optional materials will be posted on Canvas.

Robbins & Dowty 2018. *Global Problems & the Culture of Capitalism*, 7th ed. Pearson.

Robbins 2013. *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, 6th ed. Pearson.



OR



Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course, the students should:

- Gain insight into the complexity of interdependent social, political, economic, and ecological forces shaping today's world.
- Understand how relationships of global interdependence are constituted by and shape human culture, group life, beliefs, economic relations, political organization, and systems of ranking and difference.
- Appreciate the breadth of the human experience across cultures and historical epochs.
- Understand how our social world has come into being historically and how it is changing.
- Apply social scientific theories and concepts independently to investigate aspects of our social world.
- Critically consider and analyze information from diverse sources.
- Express ideas clearly in class discussion and in writing.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy. You can find it at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>

Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu

Course Requirements

Participation 20%

You are expected to complete the readings before the class session and participate in class discussions. There will be an opportunity to discuss the course material both during the live sessions and in online forums. The participation grade will combine your attendance in class sessions with your engagement in class and online discussions.

Readings and Responses 20%

Please come to class having read the assigned readings and ready to discuss them. In addition, **you will submit written responses to three readings**, randomly assigned. This will give you a chance to engage the text in light of your own knowledge and experiences, and raise questions for class discussion.

The papers are due **online, the first class period** we are discussing the reading, on the dates assigned even if the lectures diverge from the schedule. They need to address the following three points, each in **at least two paragraphs** (total 2 pages, ~600 words, double spaced). It is not necessary to use separate headings, but it is helpful.

1. **Share an observation from the social and cultural world around you** which you believe you can better understand using the class reading. This can be, say, a personal experience or a news story you have seen or read. Describe it. (2 points)
2. **Apply what you have learned from the reading** to interpret your observation. Present the concepts or facts from the text and outline them in your own words. Then explain in detail how you believe they relate to your observation. **Tie your response to specific points in the text.** (3 points)
3. **Offer at least two questions for discussion.** Outline aspects of your explanation you did not think fit the observation very well, were unsure about, or would like to know more about. Pose any questions about the reading in general you would like to discuss with your classmates. (2 points)

Additional 3 points are given for **spelling, grammar, and composition**, for a total of 10.

NOTE: if you are losing points under this last rubric, **I strongly suggest you contact the Writing Center** <https://www5.njit.edu/writingcenter/writing-center/>. As an anthropologist, I do not recognize any use of language as more or less “proper” as long as you can get your meaning across. Thus I have no interest in penalizing students for how they express themselves, and I definitely don’t want to make it any harder than necessary for anyone whose first language isn’t English. It’s not mine, either. This rubric exists because college requires you to master standard written expression, and I need to bring it to your attention if there’s room for improvement in this regard. The Writing Center will help you out with that.

Exams 30%

There will be a total of six tests during the semester, every two to three weeks. Three are shorter quizzes, each worth 3% of the grade, for a total of 9%. Three are longer exams, each corresponding to one part of the textbook and worth 7% of the grade, for a total of 21%. The longer exams are **not cumulative**, so each will cover approximately one third the semester material. The tests combine fixed response (multiple choice, matching) and essay questions.

Research Project: The Lives of Others 30%

Choose a Social Group 2%

You will start your research project by describing the topic you would like to address, and discussing how you will study it. Please explain why the topic is of interest to you, come up with possible questions you may ask, and suggest ways you can obtain information about the topic. You can be very broad in stating your interest, although it is good to be as specific as you can. (up to 1 page, double spaced)

Sources and Questions 6%

For this assignment, you will narrow down the topic you chose, locate relevant literature, and plan how to gather data. You will first explain which questions or areas within the topic you have chosen as your focus. Then you will proceed to review the literature, listing and describing written sources you have found. Finally, you will suggest other ways to collect information about the topic. (2-3 pages, double spaced)

Field Report 6%

For this assignment, you will report on your exploratory research on the topic you elaborated in the Expanded Proposal. You will describe which data collection methods you employed and how, and what you found out. The information you provide will depend on the methods you use. (2-3 pages, double spaced)

Final Essay 16%

You will complete your research with a thesis-driven research essay, due the last day of class. (4-5 pages, double spaced)

Extra Credit Opportunities

Exams and Participation (credit varies)

There will be extra credit questions on all exams. Additional points will be given to students whose participation significantly contributes to the class.

Fourth Response Paper or Research Presentation 5%

You can take one of these options (not both):

- Write an additional reaction paper to a unit that wasn't assigned to you, as described under "Readings and Responses" above.
- Record a presentation of your research topic, slides with audio or video, 5-7 minutes.

In brief:

Participation	20%
Exams	30%
Reading Responses	20%
Research: The Lives of Others <i>Choose a Social Group</i> 2% <i>Sources and Questions</i> 6% <i>Field Report</i> 6% <i>Final Essay</i> 16%	30%
TOTAL	100%

The grades are assigned as follows:

Percentage	Grade
≥ 93	A
87-92	B+
80-86	B
73-79	C+
67-72	C
60-66	D
≤ 59	F

Course Schedule

Dates	Unit	Readings	Work Due
1/19		<i>Course Introduction</i>	
1/21-2 1/26	1	Preface, Part I Introduction Scupin Chapters 2 and 3	Responses 1
1/28-9 2/2	2	Chapter 2: The Laborers	Responses 2 QUIZ 1
2/4-5 2/9	3	Chapter 3: The Rise and Fall of the Merchant, Industrialist, and Financier	Responses 3
2/11-2 2/16	4	Chapter 4: The Nation State in the Culture of Capitalism	Responses 4
2/18-9		<i>Discussion and review</i>	EXAM 1 <i>Social Group</i>
2/23 2/24-5	5	Chapter 1: Constructing the Consumer	Responses 1
3/2 3/4-5	6	Part Two: Introduction Chapter 7: Environment and Consumption	Responses 2 QUIZ 2
3/9 3/11-2	7	Chapter 6: Hunger, Poverty, and Economic Development	Responses 3 <i>Sources & Qs</i>
SPRING BREAK			
3/23 3/24-5	8	Chapter 8: Health and Disease	Responses 4
3/30 4/1		<i>Discussion and review</i>	EXAM 2
4/6 4/8-9	9	Chapter 5: Population Growth, Migration, and Urbanization	Responses 1
4/13 4/15-6	10	Chapter 9: Indigenous Groups and Ethnic Conflict (parts) Part III Introduction (beginning) Chapter 10: Peasant Adaptation and Resistance (parts)	Responses 2 <i>Field Report</i> QUIZ 3
4/20 4/22-3	11	Part III Introduction: A Primer on Terrorism Chapter 12: Religion and Anti-Systemic Protest	Responses 3
4/27 4/29-0	12	Chapter 11: Anti-Systemic Protest Chapter 13: Solving Global Problems (parts, TBA)	Responses 4
5/4		<i>Discussion and review</i>	<i>Final Essay</i>
TBA			EXAM 3