INTA 6103

International Security

Georgia Institute of Technology
Fall 2023

Course Information

Friday 2:00 - 4:45 p.m.
Room: Habersham G17

Contact Information

Professor Dalton Lin
Office: Habersham 219
Phone: (404) 894-5601
Email: dalton.lin@inta.gatech.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00 – 4:00 pm. Please use Book time with Dalton Lin: Office Hours to make appointments.

Course Description

This seminar discusses a selected list of critical concepts in international security studies. It begins with a discussion of the concept of “anarchy” and the assumptions and propositions of structural realism to lay the foundation. It then introduces key international security concepts, including the security dilemma, balance of power, offense-defense balance, alliance politics, deterrence, brinkmanship, the first strike advantage, private information, the commitment problem, and the audience cost. The course aims to empower students with these conceptual tools to understand and explain contemporary international security issues. For that purpose, the course uses the cases of China’s rise, the Korean War, the Taiwan Strait tensions, the Ukraine War, the gray-zone operations in the South China Sea, and the weaponization of cyber and space for class discussion.

Due to time limitations, this course predominantly focuses on state-centric, realist discussions of international security. Notably, it does not touch upon constructivist and feminist perspectives on international security issues and only introduce liberalist arguments briefly. However, the omission does not imply their insignificance. In addition, this course does not cover several prominent international security topics, including nuclear weapons, other
weapons of mass destruction, and terrorism. Students interested in these topics are encouraged to check out INTA courses offered by Dr. Rachel Whitlark, Dr. Margaret Kosal, Dr. Jenna Jordan, and Dr. Lawrence Rubin.

**Course Requirements**

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and proactively participate in seminar discussions and class activities.

**Required Reading**

The following books are required for the course:

Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Yale University Press, 1966)


Other readings are available through the Georgia Tech Library online resources or on Canvas when the library does not provide access.

I also encourage students to follow contemporary international security issues by reading international news. Sources of good international coverage include but are not limited to the New York Times, BBC ([https://www.bbc.com/news](https://www.bbc.com/news)), Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, and the Economist. Registering through the GT Library's Databases allows you free access to the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Financial Times. The BBC is not behind a paywall. In addition, listening to NPR news ([https://www.npr.org](https://www.npr.org)) is a good alternative.

**Requirements and Evaluation**

Students enrolled in this seminar have the following responsibilities:

1. Submit discussion questions for each topic.
   - Discussion questions are due by Thursday’s 2 p.m. on Canvas.
   - I don’t expect more than one or two thoughtful questions, which may or may not be accompanied by a short explanation. For example, think of these as the discussion questions or comments you might offer at a panel where these papers were being presented. Think of inconsistencies across readings (or within
them). Think of substance and method and what is being explained. Think too of the security issue you want to write for your policy memo (details later) and how the work helps or doesn't help.

2. Lead one seminar discussion.
   • You will sign up to lead a discussion. To prepare for leading the discussion, review your and your classmates’ discussion questions and group them into a few big inquires or debates.
   • There might be multiple people leading the same discussion, so coordinate within the group to develop a discussion plan. Then, on the Friday that you will lead the discussion, meet with me at 1:00 pm to go through your discussion plan.

3. Actively participate in seminar discussions.

4. Submit a policy memo.
   • Each student will write a policy memo (4 pages maximal, single-spaced, 12-pt font, 1 inch margin) on a contemporary case study or security topic of her/his choosing. Each memo will be addressed to a client—a head of a government agency or international institution, or a policy strategist at a firm or NGO—and will briefly summarize the significance of the event or issue, critically evaluate the interests at stake for the client, outline policy options, and explain how to choose among them. The final paper will be due on December 8th at 11:59 pm.
   • I will explain the format and substance of the policy memo on November 10th.

5. Actively participate in in-class policy simulation (details in the following).

**Simulation**

Each student will participate in a dynamic course policy simulation that will take place during the November 17th and December 1st class periods. The specific scenario and format of the simulation will be discussed in class. Each student is required to write several short preliminary concept papers and a group scenario. Those students who will participate in the role of `Control` will individually write two concept papers (3-5 pages each, double spaced). The first will specify and explain prevailing conditions that constrain options and behavior among contending actors, as well as assess alternative driving forces that motivate the behavior of contending actors. The second paper will identify critical uncertainties that can alter constraints, motivations, and/or behavior. Both papers are due no later than October 27th. All Control members will then collectively draft a specific scenario around the issue for distribution to the class on November 10th.

Alternatively, those students who participate as country team members will be required to individually write a short background paper (3-4 pages, double-spaced) and contribute to
drafting a group policy position paper (7 pages, double-spaced). For the first background paper, each student will summarize the policy issues at stake from the respective national perspective. The second paper will be collectively written by respective national teams, laying out the initial policy positions and objectives for the designated scenario. Both papers will be due at the onset of the simulation on November 17th. Each student will participate actively in all group problem-solving and deliberative exercises during the two-day policy simulation.

Grades will be determined as follows:
- Discussion questions (10%)
- Discussion leadership (10%)
- Class participation (25%)
- Concept, background, and position papers (20%; 10% each)
- Simulation/script (control), and simulation participation (country teams) (10%)
- Policy memo (25%)

Course Procedures

Announcements: Important information about the course will be announced through Canvas. I encourage students to set up receiving notifications from Canvas to avoid missing critical communication (Go to Canvas, then Account, then Notifications, and check Announcement)

Office Hours: I will hold office hours each week. Please use Book time with Dalton Lin: Office Hours to make appointments. Feel free to email me to set up appointments if the assigned office hours do not accommodate your schedule.

Grade Disputes: Any student may request a grade reevaluation by the professor. The student must accept the revised grade, which may be lower, higher, or the same as the original grade.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and directly violate the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. Plagiarizing is defined by Webster’s as “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own: use (another’s production) without crediting the source.” If caught cheating or plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. For any questions involving these or any other Academic Honor Code issues, please consult the professor or www.honor.gatech.edu.

This course is offered by the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts. The Ivan Allen College 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. If you have any concerns about inclusive diversity in this course, please don’t hesitate to raise them to the instructor.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students will be able to apply knowledge of theories of international relations and apply them in analyzing events and outcomes in world affairs.

2. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of principal contemporary global challenges in the fields of international security.

***Note: Syllabus subject to change***
Schedule

August 25: Introduction

September 1: Anarchy and the Origins of International Security Issues


Mini lecture on structural realism:


For further reading:


September 8: The Security Dilemma


*For further reading:*

**September 15: Balance of Power, Offense-Defense Balance, and Alliance**


*For further reading:*

**September 22: Deterrence**


**Discussion: U.S. Security Commitment to Taiwan**


• Bonnie S. Glaser; Michael J. Mazarr; Michael J. Glennon; Richard Hass and David Sacks, “Dire Straits,” Foreign Affairs, September 24, 2020. Canvas.

For the background of the issue:


September 29: Security Dilemma, Alliance Politics, and Deterrence


For further reading:


October 6: Brinkmanship and Gray-Zone Operations


• Bonnie Glaser and Matthew Funaiole, “South China Sea: Assessing Chinese Paranaval Behavior within the Nine-Dash Line,” in Andrew Erickson and Ryan Martinson (eds.),


**For further reading:**


October 13: First Strike Advantage and Emerging Technology


**For further reading:**


October 20: War Termination

Discussion: Ending the Ukraine War


October 27: Rational Explanation for War--Private Information and the Commitment Problem


November 3: Domestic Politics and War


For further reading:

November 10: In-class Simulation Planning and Policy Memo Nitty-Gritty

- Guest speaker: Chris McDermott

November 17: In-class Simulation

November 24: No Class—Thanksgiving

December 1: In-class Simulation

Policy Memos due on Friday, December 8 at 11:59 pm