

STS 201 Understanding Technological Society Fall 2025
New Jersey Institute of Technology

Section 001	TTh 8:30-9:50	CKB 206
Section 005	TTh 1-2:20	CKB 314
Section 011	TTh 10-11:20	CKB 114

Instructor: Miran Božičević (he, they)
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Office hours: Wednesdays 12-1pm or by appointment, [online](#).

I aim to respond to emails within 24 hours during the working week, and by the following working day on weekends and holidays. Quizzes and short written assignments are graded weekly, while exams with essay questions and research project work can take two weeks.

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.

There are no prerequisites for the course.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the students will be able to:

- Describe the breadth of the human experience across cultures and historical epochs.
- Explain how our social world has come into being historically.
- Appraise the complexity of interdependent social, political, economic, and ecological forces shaping today’s world.
- Analyze 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.
- Apply social scientific theories and concepts independently to investigate aspects of our societies and cultures.
- Critically evaluate information from diverse sources.
- Express ideas clearly in class discussion and in writing.

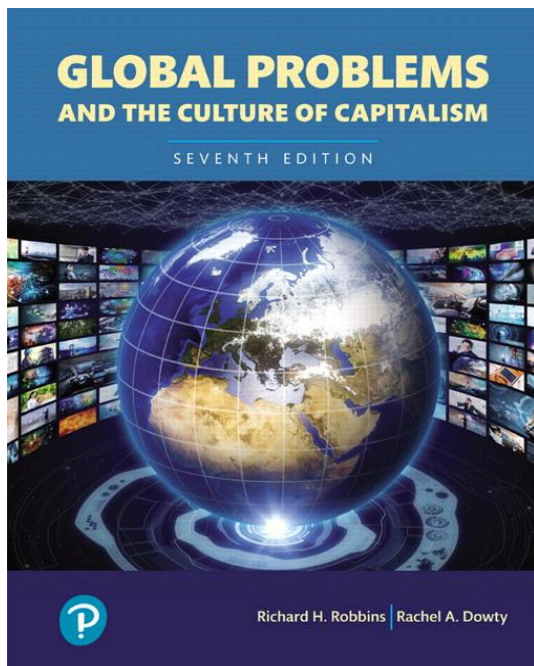
Course Materials

This is a **low-electronics class environment**. This means that, in general, you are required to **take notes on paper**, and are **not permitted** to use laptops, phones, or recording equipment in class, unless explicitly allowed, or provided as a part of a disability accommodation.

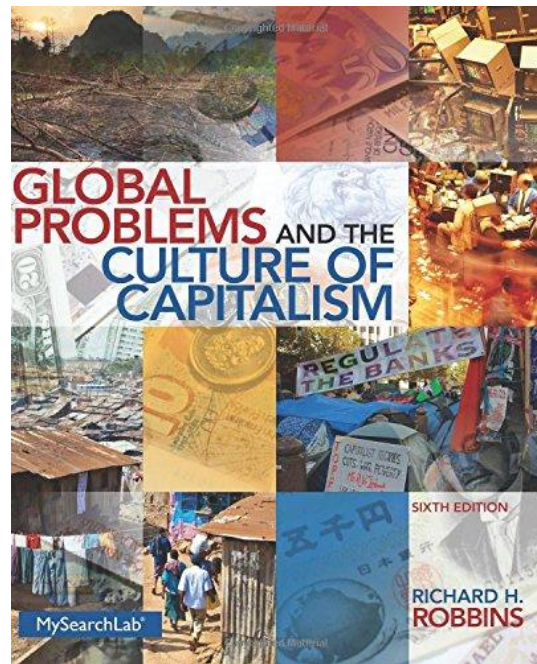
The textbook for the course is **required**. You can use either of the two latest editions. Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

Robbins & Dowty 2018. *Global Problems & the Culture of Capitalism*, 7th ed. Pearson. ISBN [978-0134732794](https://doi.org/10.1039/9780134732794)

Robbins 2013. *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*, 6th ed. Pearson. ISBN [978-0205917655](https://doi.org/10.1039/9780205917655)



OR



Course Requirements

Your work will be evaluated in four main ways: **class participation**, **reading responses and discussions**, **exams**, and the **research project**. I will provide feedback on how you are doing on particular assignments using the comments feature in Canvas.

The grading thresholds are: 92% A, 88% B+, 80% B, 76% C+, 68% C, 60% D.

I strive to give everyone opportunities to do the best they possibly can. This is accomplished through continuous work during the semester. **The scores on Canvas are not an accurate estimate of your grade.** Your actual score could be better or worse. For this reason, gamifying your work through grade percentages serves no purpose. If you're interested in how you're doing, I can give you an estimate over e-mail, and if you truly end up close to a grade threshold, I will take into account the record of your contributions over the entire duration of the course.

Here's a brief overview of the major evaluation categories:

Participation <i>Attendance, Engagement, Forums</i>	15%
Tests <i>Quizzes</i> 2 x 3% = 6% <i>Exams 1 & 2</i> 2 x 7% = 14% <i>Exam 3</i> 10%	30%
Readings and Discussions <i>Reading Responses</i> 18% <i>Leading Class Discussion</i> 7%	25%
Research: The Lives of Others <i>Choose a Social Group</i> 3% <i>Proposal</i> 7% <i>Field Report</i> 7% <i>Final Essay</i> 13%	30%
TOTAL	100%

Participation 15%

We will meet for two lectures in class each week. Please attend regularly, complete the readings before the class session, and take part in class discussions. There will also be an opportunity to discuss the course material in online forums. The participation grade combines your attendance with your engagement in class activities and online discussions.

In class, you are expected to follow [NJIT's Code of Student Conduct](#). You should be polite, active participants and respect your instructor, classmates, as well as ideas or opinions that differ from yours. Scholarly debates are encouraged but should not become personal attacks.

Tests 30%

There will be a total of **five tests**. Two are shorter quizzes, covering 2 units, worth 3% each. Three are longer exams, each covering 4 units. Of these, the first two are worth 7% each, and the last exam is worth 10%. The longer exams are **not cumulative**. The quizzes contain fixed response items (multiple choice, matching) only, while exams combine these with short essays.

The tests are administered after we complete the units they cover, and may take place later than indicated in the course schedule. Fixed-choice items are **administered online** and are available for at least 30 hours. Short essay items are **administered in-class**. Fixed-choice items of the last exam will be **available during the scheduled final exam slot**, but you are free to take it at the time and place of your choosing during an extended time window.

Responses and Discussions 25%

Please come to class having read the assigned readings and watched the lectures, if the videos are posted, and be ready to discuss them.

During the course, you will also submit **written responses to three readings**, randomly assigned, and coordinate with students submitting their responses at the same time to **lead class discussion**. The due dates for responses and discussion leads remain as assigned even if our classes diverge from the schedule.

Reading Responses 18%

Three times during the semester, **during the first class session** we are covering the unit, you will split into groups of 2-3 classmates and submit a collaborative short essay engaging with the readings and the lectures. In your responses, you will **share observations** from the social and cultural world around you, **apply what you have learned** from the reading to interpret your observation, and offer **questions for discussion**.

Reading responses are **submitted and graded in small groups** (2-3 students).

Leading Class Discussion 7%

Three times during the semester, **before the second class session for each unit**, the students who wrote the responses for the unit will submit, as a group, a **presentation of 7-8 questions with explanations** chosen from all of their submissions (presentation, one slide per question). They will also choose **two or more students per section** to introduce the questions, explain why they're important, and lead class discussion.

Discussion leads are **submitted and graded as group work**, reflecting the **preparation of the presenters** and their **skill in leading discussion**.

Research: The Lives of Others 30%

The theme of this course is to examine the diversity of people's perspectives and experiences. For the class project, you will research a social group with whom you are not familiar and try to get a glimpse into their lives, both by interacting with them and by locating relevant literature. This will give you a chance to try out ethnographic social research methods on your own.

Choose a Social Group 3%

For this first step, you will choose a social group whose experiences you would like to investigate, explain why they are of interest to you, and identify how you can interact with them. (up to 1 page, double spaced)

Proposal 7%

Next, you will narrow down your interest in the social group you chose, and outline a plan for your research. You will confirm the venues where you may interact with them, and locate literature that will help you clarify your findings. (2-3 pages, double spaced)

Field Report 7%

Then, you will report on your field research on your chosen social group. You will describe which data collection method(s) you employed and what you found out. The information you provide will depend on the methods you use. (2-3 pages, double spaced)

Final Essay 13%

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

Extra Credit Opportunities

Exams and Participation (credit varies)

There are extra credit questions on all exams. Additional points are awarded to students whose participation significantly contributes to the class.

Fourth Reading Response or Research Presentation 5%

You can take one of these options, not both:

- Write an additional reading response for a unit that wasn't assigned to you.
- Record a presentation of your research topic, slides with audio or video, 5-7 minutes.

If you would like to avail yourself of these opportunities, you need to identify them and submit your work **by the end of the reading period**.

Examination and Late Policies

The tests are **open notes**, but you need to **take them on your own** and **not use outside sources**. Due dates for individual written assignments are flexible, those for group assignments and discussion forums are not.

For detailed information, please refer to *STS 201 Success and Integrity*, posted on Canvas.

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 further questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

To understand better the difference between plagiarism and paraphrase, please read the following two articles. This is **required reading**:

- [When to Summarize, Paraphrase, and Quote](#), The Writing Center, George Mason U.
- [Quoting and Paraphrasing](#), The Writing Center, University of Wisconsin

Using AI tools of any kind is forbidden. This includes **generative AI**, but also common **AI-powered grammar and style tools**. Even though the text produced by these tools is usually grammatically correct, it's bland and lacks individuality, it's flagged by AI detectors, and most importantly, it's not yours. Using these tools sabotages the central aim of this course and of college education, to empower you to think critically about the world around us, and put your thoughts into your own words.

For additional detail, please refer to *STS 201 Success and Integrity*, posted on Canvas.

Accommodations, Accessibility, and Other Services

If you need accommodation due to a disability please contact Scott Janz, Associate Director of the [Office of Accessibility Resources and Services](#), Kupfrian Hall 201, to discuss your specific needs. A Letter of Accommodation Eligibility from the office authorizing student accommodations is required.

For information on Canvas accessibility, please consult their [Product Accessibility Statement](#).

For more information on online learning resources, please refer to [this document](#), maintained by The NJIT Office of Digital Learning.

Date	Unit	Readings	Work Due
9/02		<i>Course Introduction</i>	
9/04		<i>Discussion: social aspects of the ecological emergency</i>	
9/09 9/11	1	Preface, Part I Introduction Scupin Chapters 2 and 3	Responses 1 Leads 1
9/16 9/18	2	Chapter 2: The Laborers	Resp & Leads 2 QUIZ 1
9/23 9/25	3	Chapter 3: The Rise and Fall of the Merchant, Industrialist, and Financier	Resp & Leads 3 <i>Social Group</i>
9/30 10/07	4	Chapter 4: The Nation State in the Culture of Capitalism	Responses 4 Leads 4
10/09		<i>Discussion and catch-up</i>	EXAM 1
10/14 10/16	5	Chapter 1: Constructing the Consumer	Resp & Leads 1 <i>Proposal</i>
10/21 10/23	6	Part Two: Introduction Chapter 7: Environment and Consumption	Resp & Leads 2 QUIZ 2
10/28 10/30	7	Chapter 6: Hunger, Poverty, and Economic Development	Responses 3 Leads 3
11/04 11/06	8	Chapter 8: Health and Disease	Resp & Leads 4 EXAM 2
11/11 11/13	9	Chapter 5: Population Growth, Migration, and Urbanization	Resp & Leads 1 <i>Field Report</i>
11/18 11/20	10	Part III Introduction (275-277) Chapter 9: Indigenous Groups & Ethnic Conflict (249-259) Chapter 10: Peasant Adaptation & Resistance	Responses 2 Leads 2
11/25 12/02	11	Part III Introduction: A Primer on Terrorism (277-281) Chapter 12: Religion and Anti-Systemic Protest	Responses 3 Leads 3
12/04 12/09	12	Chapter 11: Anti-Systemic Protest Chapter 13: Solving Global Problems (selections from 6th ed.)	Responses 4 Leads 4
12/11		<i>Discussion and review</i>	<i>Final Essay</i>
TBA			EXAM 3

9/08 Last day to add/drop a course

11/10 Last day to withdraw with a W

12/22 Final grades are in