

INTA 4803/8803 Syllabus

Open-Source Intelligence, 3 credits

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Sarah Bidgood

Email:

General Course Information

Description

Open-source intelligence (OSINT) is intelligence derived from publicly- and commercially available sources. How can it be leveraged to address pressing, real-world challenges? This course will answer this question by introducing students to cutting-edge tools for collecting, assessing, and analyzing the wealth of open-source data around us—from ground and satellite imagery to news and social media to public records and beyond. Featuring real-life examples and case studies—as well as discussions with leading practitioners from across industry and the national security sector—it will explore how OSINT can be used with extraordinary effect to evaluate risk, monitor threats, assess adversary/competitor capabilities and intentions, inform decision- and policymaking, and more.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- define OSINT and explain how it differs from other kinds of intelligence;
- identify different kinds of open-source data and the types of information that can be gleaned from them;
- deploy various open-source analytical methods, tools, and techniques to answer specific questions in your own interest areas independently, effectively, and ethically;
- describe how these methods, tools, and techniques have changed over time and how they are likely to evolve in the future with the advent of new technology;
- present your findings to different audiences from policymakers to the public and beyond in ways that support better decision-making and understanding; and

- explain how different industries and communities make use of OSINT and where these skills are in greatest demand today.

Required Course Materials

There is no textbook for this course. All required course materials and reading assignments will be made available via Canvas and the Georgia Tech library databases. Please note that these materials and assignments are subject to change with advance notice to students.

Grading Policy

Grades will be assigned on the following scale in this course. *Please note that, at Georgia Tech, final course grades are awarded on a scale of A-F with no +/- grades permitted.*

100-90%: A

89-80%: B

79-70%: C

69-60%: D

59% or below: F

Assignments

- Participation: 10%
- Homework: 10%
- Midterm: 20%
- Final project: 30%
- Final presentation: 30%

TOTAL: 100%

Please note that, in order to pass the class, you must complete all of the assignments for the course. To illustrate with an example: even if you receive 100% on the final project and final presentation, which are worth a total of 60% of your final grade, you will not pass the class if you skip the midterm, fail to submit any of the homework assignments, and/or never participate in class.

Description of Graded Components

Participation—10%

Your participation is critical to making this course effective and engaging and to ensuring that you achieve the learning objectives above. Participation goes beyond simply attending class and can be demonstrated in multiple ways, all of which will count toward your participation grade. These include, but are not limited to, asking questions; actively

engaging in discussions in class; reflecting upon the readings and other assignments in ways that demonstrate you have thought carefully about them; volunteering to serve as a “spokesperson” for group exercises in class; and considering and responding to the ideas your colleagues put forward in class in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Homework—10%

Homework assignments for this course will be short, take-home exercises which are designed to help you practice and solidify the techniques, methods, and skills we learn in class. Your completion/submission of the assignments is what will determine your grade for this component. We will review the answers together at the start of each class to help you gauge your learning.

Midterm—20%

The midterm will be a closed book, closed notes, in-class test of material covered up until that point in the course. It will include a mixture of multiple-choice questions, true/false questions, and short answer essays. An in-class review session will be held prior to administering the midterm.

Final project—30%

The final project for this course will be an intelligence report (c. 3,000 words) on an event, site, or topic relevant to your research interests in which you will make use of the various analytical methods, tools, and techniques we cover in this course. I will provide you with detailed instructions about how to complete the report along with a rubric of specific components it must include. You will have opportunities to receive feedback and comments on drafts from me prior to final submission.

Final presentation—30%

The final presentation for this course will be an in-class, oral briefing of your final project making use of the various presentation tools and techniques we cover in class. I will provide you with detailed instructions and guidance on what the briefing must include, and you will have opportunities to receive comments and feedback on your briefing material from me prior to your presentation.

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

While attendance is not assigned a separate grade in this course, receiving full credit for participation as described above will not be possible unless you attend class regularly. If you need to miss class for reasons planned or unplanned, including because of illness, approved Institute activities, and/or religious observances, please alert me as soon as possible and provide any necessary documentation in accordance with the [rules and regulations](#) detailed in the Georgia Tech Catalog. For any excused absences defined therein, I will provide alternative ways to make up participation credit, such as writing a short reflection on the reading assignments for the class(es) missed.

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. Review [Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the student [Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who 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](#) (404-894-2563) 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.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

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 Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate 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.

Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

There are no prerequisites for this course, and there is no expectation that students will be familiar with open-source analytical techniques or methods prior to taking this course. All

that is required in advance is an interest in the topic and a readiness to learn something new.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Collaboration is an important part of OSINT work, so working together on homework assignments outside of class when relevant is encouraged. However, you must submit your own homework assignments with your answers in your own words directly to me—and you must be prepared to explain said answers if and when I call upon you in class!

The midterm must be exclusively your own work, as must the final project and presentation.

Some of the methods we will cover in this course will involve the use of artificial intelligence tools, including generative AI (GenAI). Among the topics we will discuss in class are the benefits and limitations of these tools for open-source intelligence analysis. Correspondingly, when part of an assignment and in cases where you are explicitly advised to do so, you not only can but *should* use these tools—as doing so is important for achieving the course learning objectives. In other instances, however, utilizing GenAI will inhibit your mastery of the OSINT skills we cover, undermine the credibility of your findings and, potentially, result in deeply flawed analyses. Thus, for each course assignment, I will provide specific, written guidance pertaining to the use of GenAI/AI more broadly, which it is your responsibility to follow. As a general rule, you should assume that the use of GenAI tools for completing your course assignments is prohibited unless I tell you otherwise. In all cases, including content generated by AI in your assignments without acknowledging that you have done so will be treated as academic misconduct.

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Unless I have granted you an extension in advance, your grade for any assignments which are submitted after the deadline will automatically be docked 10% for every 24-hour period or portion thereof that they are late. If you have not submitted an assignment 72 hours following the deadline, you will receive a 0. That said, I am typically able to grant short extensions in the case of illness or other emergency exigencies if requested in advance and with appropriate supporting documentation. Please note, however, that I will not grant extensions retroactively after a deadline has passed.

If you need to miss an exam or presentation because of you are sick or have a valid conflict related to an approved institutional activity or religious holiday, a makeup exam/presentation will be scheduled. Please let me know as soon as a conflict arises and in line

with the [rules and regulations](#) on attendance outlined in the Georgia Tech catalog so I can make appropriate accommodations.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Some of the activities we do in class will involve the use of a computer, so please plan to bring your laptops. However, I urge you to strenuously resist the temptation to multitask, which will degrade your learning experience. Instead, please focus on being present and engaged with the material—which is to everyone’s benefit. All cellphones should be silenced and put away as soon as class starts.

Subject to Change Statement

Please note that the syllabus for this course is subject to change at my discretion. I will communicate any changes to you in advance either via email or Canvas, and it is your responsibility to monitor your inbox/Canvas for any such changes.

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources

A list of resources for undergraduate students’ academic success and information about advising can be found at [Success at Tech](#).

Among these is Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success), which provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at success.gatech.edu/tutoring, email us at tutoring@gatech.edu, or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the [Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education](#) website. Specific information for [current graduate students](#) includes

- [Academic Resources](#) such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;

- Student Resources such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- Professional Development such as the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events”

Student Well-Being

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))