The Blue Banana: History, Geography, and Culture of an Industrial Mega-Region

HSOC 2100 (Science and Technology in the Modern World)

Spring 2020

Course Syllabus

Instructor
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Meeting
T: 11am -12:20 pm
Red Room

Curriculum Requirements
The course meets the social science elective and ethics requirements at Georgia Tech and counts towards the International Plan.

Course Description
Georgia Tech’s European campus is located at the center of the Blue Banana – the arc-shaped backbone of European industry that stretches discontinuously from North Wales through Greater London, the Benelux countries, Alsace and Lorraine, and the German Rhineland to Switzerland and northern Italy. Over the past two centuries, cities and industrial regions within the Blue Banana - in areas from mining and manufacturing to high tech – rather than individual nation-states have driven Europe’s economic growth and technological development. Arguably, Europe is not a cultural region or continent, but a Blue Banana.

HTS 2100 examines European science and technology through the lens of the Blue Banana. It analyzes several aspects of industrial regions: their formation, organizing principle, and wider socio-economic impact. The course employs direct experience as a main pedagogical instrument – “seeing” industry at work – through a series of site visits to leading companies in the Lorraine area (and beyond). Readings, written reflections, and oral research presentations build on site visits, allowing students to make connections between individual industries and the Blue Banana.

Course Objectives
HTS 2100 will meet the following core objectives in term of learning outcomes:

• Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.
• Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence the global system.
• Students will describe relationships among languages, philosophies, cultures, literature, ethics, or the arts.
• 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.

(Language is taken directly from the General Education Mission Statement of Georgia Tech’s Core Curriculum, available on the Registrar website.)
**Grading**

Course assessment will be based on the following elements (see below for descriptions):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site reflections</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading reflections</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes (after class)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site visit presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Georgia Tech Lorraine is a serious academic program. Attendance on course site visits is required. Please let me know in advance if you cannot attend class for an official reason. Unexcused absence on site visits will count as a letter grade (10%). Please turn off electronics, including laptops and cell phones, during class.

In order to facilitate communication, please add a profile photo on Canvas.

After each site visit, students will post a site reflection on Piazza (T-Square) for each location visited; reflections are due by the following Monday at 6pm. Reading reflections should demonstrate careful completion of the assigned material; they are due on Piazza by 9am on the day of class. Your reading reflection is an open response and may cover any aspect of the reading that you deem important. All responses must be at least one sizeable paragraph long. In order to encourage dialogue, you must reply at least five times during the semester to other students’ site and reading responses, respectively (for a total of 10 replies). Site or reading reflections completed more than one day late will not be counted. Failure to complete either site or reading reflections will result in the following grades: 1 missing (90%), 2 missing (80%), 3 missing (70%), etc.

Assignments given in class must be completed by the following class. After each class, a review quiz covering the day’s material will be administered through Canvas. Students will receive an overall grade for class discussion on the following scale: 95% (regular contribution) – 88% (moderate contribution) - 83% (little or no contribution). Discussion grades will be posted three times on Canvas; the final grade will average the two figures. Class discussion contributions should increase our general understanding of the material rather than merely repeat points. Students will also work in pairs to lead discussion of one week’s class reading.

For site visit presentations, you will divide into groups and provide an introduction of the site before the visit, as well as an analysis of the site post visit. Your final project will also be a group project on an industrial region of Europe. You will have a detailed schedule of deadlines, including an annotated bibliography of five major sources and a class roundtable discussion of topics and theses/themes. You may request copies of sources behind paywalls from the instructor. Final presentations will take place in class on April 14. There are no tests or final exam.

Final course grading will be done on a letter basis and will be rounded up on the half percentage point (i.e. 89.5% = A). Final grades will not be available through Oscar until the Monday following the end of the exam period (May 4). Please do not ask to change grades.

Please note that only class members can attend site visits.

**Reading Material**

The course has no required textbook. Required reading material will be posted on T-Square.
Inclusion Policy
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. (Language taken from Ivan Allen College Dean’s Office)

Honor Policy
Students are expected to abide by the Georgia Tech honor code. All infractions will be handled through the Office of the Dean of Students and treated with the highest degree of seriousness.

Site Visits
The following is a complete list of site visits for Spring 2020. All five (5) visits are required. All visits take place on Fridays (except for Airbus). We will normally return to GTL for full-day visits by 5:30pm. Visit to Institut Lafayette takes place on the GTL campus at 5pm on a weekday and lasts one hour.

Jan 31      Villeroy & Boch (Mettlach, Germany) (ceramics manufacturer)
Mar 6 & 13   EDF Chooz (Chooz, France) (nuclear power plant)
Mar 27      Haganis (Metz, France) (recycling center and waste incinerator) (1/2 day)
Apr 2-4     Airbus/ENSEEIH (Toulouse) (aerospace manufacturer & partner engineering school) (Note: includes Saturday)
Apr 6-8     Institut Lafayette (GTL) (optoelectronics platform)