

INTA 4803-AY/8803-AY
European Research Seminar
Fall 2018

TR 3-4:15

IAC/Habersham 136

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Course description

This course enables students to research in a structured manner a topic of their choosing concerning Europe. The course reviews social science research techniques and explicitly applies them to students' research projects. The projects will be developed and discussed throughout the course. Thus, in addition to developing their own research projects, students will be expected to provide constructive feedback on their peers' projects. The course will culminate with presentations of the students' research findings to an invited audience. The aspiration is that students will present their work at national student conferences and/or publish it in a suitable outlet.

Intended learning outcomes

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

- apply appropriate social science methodologies to answer a research question (Scientific analysis of international politics);
- understand the impact of political institutions and political culture on outcomes (Cultural, contextual and ethical awareness); and
- convey complex ideas effectively orally and in writing (Professional development).

Course text (Required)

Brians, C. L., Willnat, L., Manheim, J. B. and Rich, R.C., *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, 8th edn, Longman, 2011. (EPA8)

To access electronic journal articles through the library website:

- click on 'eJournals' on the left-hand side of the library homepage (under 'research tools');
- type the name of the journal in the search box;
- select the database option that includes the appropriate issue of the journal;
- browse the journal to the appropriate volume and issue.

Course requirements

The final assessment will be based on a research paper, which will also be presented to an invited audience. That paper will be based on a research plan developed during the first portion of the course. Students will also have to give two reports on the progress of their research.

Assignment	Due	Share of final grade	Maximum points
Research question	9/3 by email (5 pm)	5%	100
Research reports (2)	9/19 and 11/5 (5 pm)	10%	200
Research plan	10/17 by email (9 am)	15%	300
Final paper	11/26 by email (9 am)	35%	700
Presentation	12/4	15%	300
Class participation	continuous	20%	400
			2000

Late assignments will NOT be accepted, except for medical or personal emergencies upon verification.

Extra-credit assignment (25 points for a serious effort) (up to 2 assignments may be submitted)

Write a reflective summary (500 words max) of an approved public talk. Due by email within a week.

Grading

Grade	Points	Descriptors
A	20 19 18	Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials.
B	17 16 15	Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.
C	14 13 12	Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems.
D	11 10 9	Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating serious deficiencies.
F	<8	Did not demonstrate familiarity with the subject matter, nor the capacity to deal with simple problems in a manner recognizable to the consensus of mainstream academic practitioners within the field.

Grade Change Policy

Simple computational or clerical errors should be brought to my attention immediately. Legitimate requests for grade changes are welcome and encouraged. You should, however, resist the temptation to

file a frivolous request just hoping to “get lucky”. Approach a grade change request as if arguing a legal case: you should have strong and convincing arguments and evidence to support your request. Be aware that appeals to the practices of other professors generally do not constitute good argument or evidence. Note also that grade changes requests can result in re-grades either up or down (or left unchanged). That is, if the greater scrutiny demanded by a grade change request reveals your assignment to deserve a lower grade than previously awarded, and then the lower grade will be assigned.

Attendance policy

Attendance is required, although each student can have 2 (two) unexcused absences without penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in the student’s class participation grade being lowered 1 (one) point on the 20 point scale.

- Absences for medical or personal emergencies will be excused upon verification by the instructor. Absences for school athletics will be excused only if they are in accordance with the schedules approved and circulated by the Student Academic & Financial Affairs Committee for Travel or the Associate Athletic Director (Academic Services). Absences due to military service will be handled on a case-by-case basis and subject to verification.
- In order to get the most out of the course and to be able to participate effectively in class, you are expected at a minimum to read and reflect upon required readings before class. You should also read daily a quality newspaper (*Financial Times*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* or *Washington Post*) and the *Economist* (weekly).
- Course participants will treat each other with respect. Constructive questioning and criticism are welcome, even encouraged. Personal attacks and insults are not. The rule of thumb here is that critical comments and questions should be maturely phrased in a manner that encourages constructive and open debate. They should **not** be phrased as insults, threats, or in a manner that shuts down discussion.
- **All telecommunications devices are to be switched off during class.**
- **Computers and tablets are not to be used in class without express permission.**
- **No food in class**

Statement on inclusiveness

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.

Special Accommodations

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a documented disability are required to register with the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS). Please obtain a form from the ADAPTS office and turn it in to me during office hours or in class in the beginning of the semester. (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>).

Academic misconduct

According to the Georgia Tech honor code,¹ academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records. Such acts include:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism).

Course outline

<i>Class</i>	<i>Subject</i>
8/21	<p>Introduction</p> <p>During this class will be introduce ourselves and our interests in Europe in order to establish an appropriate environment for the collaborative nature of the course. We will also discuss the objectives and requirements of the course and spell out our expectations. More substantively, the class will introduce the scientific method and make the case for the value for rigorous, reflective analysis of political phenomena.</p>
8/23	<p>Issues and controversies in Europe</p> <p>This class will introduce contemporary debates in European studies as a means of introducing students to active research agendas and questions. It will also discuss issues associated with Europe of particular interest to students as a way to highlight empirical problems that might be suitable topics for research.</p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Archick, K. (2017), "The European Union: Current Challenges and Future Prospects," Congressional Research Service R44249, 27 Feb.</p> <p>European Council (2017), "Rome Declaration," Press Release 149/17, 25 March.</p>

¹ <http://www.osi.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=46>

8/28 Developing a research question

In this class we will discuss what makes a good research question and workshop the students' prospective questions in advance in order to refine and develop them.

Assignment

Circulate 3 potential research questions by 5 pm on 8/27. Be prepared to discuss:

- Why you think that they are interesting/significant?
- How you might go about answering them?

Reading

EPA8, Chapter 1.

Shively, W. P. (2011), *The Craft of Political Research* (Prentice Hall 8th edn). Ch 1 and pp. 21-31) (t)

8/30 Tailored discussion of European politics and policy

This class will discuss those European issues most relevant to the students' research interests in order to ensure that they have a basic understanding of the relevant material before they begin their research.

Reading

TBD

9/4 Theory building: Concepts, relationships and operationalization

We will discuss what makes a good theory and focus on the importance of specifying concepts, understanding the relationships between them and begin to consider how to operationalize concepts. We will workshop the students' selected research questions, paying particular attention to:

- What are the key concepts?
- What are plausible relationships among them?
- How might the concepts be translated into variables?
- What do you think relationship between the key concepts is?

Assignment

Circulate your **research question** by 5 pm on 9/3. You should be prepared to answer the questions above about it in class

Reading

EPA8, Ch. 2

Van Evera, S. (1997), *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Cornell University Press, pp. 7-27. (t)

9/6 **Finding and selecting sources**

This class will introduce students to the resources particularly appropriate for their research questions and consider how to assess the reliability of sources of information.

Reading

Columbia College, "Evaluating the Credibility of Your Sources," Available at:
<https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-sourcecredibility>

Berkeley Library, "Real News/Fake News," Available at:
<http://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=620677&p=4322330>

Allcott, H. and Gentzkow, M. (2017), "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31/2, 211-36.

Shuster, S. (2017), "Russia Has Launched a Fake News War on Europe. Now Germany Is Fighting Back," *Time*, 9 August.

9/11 **Literature review**

This class will have two parts. It will begin with a discussion of the purpose and form of a literature review. In the second part we will collectively critique an article in order to help to hone students' ability to critically read published works.

Assignment

Critical reading exercise (guidance on t-square):

- Price, R. (1998), 'Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines,' *International Organization*, 52/3, 613-44 (I)

Reading

EPA8, Ch. 3 and pp. 395-8.

9/13 **Honing focus: Alternatives and working hypotheses**

This class will introduce the challenges posed by the need to eliminate rival alternative explanations. Toward this end we will discuss alternative rival hypotheses and how to develop working hypotheses. We will workshop students' research questions to identify rival alternative hypotheses and how to isolate them.

Assignment

Circulate a list of alternative (rival) hypotheses for your research question by 5 pm on 9/12.

Reading

EPA8, pp. 77-81; 88-93; 99-102; 123-9.

Shively, W. P. 2011. *The Craft of Political Research* (Prentice Hall 8th edn). pp. 78-90 (t)

9/18 **No class: Research Day**

9/20 Student research report I

Students will report on their progress and discuss any problems they have encountered. A written (short) report must be circulated by 5 pm on 9/19. The report should:

- Explain how the research question has evolved;
- Address what the key concepts are and how they might be operationalized;
- Identify the alternative explanations that you are considering;
- Incorporate the literature review (e.g., where did the different concepts, operationalizations and hypotheses come from?).

9/25 Research methods overview

This class introduces the range of approaches from which you are likely to choose when seeking to answer your question. The aim is to give an overview of their general strengths and weaknesses. The crucial take away that the appropriate method is determined by the question that is being asked and that methodological choices should be taken with care and transparently.

Assignment

Present one article or book chapter from your literature review.

What is it about?

What is the argument?

How is it relevant to your project?

Reading

EPA8, pp. 81-6; 94-9.

Bennet, A. (2010), "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," in H. E. Brady and D. Collier (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 207-11. (t)

9/27 Concept presentation 1

Each student will **present** his/her literature review relating to the key concept to be explained.

10/2 Concept presentation 2

Each student will **present** his/her literature review relating to the key explanatory concept.

10/4 Writing a research paper

This class will discuss writing a research paper. It will cover everything from structure through presentation and referencing. It will also address how to write a research plan as an intermediate step.

Reading

EPA8 Chs. 15 and 22.

10/9 No class. Student recess**10/11 Research ethics**

This class will introduce and discuss the key ethical issues involved in conducting social science research, including plagiarism and dealing with human subjects.

Assignment

Complete Georgia Tech's training on the use of human subjects. Instructions available at: http://researchintegrity.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/citi_gt_users.pdf. This will take several hours. Bring proof of completion to class.

Reading

APSA (2012), *A Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science*, 2nd edn. pp. 8-11.

10/17 No class: Meet individually with instructor during class hour.

10/18 Workshopping research plans I

The class will discuss some of the students' **research plans** focusing on how to improve and implement them. All students must circulate their research plans by 9 am on 10/17. All students must be prepared to discuss their and the others' research plans.

10/23 Workshopping research plans II

The class will discuss the remaining students' research plans focusing on how to improve and implement them.

10/25 Faculty research presentation 1

A member of faculty will present his/her research focusing on methodological issues and choices.

10/30 No class: Research day. Meet individually with instructor during class hour.

- 11/1 **Faculty research presentation 2**
A member of faculty will present his/her research focusing on methodological issues and choices.
- 11/6 **Student research report II**
Students will report on their progress and discuss any problems they have encountered. Reports must be circulated by 5 pm on 11/5.
- 11/8 **Faculty research presentation 3**
A member of faculty will present his/her research focusing on methodological issues and choices.
- 11/13 **No class: Research and writing day.**
- 11/15 **No class: Individual meetings**
- 11/20 **No class: Writing day**
- 11/23 **No class. Thanksgiving Day**
- 11/27 **Substantive feedback and review**
The class will discuss students' research papers.
Papers to be circulated by 9 am on 11/26
- 11/29 **Practice presentations**
Some of the students will give their presentations and receive feedback.
- 12/4 **Public presentations**