

**Georgia Institute of Technology
Sam Nunn School of International Affairs
Spring 2025**

**INTA 4500: Pro-Seminar
Class Time: Tuesdays 5:00-7:45 PM
Classroom: Habersham 136**

Instructor:

Prof. Mikulas Fabry
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Office hours: by appointment, Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 PM

Course Description:

This is a project-based course. Its purpose is to enable you to produce a senior 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 as well as graduate schools: collecting and processing relevant sources; clear and concise writing; analytical, critical, and methodological thinking; public presenting; and providing constructive feedback to peers and colleagues. The final product may prove especially useful as you prepare an application portfolio for a job or graduate school. Bearing that in mind, I assign minimum reading in this course: only a very concise textbook on writing a research paper in political science. You will spend most of the time presenting the progress you have made on your projects and commenting on projects of your classmates. Through presentations and Q&A you will demonstrate what you know, and how to think, about international affairs.

The course has four intended learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

1. demonstrate knowledge of theories of international relations and apply them in analyzing events and outcomes in world affairs.
2. apply basic statistical skills to include quantitative and qualitative methodologies in academic and professional contexts within the field of international affairs.
3. apply research skills to address problems in the field of international affairs.
4. establish proficiency in oral and written communication to demonstrate knowledge and to make cogent and coherent arguments in international affairs.

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

Course Text:

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

The book is available for purchase from the GT Barnes & Noble. The GT Library also has a copy on reserve. All other course material will be posted on the Canvas course page.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Students enrolled in the course have the following responsibilities: (1) to complete four written assignments and to present them in class; (2) to complete a research paper of 5,000 words (excluding notes and annotated bibliography) on a significant problem, issue or puzzle in international affairs which utilizes at the very least 20 academically reputable sources, including books and journal articles, and has an empirical component; (3) to present their nearly completed papers in a final class Power Point presentation and in a poster session to the INTA community; (4) to **actively** participate in class discussions. Students can work on their projects individually or as a group of two. Those wishing to work in pairs should let the instructor know via email by Friday, January 17th.

The final grades will be determined as follows: four written assignments and their presentations (20%; 5% each), class attendance (10%) and participation (20%), and the final presentation (10%), poster (10%) and paper (30%).

The four written assignments are due on the day you present them to the class and their copies should be uploaded to Canvas (under Discussions) **by 12:00 PM before the class of your presentation** (should you choose to present your written assignment with the assistance of Power Point, please upload a copy to Canvas/Discussions too). Only Word, Power Point or PDF files are acceptable as submissions on Canvas, and you must verbally present the files you uploaded earlier that day.

The final research papers are due to be uploaded to Canvas (under Assignments) **by 12:00 PM on Monday, April 28.** The papers will be graded based on their originality, logic and structure

of argument, quantity and quality of supporting research, and clarity, readability, and elegance of writing style.

In several classes we will discuss themes raised by the textbook to better understand different elements of a research project. To provide stimulus for these discussions, each student should prepare two questions that they were left with after reading the assigned material for the specified class. The typed and printed questions should be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of class. These will count towards class participation.

Class Absence and Penalty Policy:

Class absence is only justified for **documented** medical and family emergency reasons and in other cases approved by the GT Office of the Dean of Students. All late assignments will be penalized by 10% per day unless valid justification for missing the due date/time is provided before the due date/time.

Academic Integrity:

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/ or catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/.

Final papers submitted on Canvas will be screened for plagiarism via Turnitin, which now checks for AI fraud too. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or disabilityservices.gatech.edu/, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible so that I know of your learning needs.

Additional Student Resources:

The Center for Academic Success (success.gatech.edu) offers a variety of academic support services to help students succeed academically at Georgia Tech (e.g., tutoring, peer-led study groups, writing and study skills). Of particular importance for this course is the GT Communication Center (communicationcenter.gatech.edu). The Division of Student Life (studentlife.gatech.edu) in the Office of the Dean of Students offers resources and support for all students in the Tech community. The Counseling Center (counseling.gatech.edu) offers free mental health services, as well as stress management and wellness workshops to all currently enrolled students. They are located in Smithgall, Suite 210 and are offering virtual and in-person resources.

Communications Policy:

As your official GT email is the only means for the instructor to reach you outside the classroom, you are responsible for checking it **daily**. You are also asked to **turn on** to receive **all** the course-related notifications on Canvas.

Outline of Classes:

[N.B. The schedule is subject to revision. I will provide ample notice should that occur.]

January 7: Course Introduction

We will discuss the structure of the pro-seminar, the grading rubrics and introduce the critical importance of good research question selection.

January 14: Presentation by INTA Librarian Jay Forrest + General Discussion of Research Questions

Read Baglione's chapters 1-2 and hand in a sheet with two typed questions raised by them at the beginning of the class. The sheet should, in addition, contain the research question you are planning to answer in the course.

January 21: Presentations of Research Questions

Assignment: Find a narrow, specific research question you will investigate this semester in the pro-seminar paper. Prepare a one-page handout to be presented in class. The handout should clearly state your research question, describe the problem to be investigated (both in the real world and as a matter of policy/scholarly debates), explain why it is important (theoretically, empirically, in terms of policy relevance, or all three), and lay out a rough plan for how you intend to go about answering it. [5 points].

Students will present their own research questions and help others refine theirs. The presentation will go by the ascending alphabetical order of student surnames.

January 28: Presentations of Research Questions Continued

February 4: Presentation on Posters by Vince Pedicino + General Discussion of Literature Review and Tentative Arguments

Read Baglione's chapters 3-5 and hand in a sheet with two typed questions raised by them at the beginning of the class.

February 11: Presentations of Literature Review and Tentative Arguments

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

Assignment: Prepare a one-page handout to be presented in class. State your research question and then describe existing scholarship and theories in relation to it, grouping them into distinct “schools of thought.” Be sure to explain how your project relates to the existing literature on your research question (e.g., Are you filling a gap or resolving a disagreement? What concepts or methods might you utilize? Are they different from what currently exists?). Then present your own tentative theory, hypothesis, or argument. The presentations will go by descending alphabetical order of students’ surnames. [5 points].

February 18: Presentations of Literature Review and Your Tentative Arguments Continued + Discussion of Research Design

Read Baglione’s chapters 6-9 and hand in a sheet with two typed questions raised by them at the beginning of the class.

February 25: Presentations of Research Design: Method, Evidence and Case Studies

How do you design and organize your research inquiry? How do you convince others your arguments are valid and make sense? What is the nature of your evidence? On what basis do you pick relevant cases/case studies to make your inference sound and persuasive?

Assignment: Prepare a one-page handout explaining your approach or method of inquiry. 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 presentation will go by the ascending alphabetical order of student surnames [5 points].

March 4: Research Week (NO CLASS)

March 11: Presentation of Research Design: Method, Evidence and Case Studies Continued

March 18: Spring Break (NO CLASS)

March 25: Individual Consultations with Students (NO CLASS)

April 1: Taking Stock of Progress

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 or graduate school. Could you concisely introduce your research topic 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 200 words). For example: I did research on XXXXX (*a topic*) because I was intrigued by XXXXX (*your research question*). To answer the question, I did a case comparison between XXXXX (*your methods*) and found that when XX increases XX decreases (*your argument*). I thought the issue was interesting and important because XXXXX (*why it matters*). [5 points].

April 8: Final Presentation of Research

The presentations containing all elements of the research paper will go by descending alphabetical order of students’ surnames. Please upload your Power Point presentation on Canvas/Discussions by 12:00 PM of the day on which you present [10 points].

April 15: Final Presentation of Research Continued

April 22: Poster Day

Assignment: Prepare a physical poster capturing your project for the INTA community session and upload its electronic version on Canvas/Discussions by 12:00 PM. The poster should clearly illustrate your research question, argument, research design/methodology, findings and implications [10 points].