

# INTA 4500

## Pro-Seminar

### Fall 2019

M 3:00 – 5:45

Habersham G17

Subject to change with notice

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Office hours: Mondays 2-3 PM; Tuesdays 10-11 AM and by appointment

#### **Course Description:**

This is a project-based course. Its purpose is to enable you to produce a research paper based on your specific interests within international affairs. The work you put into it should help you enhance essential skills required by employers and/or graduate schools: collecting and processing relevant evidence; clear and concise writing; analytical, critical and methodical thinking; public presenting; and providing constructive feedback to others. The final product may prove very useful as you prepare an application portfolio for a job or graduate school. Bearing that in mind, I assign minimum reading in this course. You will spend most of the time presenting the progress you have made on your projects and commenting on those of others. Through presentations and Q&A you will demonstrate what you know, and how to think, about international affairs.

#### **Intended learning outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will:

- demonstrate theoretical knowledge of the discipline to address international policy issues.
- demonstrate methodological literacy to analyze to international political phenomena.
- use oral communication to demonstrate knowledge and to make cogent arguments in international affairs.
- demonstrate proficiency in written communication to increase knowledge and develop cogent arguments in international affairs.

#### **Course Text:**

Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Sage, 2020).

## **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.

## **Course Requirements and Evaluation:**

Students enrolled in the course have the following responsibilities: (1) to submit four written assignments and present them in class; (2) to complete a research paper of 5,000 words (excluding notes and bibliography) on a significant problem, issue or puzzle in international affairs that utilizes at least 20 academically reputable sources; (3) to present drafts of their papers in class (with the help of Power Point) and in a poster session; (4) to actively participate in class discussions. For the paper and associated presentation and poster, students may work individually or as a group of two.

| <b>Graded assignments</b>    | <b>Date due</b>         | <b>Maximum points possible</b> | <b>Share of total</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Research question         | 9/9                     | 100                            | 5                     |
| 2) Critical reading write-up | 9/16                    | 200                            | 10                    |
| 3) Literature review         | 9/30                    | 200                            | 10                    |
| 4) Research design           | 10/21                   | 200                            | 10                    |
| Presentation                 | 11/4, 11/11 or<br>11/18 | 200                            | 10                    |
| Poster                       | 12/2                    | 200                            | 10                    |
| Paper                        | 12/9                    | 600                            | 30                    |
| Participation*               | continuous              | 300                            | 15                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 |                         | <b>2000</b>                    | <b>100</b>            |

\* In several classes (8/26, 9/23, 10/7, 10/28) we will discuss themes raised by the textbook so as to better understand different elements of a research project. In order to provide stimulus for those discussions, each student should prepare two questions that she/he/they were left with after reading the assigned material for the class. The questions should be handed in – on a typed page containing the student's name – to the instructor at the beginning of class. These will count towards class participation.

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

**Extra-credit** (50 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 of the event.

## **Grading**

| Grade | Points         | Descriptors   |
|-------|----------------|---|
| A     | 20<br>19<br>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<br>16<br>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<br>13<br>12 | Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems.  |
| D     | 11<br>10<br>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.     |

### *Final grades:*

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| > 1800    | A |
| 1500-1799 | B |
| 1200-1499 | C |

### 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 may be assigned.

## **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 at the beginning of the semester. (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>).

## **Attendance policy**

Attendance is required, although each student can have 1 (one) 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.
- 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.

## **Academic misconduct**

According to the Georgia Tech honor code,<sup>1</sup> 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; and
- 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).

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

## **Course overview**

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|-------|--|---|
| 8/19  | Introduction   |   |
| 8/26  | Topics of interest<br>What makes a good research question?               | Topics of interest<br>Reading questions |
| 9/2   | <b>Labor Day – No Class</b>  |   |
| 9/9   | Research Question workshop 1   | Research Question                       |
| 9/16  | Research Question workshop 2<br>Critical reading exercise                | Critical reading write-up               |
| 9/23  | Library resources<br>Introduction to literature reviews                  | Reading questions                       |
| 9/30  | Presentations of literature reviews 1                                    | Literature review                       |
| 10/7  | Presentations of literature reviews 2<br>Introduction to research design | Reading questions                       |
| 10/14 | <b>Fall Recess – No Class</b>  |   |
| 10/21 | Research design presentations 1  | Research design                         |
| 10/28 | Research design presentations 2<br>Poster guidance                       | Reading questions                       |
| 11/4  | <b>Presentations 1</b>   |   |
| 11/11 | <b>Presentations 2</b>   |   |
| 11/18 | <b>Presentations 3</b>   |   |
| 11/25 | <b>No class - 1-on-1 sessions as needed</b>                              |   |
| 12/2  | <b>Poster session</b>  |   |
| 12/9  | <b>Paper due</b>   |   |

## **Detailed Course Outline**

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| 8/19 | <p><b>Introduction</b><br/>This class will introduce the course and expectations. In-class reading and an exercise will help to illustrate the importance of explicit and rigorous social scientific analysis</p>  |
| 8/26 | <p><b>Topics of interest</b><br/><u>Assignment:</u> Each student will present 2 issues that she/he/they considers interesting, explaining why they are interesting.</p> <p><b>What makes a good research question?</b><br/>In this class we will begin the critical process of identifying good research questions.</p> <p><u>Reading</u><br/>Baglione, Chapters 1 and 2.</p> <p>If you think you might want to write a policy paper, see PowerPoint guidance on Canvas.</p>   |
| 9/2  | <p><b>Labor Day – No Class</b></p>   |
| 9/9  | <p><b>Research Question workshop 1</b><br/>Students will present their own research questions and help others refine theirs. When workshopping questions, we will pay particular attention to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key concepts?</li> <li>• What are plausible relationships among them?</li> <li>• How might the concepts be translated into variables?</li> <li>• What do you think relationship between the key concepts is?</li> </ul> <p>Find a <b>research question</b> you will investigate this semester in the pro-seminar paper. Prepare a one-page handout to be distributed and presented in class. The handout should clearly state your research question, explain why you think that it is interesting/significant, and set out how you plan to go about answering it. Be prepared in class to discuss the questions above.</p> <p>The in-class presentation will go by the ascending alphabetical order of student surnames.</p> |
| 9/16 | <p><b>Research Question workshop 2</b><br/>Students will present their own research questions and help others refine theirs.</p> <p><b>Critical reading exercise</b><br/>Students will discuss their analysis of the Price, R. (1998), 'Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines,' International Organization, 52/3, 613-44. Detailed instructions are available on Canvas.</p>  |

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| 9/23  | <p><b>Library resources</b><br/>INTA Librarian <u>Jay Forrest</u> will visit the class to highlight research resources and to answer questions.</p> <p><b>Introduction to literature reviews</b><br/>What are the existing answers to your research question? What are they missing? What explanation do you propose?</p> <p><u>Reading</u><br/>Baglione, Chapters 3 and 4</p>  |
| 9/30  | <p><b>Presentation of literature reviews 1</b><br/>Prepare a one-page handout (excluding references) summarizing your <b>literature review</b> to be distributed and presented in class. Describe existing scholarship and theories regarding your research question. Be sure to explain how your project relates to the literature (e.g., Are you filling a gap or resolving a disagreement? What concepts or methods might you utilize?). Be prepared to present it in class. The in-class presentation will go by descending alphabetical order of students' surnames.</p> |
| 10/7  | <p><b>Presentation of literature reviews 2</b><br/>Students will present their own literature reviews and tentative arguments and comment on those of others.</p> <p><b>Introduction to research design</b><br/>How do you design and organize your research inquiry? How do you convince others your arguments are valid and make sense? How do you pick relevant cases to make your inference valid and persuasive?</p> <p><u>Reading</u><br/>Baglione, Chapters 5, 7, 8</p>  |
| 10/14 | <p><b>Fall Recess – No Class</b></p>  |
| 10/21 | <p><b>Research design presentations 1</b><br/>Prepare a one-page handout explaining your <b>research approach or method of inquiry</b>. If you are using qualitative methods, explain the case(s) you pick and implications you expect to find. If you are using quantitative methods, explain the source(s) and periods of data you will use or collect and the measurement of your variables. The order of in-class presentations will be determined by lottery.</p>  |
| 10/28 | <p><b>Poster guidance</b><br/><u>Vince Pedicino</u> will visit class to provide guidance on how to create an effective poster.</p> <p><b>Research design presentations 2</b></p> <p><u>Reading</u><br/>Baglione, Chapters 6 and 9</p>   |

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| 11/4  | <p><b>Presentations 1</b><br/>Some students will present their research. This is an opportunity to get feedback on your preliminary findings. For grading, the emphasis will be on the clarity of the presentation, including the structure and logic of the argument. The other students and invited guests will provide constructive research. There will be 10 minutes/presentation + 5 minutes for questions and comments. The order of the presentations will be the same as for research design.</p> <p>Students presenting today must email me their presentations by noon.</p> |
| 11/11 | <p><b>Presentations 2</b><br/>As above.</p> <p>Students presenting today must email me their presentations by noon.</p>  |
| 11/18 | <p><b>Presentations 3</b><br/>As above.</p> <p>Students presenting today must email me their presentations by noon.</p>  |
| 11/25 | <p><b>No class:</b> 1-on-1 sessions as needed</p> <p>The instructor will be available during the class period to provide individual advice. There will be a sign-up sheet.</p>   |
| 12/2  | <p><b>Poster session</b><br/>Students will exhibit their posters in Habersham Building and present them to the INTA community.</p> <p>Prepare a poster of your project. Illustrate clearly your research question, argument, research design/methodology, findings and implications.</p>   |
| 12/9  | <p><b>Paper due</b> by 2 PM in my mailbox in Habersham 129</p>   |