

INTA 4803-AY/8803-AY
European Research Seminar
Fall 2019

T 12-2:45

IAC/Habersham 136

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

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:

- demonstrate theoretical knowledge of the discipline to address international policy issues.
- demonstrate methodological literacy to analyze 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 (Required)

Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*, 4th 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

Students enrolled in the course have the following responsibilities: (1) to submit five short 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 concerning Europe that utilizes at least 20 academically reputable sources; (3) to present a draft of their papers in class (with the help of Power Point); (4) to actively participate in class discussions.

Assignment	Due	Share of final grade	Maximum points
1) Research question	9/10	5%	100
2) Critical reading write-up	9/24	10%	200
3) Literature review	10/8	10%	200
4) Research design	10/29	10%	200
5) Progress report	11/19	10%	200
Presentation	12/3	10%	200
Final paper	12/9	30%	600
Class participation*	continuous	15%	300
			2000

* In several classes (8/27, 9/3, 9/10, 9/17, 10/22, 11/5) 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 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 of the event.

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 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.

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>).

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

Class *Subject*

8/20 **Introduction**

During this class we 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.

8/27 **What makes a good research question?**

We will discuss what makes a good research question and workshop students' areas of interest in order to begin to develop them as research questions.

Reading

Baglione, Chapters 1 and 2

9/3 **Issues and controversies in Europe**

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.

Reading

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

Archick, K. (2017), "The European Union: Current Challenges and Future Prospects," Congressional Research Service R44249, 27 Feb. (w)

Other readings as appropriate.

9/10 **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 students' 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

Identify the **research question** you will investigate this semester. 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.

Reading

Baglione, Chapter 5.

9/17 **Literature review**

This class will have three parts. It will begin with a discussion of the purpose and form of a literature review. In the second part, it will introduce students to the resources particularly appropriate for their research questions and consider how to assess the reliability of sources of information. In the third 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 Canvas)

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

Reading

Baglione, Chapters 3-4.

9/24 Faculty research presentations

Nunn School faculty will present their current research projects, highlighting their research processes.

10/1 1-on-1 sessions - no class

Students will meet individually with the instructor to discuss their progress on their literature review.

10/8 Literature review presentations

Prepare a one-page handout (excluding references) summarizing your literature review 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.

10/15 Fall Recess - no class**10/22 Introduction to research design**

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?

Reading

Baglione, Chapters 7 and 8

10/29 Research design presentations

Prepare a one-page handout explaining your approach or method of inquiry to be distributed and presented in class. 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.

11/5 Writing a research paper

This class will discuss writing a research paper. It will cover everything from structure through presentation and referencing.

Reading

Baglione, Chapters 6 and 9

11/12 No class: Meet individually with instructor during class hour.

11/19 Progress report presentations

Prepare a one-page handout explaining your progress to date. Set out your preliminary findings and sketch your argument. Highlight any conceptual or evidence challenges you are facing and what the nature of the problem is. You will not be marked down for encountering difficulties. What matters more is that you have identified them and how you think you might address them. Be prepared to present your progress report in class and discuss those of the other students.

11/26 No class: Meet individually with instructor during the class hour as needed.

12/2 Presentations

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 feedback. You will have 15 minutes/presentation followed by 5 minutes for questions and comments.

12/9 Paper due by 2 PM in my mailbox in Habersham 129