

Introduction to International Security

Last Updated: Mon, 07/21/2025

Course prefix: INTA

Course number: 2120

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):

90022

Instructor First Name: Jenny

Instructor Last Name: Jun

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

This course offers an introduction to a range of traditional and contemporary international security issues from both a theoretical and policy perspective. After completing the course, students will be conversant in the most important theories in international security and the ins and outs of emerging security challenges. This course starts out by exploring a central puzzle at the heart of international security - why do strategic actors end up in violent conflict despite its inefficiency? Through the lens of the three "I"s – interests, interactions, and institutions – we will analyze why states and non-state actors often resort to violence to pursue their interests, despite its costliness. We will cover major theories in international security through topics such as the role of domestic politics in warfare, why states form alliances to increase security, and why some actors resort to terrorism. In the second half of the course, we will apply these tools to specific issue areas such as nuclear weapons, regional security competitions, the security repercussions of climate change, as well as the political dimensions of emerging security issues such as cybersecurity, drone warfare, and artificial intelligence.

Course learning outcomes:

1. Students will become knowledgeable on major theories of international relations and be able to utilize such theories to explain and analyze international security issues.
2. Students will become knowledgeable on various global security challenges and be able to understand their facts as well as different actors' perspectives and interests surrounding the issue.

3. Students will be able to take a position on a key issue by forming a coherent argument supported by appropriate empirical evidence and thinking through potential counterarguments.

Required course materials:

The main textbook that we will be using is *World Politics*, by Jeffry Frieden, David Lake, and Kenneth Schultz, fifth edition. (<https://www.norton.com/books/World-Politics/>) Electronic copies of the chapters we will be using will be made available on Canvas. There is no need to purchase the book, although those who wish to are free to do so.

Grading policy:

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A 90-100%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 0-59%

Per Georgia Tech policy, grades are awarded on a scale of A-F with no +/- grades permitted. Additional information regarding Georgia Tech's grading system is provided by the Registrar [here](#).

Incompletes (I): Students may be assigned an "incomplete" when they were doing satisfactory work, but for nonacademic reasons beyond their control and deemed acceptable by the instructor, the student was unable to meet the full requirements of the course.

Withdrawals (W): Withdrawals from individual courses without penalty will not be permitted after 60 percent of the term has been completed, as specified by the official calendar, except in cases of hardship.

Attendance policy:

While I won't be checking attendance (I respect you as adults to make good judgments), the expectation is that you attend lectures and stay actively engaged for the 75 minutes of class time. Having said that, I understand that various circumstances can arise during the semester. The point is to act in good faith - email me in advance, and we can figure things out. On the other hand, students with regular, unexcused absences should not expect to receive full marks on participation. Having full marks on participation can often make or break a borderline grade (often between a high B and a low A).

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

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 a clear description of what counts as plagiarism, cheating, and/or the use of unauthorized sources, please see the [Student Code of Conduct](#). For more information about Georgia Tech's standards with respect to academic integrity, please see Georgia Tech's [Honor Code](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a paper will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

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 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