

# ME4698 – Undergraduate Research Assistantship: Syllabus

## Course Information

**Course Prefix and Number:** ME 4698

**Course Name:** Undergraduate Research Assistantship

**Instructor:** Thomas R. Kurfess

## Course Description

This course provides academic credit for independent thesis research conducted under the supervision of a Georgia Tech faculty advisor. The course does not involve regular class meetings, assignments, or examinations. The scope and direction of research are determined by the student in consultation with the undergraduate research advisor, consistent with the requirements of the degree program.

## Course Learning Outcomes

By enrolling in this course, students will:

1. Engage in independent research under faculty supervision.
2. Gain experience in formulating research questions and applying methods appropriate to their discipline.
3. Communicate research activity through interactions with their research advisor and, as applicable, other members of their research team.

## Required Course Materials

No textbooks or materials are required. Resources for research are determined in consultation with the thesis advisor.

## Grading Policy

This course is normally not graded as it is typically used for either paid or voluntary efforts. However, if the course is taken for a grade, it is graded on a letter grade of **A-F** basis.

A grade of **A** reflects outstanding performance:

- High-quality, intellectually rigorous research effort

- Clear connection between work performed and learning objectives
- Strong written and/or oral deliverables (report, paper, presentation)
- Evidence of critical thinking, synthesis, and reflection
- Responsible handling of setbacks and ambiguity
- Professional-level documentation of work

A grade of **B** reflects good / solid performance:

- Research goals largely met
- Adequate academic rigor
- Deliverables completed but lacking depth, polish, or synthesis
- Some guidance needed to stay on track
- Reasonable understanding of the research context

A grade of **C** reflects marginal performance:

- Partial completion of research objectives
- Weak analysis or documentation
- Lack of clear learning progression
- Deliverables that meet minimal standards only
- Significant faculty intervention required

A grade of **D** indicates unsatisfactory performance:

- Failure to meet agreed scope of work
- Poor reliability or professionalism
- Incomplete or missing deliverables
- Minimal contribution to research
- Repeated issues despite feedback

A grade of **F** indicates failure:

- Research activities were largely not performed
- Student abandoned the project without resolution
- No meaningful deliverables were submitted
- Academic integrity violations occurred
- The student failed to meet even minimal expectations

## Attendance Policy

This course does not include scheduled class meetings. Students conduct independent research under the supervision of a thesis advisor. The frequency and format of student-advisor contact are determined by mutual agreement.

## Academic and Research 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. Review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Academic Honor Code](#), especially [Appendix A: Graduate Addendum to the Academic Honor Code](#).

Students are expected to perform research in an ethical and responsible manner. All Doctoral and Master's Thesis students are required to take the [Responsible Conduct of Research training](#), and it is expected that students abide by the principles taught in that training while performing research for this thesis course.

Allegations of scientific or scholarly misconduct are handled in accordance with the procedures outlined by the [Policy for Responding to Allegations of Scientific or Other Scholarly Misconduct](#).

### Core IMPACTS

Not applicable.

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) 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 in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

### Expectations of Advisors and Advisees

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. The [Expectations of Advisors and Advisees](#) articulates some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.