

INTA 4500 Pro-Seminar, Fall 2024

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

Time: Fridays 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Room: Howey S204

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Description

This is a project-based course. The purpose of this course is to enable students to produce something deliverable that will be helpful when they try to begin their careers after graduation, whether in industry or in graduate school. Bearing that in mind, I have required minimum reading in this course: only a very concise textbook on doing research in political science and a few articles to serve as examples. Students will spend most of the time presenting the progress they have made on their own research

projects and questioning and commenting on others' work. Through presentation and Q&A, students will demonstrate what they know, what they think are important in international affairs, and how to think about all of them.

Reading Materials

Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press 1997).

Other readings are available on Canvas or through Georgia Tech Library online resources. When reading assigned articles, prepare for in-class discussion by always asking yourself: "What is the research question?" "What are the author's arguments?" "What evidence does the author provide?" "Is it convincing?" Most importantly, "how would you improve the research?"

Requirements and Evaluation

Students enrolled in the pro-seminar have the following responsibilities: (1) finish four assignments and present them in class; (2) complete a research paper or a commentary piece on an issue in international affairs (5,000 words maximum); (3) present their research projects in class and in a poster section; (4) actively participate in class discussion. Students can work individually or as a group of two.

The student's final paper is due on December 4, 2024. Please send me a pdf version by 12 p.m.

Grades will be determined as follows: four assignments and presentations (40%; 10% each), class participation (30%), and the final paper, poster, and presentation (30%).

Learning Outcomes

- (1) Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of theories of international relations and apply them in analyzing events and outcomes in world affairs.**
- (2) Students will be able to apply basic statistical skills to include quantitative and qualitative methodologies in academic and professional contexts within the field of international affairs.**

(3) Students will be able to apply research skills to address problems in the field of international affairs.

Statement on Diversity and Inclusion

This course is offered by the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs within the Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts. The Nunn School and the Ivan Allen College support 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.

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

Schedule

August 23: Introduction

We will introduce the structure of the pro-seminar and the grading rubrics, both of which are informed by the criteria of a good research.

- Van Evera, Appendix.
- Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, "Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity," *International Organization* Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring, 1990), pp. 137-168.

August 30— Research Questions

What is a good research question? What is your research question? Why should we care about your research question?

- Van Evera, Chapter 4 (Some parts of the chapter will be particularly useful in the later stage of your project, but it is good to have a roadmap and blueprint early in mind. Just replace the word “dissertation” with “senior thesis,” and everything else is relevant and applicable!)
- Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon, “On the Art of Writing Proposals,” (Social Science Research Council, 1995): 1–8, https://s3.amazonaws.com/ssrc-cdn1/crmuploads/new_publication_3/%7B7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70%7D.pdf

Assignment: Find a research question you will investigate in this semester as the topic of your pro-seminar project. Prepare a one-page handout to be distributed and presented in class. The handout should clearly state your research question, provides relevant context, and lays out a rough plan for your research. You can refer to the section “Your Dissertation Prospectus” in Van Evera’s Chapter 4 and write the handout as if it were a one-page prospectus. The in-class presentation will go by ascending alphabetical order on students’ surnames [10 points].

September 6: Presentation on Research Questions

Students will present their own research questions and help others refine theirs in class.

September 13: Exploring the Literature Using the Library

Presentation by Jay Forrest, Head, Operations Planning, Library Service Center

After Mr. Forrest’s presentation, we will finish students’ presentations on their research questions and discuss the citation style we will use in this class.

September 20: Theory

What are existing answers to your research question? What are they missing? What explanations do you propose?

- Van Evera, Chapter 1, pp. 7-27, and Chapter 3
- Reread Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder, “Chain Gangs and Passed Bucks: Predicting Alliance Patterns in Multipolarity,” *International Organization* Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring, 1990), pp. 137-168.

Assignment: Illustrate extant theories on your research question and your own tentative theory (argument) using arrow-diagrams and be prepared to present them in class. The in-class presentation will go by descending alphabetical order on students' surnames [10 points].

September 27: Presentation on the Extant Theories and Your Arguments

Students will present their theoretical arrow-diagrams and criticize others'.

October 4: Evidence and Case Studies

How do you convince others your arguments make sense? What are the observable implications of your theory? How do you pick relevant cases to make your inference valid and persuasive?

- Van Evera, Chapter 1, pp. 27-48; Chapter 2
- Daniel N. Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 98, No. 4 (2004), pp. 529-545
- Alexander Thompson, "Coercion Through IOs: The Security Council and the Logic of Information Transmission," *International Organization* Vol. 60, No. 1, pp. 1-34.

Assignment: Prepare a one-page handout explaining your methods of empirical inquiry. If you are using qualitative methods, explain the case(s) you pick and observable 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 [10 points].

October 11: Presentation on Empirical Methods

Students will present their methods of empirical inquiry and criticize others'.

October 18: Presentation on Empirical Methods

We will finish students' presentations on empirical methods.

October 25: Poster Making and Elevator Pitch

In the first half of the session, Vincent Pedicino, Director of Academic Programs, the Sam Nunn School, will introduce poster making and presentation to the class.

In the second half, students will report their progress by presenting an “elevator ride” description of the project (or an “elevator pitch”). Imagine stepping into an elevator and as the doors close, you realize that the person standing next to you is a recruiter at your dream company. Could you concisely introduce your research capabilities in the time of a quick elevator ride—about 60 seconds or less? Your objective is to create a memorable and positive impression and open the door to further conversation.

In addition to presenting your elevator pitch, you may also raise any research issues you have encountered and seek advice from the class.

Assignment: Prepare an “elevator ride” description of your project, which is a summary of your research question, findings/arguments, and the importance of the issue in a paragraph (maximum 250 words). Ex. I did a research on XXXXX (*a topic*) because I was intrigued by XXXXX (*your research question*). In order to answer the question, I did a case comparison between XXXXX (*your empirical methods*) and found that when XX increases XX decreases (*your argument*). I thought the issue was interesting and important because XXXXX (*why it matters*). The in-class presentation will go by lottery [10 points].

November 1 Presentation of Research

Every presenter (or group) will have 12 minutes to present their research, followed by 8 minutes Q&A.

November 8 Presentation of Research

Every presenter (or group) will have 12 minutes to present their research, followed by 8 minutes Q&A.

November 15 Presentation of Research

Every presenter (or group) will have 12 minutes to present their research, followed by 8 minutes Q&A.

November 22 Poster Day

Students will exhibit their posters in Midtown Room, Exhibition Hall.

Assignment: Prepare a poster of your project. Illustrate clearly your research question, argument, empirical design, findings, and conclusion/implications [10 points].