

# INTA 4500 Pro-Seminar: The Politics of International Assistance (Spring 2013)

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Instructor: Esther Skelley Jordan, Ph.D.  
Instructor Email: [estherjordan@gatech.edu](mailto:estherjordan@gatech.edu)  
Class time: Tuesday, 3:05 – 5:55 p.m.  
Class location: U.A. Whitaker Biomedical Engineering 1232  
Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. and by appointment  
Office Location: Clough #457N

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## Course Description

There will always be individuals, states and political groups in need, and people willing to help. Yet, in a world of limited resources, power inequality, and competing ideologies, international assistance is highly politicized. This is despite the best altruistic intentions of some citizens within donor states. The consequence is a mixed bag of met needs and continued suffering, as well as many unintended outcomes.

This senior seminar will draw from contemporary scholarship, the theoretical cores of comparative politics and international relations, and the historical record to examine the politics of international assistance. It will consider economic, military and democracy assistance, with a primary emphasis on US foreign assistance and secondary emphasis on other donors.

Throughout the semester, we will seek to answer the following questions. Why do states give assistance? What determines which states or groups receive assistance? What determines how much and in what form assistance is given? Is international assistance effective and how can this be determined? What are the unintended consequences of assistance? What lessons can be learned from the past and what recommendations should be made for the future of international aid?

As a seminar, this course will rely very heavily on directed student discussion of the reading. Students will be required to write brief analysis papers throughout the term and one major research paper. They will also be required to present their research to the rest of the class.

## Learning Goals

1. Students will apply political theory and the historical record to answer the “to whom,” “how much”, “why,” and “to what end” questions regarding international assistance.
2. Students will develop compelling, evidence-based, arguments to a) defend their critical assessments of international assistance practices and b) to make their own policy recommendations.
3. Students will communicate compelling and evidenced based arguments through either empirical research paper and/or policy paper formats, and through oral presentations.

4. Students will consider the complexities of donor decision-making and of international aid impact assessment, as well as how these complexities affect those in need.

5. Students will gain an increased awareness of career options in international assistance. They will also produce at least one paper that would be suitable to submit as a writing sample for either a) a job application for a policy position with the government or a non-governmental organization, and/or b) an application to graduate school in a field related to international affairs.

## Required Reading

Collier, Paul. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Oxford University Press, USA. 2008. (ISBN-10: 0195373383 )

Diamond, Larry, Mac Plattner, and Philip J. Costopoulos (Editors). *Debates on Democratization*. The Johns Hopkins University Press. 2010. ISBN-10: 0801897777

Easterly, William. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. Penguin Books. 2007. (ISBN-10: 0143038826)

McFaul, Michael, *Advancing Democracy Abroad: Why We Should and How We Can*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2009. (ISBN-10: 1442201118)

Peceny, Mark. *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999. (ISBN-10: 0271018836)

- Note, this is available as an electronic resource for free through the GT library.

Riddell, Roger C. *Does Foreign Aid Really Work?* Oxford University Press, USA. 2008. (ISBN-10: 0199544468)

Various assigned articles, will be posted in the “Resources” section of TSquare. (**TSquare**)

## Class Requirements

### *Participation (40%)*

Participation will account for 40% of your total grade. Credit will be given in two categories: Class Discussion and Panel Presentations.

Class Discussion (30%): The grade for class discussion will be based on the quality and consistency of contributions each student makes to class discussion and in-class group activities. High quality contributions include **prepared and informed** comments and questions which demonstrate critical thinking regarding assignments and lectures.

You must demonstrate orally that you have thought critically about each reading assignment, and about the comments made by your peers and instructor. Comments which stimulate an engaging and respectful debate among your peers are particularly appreciated, as are contributions which help your peers better understand the material. This part of your grade will be awarded subjectively, at the instructor's discretion.

Panel Presentations (10%): Each student will present their research twice during the semester (5% each time). The presentation will be in the form of participation on a "panel of experts." The primary purpose of this is to give students practice doing one of the most common types of oral presentations in the field of international affairs. The secondary purpose is to engage the whole class in a conversation about student findings and recommendations.

*Response Papers (20%)*

Each student will write two response papers. Each paper must be 1000 to 1200 words in length. These papers will be critical assessments of the assigned readings. They can take either of two forms: literature reviews or policy analysis/white papers. The purpose of giving you the option is to allow you to do work that is the most relevant to your career goals.

Both options will require research beyond the assigned reading that should be conducted well before the week in which the response paper is due. It is recommended that the type of paper you complete remain consistent throughout the term and with the type of term paper you intend to complete. Sample papers and detailed instructions will be posted on TSquare.

*Term Paper (40%)*

The term paper will account for 40% of your total grade. It is highly recommended that you meet with me to discuss your research throughout the semester. I am happy to review earnest drafts of sections of your work, so long as you do not submit them to me at the last minute.

**Grading**

*Grading Scale*

Grades for each of the above assignments will be calculated out 100 points, as follows:

A= 90.0-100, B = 80.0-89.99, C = 70.0-79.99, D = 60.0-69.99,  
F = 0-59.99

*Rubrics*

All grades will be based on rubrics, which will be provided with the instructions for each assignment.

*Late Assignments*

Penalty-free extensions will only be offered in cases of officially documented medical emergencies or official university excuses. Students must bring any such case to the instructor's attention as soon as they become aware of it.

Any assignments that are otherwise completed late will be deducted by one letter grade for each day past the due date.

**Disability or Health  
Related Issues**

Students with a disability or a health related issue who need a class accommodation or are concerned about class performance should **make an appointment to speak with me during the first week of class or as soon as the health concern arises.**

**Academic honesty**

All coursework must meet the Georgia Tech standards of academic honesty. Each student is responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. See: <http://www.osi.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=46>

Specific instructions regarding collaboration and citations will be provided for each assignment. Deviations from the instructions and all other violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean Of Students.

If you are not familiar with what qualifies as plagiarism, you are responsible to familiarize yourself with it. It is recommended that each student take the following plagiarism quiz to this end. For students who have already taken it before, it is recommended that they take again it as a refresher.

[https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/plagiarism\\_test.html](https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/plagiarism_test.html)

*NOTE: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced.*

WEEK	WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READING, TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO CLASS ON THIS DAY
1/8/13		Introduction	None
1/15/13		History and Why Aid?	Riddell, p. 1-162
1/22/12		Does Aid Work? - Part 1	Riddell, p. 163-258
1/29/13		Does Aid Work? - Part 2	Riddell, p. 259-354
2/5/13	<b>Response Paper 1</b>	Student Paper Discussion and Careers in International Assistance	None
2/12/13		A Closer Look at Development Aid - Part 1	Easterly, p. 1-164
2/19/13		A Closer Look at Development Aid - Part 2	Easterly, p. 165-340
2/26/13		A Closer Look at Development Aid - Part 3	Collier, p. 1-174
3/5/13		Policy Recommendations	Riddell, p. 355-414; Easterly, p. 341-384; Collier, p. 175-192
3/12/13	<b>Response Paper 2</b>	Student Panel #1	None
3/26/13		A Closer Look at Democracy Assistance - Part 1	Diamond, et al, p. to be announced
4/2/13		A Closer Look at Democracy Assistance - Part 2	McFaul, p. 1-122
4/9/13		A Closer Look at Democracy Assistance - Part 3	McFaul, p. 123-235
4/16/13		A Closer Look at Military Assistance - Part 1	Peceny, p. to be announced
4/23/13		A Closer Look at Military Assistance - Part 1	To be announced
4/30/13	<b>Term Paper Due</b>	Student Panel #2	None