

# INTA 6003 Syllabus

Empirical Research Methods, Section A, 3 Credits

Fall 2026

## Instructor Information

---

**Instructor: Anjali Thomas**

**Email: athomas424@gatech.edu**

## General Course Information

---

### Description

This course will introduce the application of scientific methods to the study of international affairs, broadly construed. In it, you will learn the purposes of social science, and what distinguishes a scientific approach to social phenomena from other approaches. We will cover the key elements of a good social science theory and understand how to formulate and measure important social science concepts. We will learn how to ensure that our samples are representative of the populations we wish to study and how to design high quality surveys. Finally, we will examine the approaches social scientists use address causal questions of interest in international affairs, covering both quantitative methods - with a specific focus on ordinary least squares – as well as qualitative methods. The primary aim of this course is to help you understand, interpret, critique, and communicate a wide range of empirical social science research relating to international affairs.

### Pre- &/or Co-Requisites

While there are no formal course pre-requisites, you are expected to have basic statistics skills coming into the program. Specifically, you are expected to have a basic understanding of the following concepts:

- Basic Probability and Probability Distributions
- Basic Statistics: Mean, Median, Mode, Variance, Standard Deviation, Correlation
- Basic Algebra and Calculus: Linear Models, How to Take a Derivative

### Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- A. Apply research skills to address problems in the field of international affairs.

- B. Apply basic statistical skills to include quantitative and qualitative methodologies in academic and professional contexts within the field of international affairs, science and technology/international security/global development
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of principal contemporary global challenges in the field of international security
- D. Apply concepts relating to measurement and operationalization in the course of understanding and critiquing social science research
- E. Understand the logic behind the major methods used to answer social science research questions
- F. Read and interpret basic regression tables, and read and interpret qualitative research

**Required Course Materials**

Keohane, King, and Verba 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton Univ. Press).

Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research* 2nd Edition. (Cambridge Univ. Press).

We will also make use of electronic journal articles. To access electronic journal articles, go to the electronic Georgia Tech Library Catalog (<https://library.gatech.edu>) and search for the relevant article.

**Grading Policy:**

<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>% OF OVERALL MARK</b>
<b>Homework x 4</b>	Completion of four homeworks to be distributed on Canvas.	40%
<b>Midterm – Research Design Assignment</b>	An assignment that will walk students through the initial steps of developing a research design	20%
<b>Final – Article Review Assignment</b>	A 4-5 page (double-spaced) article review to be completed in accordance with guidelines posted on Canvas	15%
<b>Final – Article Review Presentation</b>	A presentation on your chosen article to be delivered in accordance with guidelines posted on Canvas.	10%

ASSIGNMENT	DESCRIPTION	% OF OVERALL MARK
<b>Class Participation</b>	Oral participation during class sessions and performance on any in-class written exercises	15%

## **Description of Graded Components**

### A. Homeworks (40%)

There will be four homework assignments to be completed during the semester. Instructions for each assignment will be distributed on Canvas. While it is encouraged that students ask questions within their cohort, all submitted work should be completed individually. Homework assignments should be submitted on Canvas by the required due date. Email submissions will not be accepted.

### B. Mid-Term Assignment – Research Design (20%)

The midterm assignment will involve an exercise that will guide you through the steps involved in formulating your own research design. You will use the concepts and skills learned in the first part of the course to a) identify a research question 2) develop a theory 3) state hypotheses 4) discuss how you would operationalize the hypotheses, and 5) describe and defend a strategy for causal inference. The assignment will involve responding to the specific prompts provided.

### C. Final Assignment – Article Review and Associated Seminar Presentation

The final assignment involves writing an article review as well as delivering an associated seminar presentation. You must choose a different article for the final assignment than you did for the midterm assignment. Your article review and seminar presentation must closely follow the instructions provided on Canvas.

### D. Class Participation and In-Class Exercises (15%)

The class participation mark will be based on a combination of your in-class oral participation, participation on online discussion boards on Canvas, as well as on the quality of your performance on written exercises that you will be required to complete in class. *Assessments of in-class oral participation will be based on your regular willingness to answer questions posed by the professor or by your peers.* Your answers are not expected to be correct, but they should reflect thoughtfulness and preparation in

terms of having done the readings. Many of the in-class exercises will involve small group work and you are expected to be an active contributor to your group's discussions.

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%

## Course Policies

---

### **Attendance and/or Participation**

Since the success of the course depends heavily on student involvement and participation, you are expected to participate in every class session barring an excused absence (see definition below). Although it is recognized that occasionally it may be necessary for students to be absent from scheduled classes for reasons that do not fall under the conditions of an excused absence, students are responsible for all material covered in their absences, and they are responsible for the academic consequences of their absences. Students should discuss planned absences with their instructors as soon as possible after the beginning of an academic term. Work missed may be made up at the discretion of the instructors. Excessive unexcused absences may result in a lowering of the participation grade.

#### *Excused Absences*

Excused absences are those that are a result of a verified illness or emergency or "approved Institute activities". In order to have an illness or emergency situation verified, you are responsible for contacting the Office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible to report the medical issue or emergency, providing dated documentation from a medical professional and requesting assistance in notifying their instructors. The medical documentation will be handled confidentially within the Office of the Dean of Students and will inform a decision as to whether communication with instructional faculty is appropriate. Once I receive this documentation, you should contact me to discuss a plan for making up missed participation, presentations, and other assignments. Absences due to participation in approved Institute activities will also be

excused provided they are discussed with me at least a week in advance. At this time, we will discuss a plan for making up missed participation, presentations, and other assignments.

### **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.

### **Policies on the Use of Generative AI**

Any generative AI tools used to produce any assignments should be clearly acknowledged as indicated by the instructor. This includes not only content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when a generative AI tool is used in the process of composition (for example, for brainstorming, outlining, or translation purposes). The student should cite any content generated by an AI tool as s/he would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people. See this [article](#) for how to cite AI properly (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>). Using generative AI tools in the course without adhering to these principles, or when it is specifically prohibited by the

instructor, may be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity.

### **Group Work and Collaboration and Use of Outside Resources**

While you are allowed – and even encouraged to consult and collaborate with your classmates regarding your assignments, the work you turn in must be your own. Any use of outside resources must be acknowledged within the assignment and cited appropriately.

### **Assignment Turn-In**

All assignments should be submitted online on Canvas in the designated area for the assignment by the specified due date. Please see below for the policy on late assignments.

### **Policy on Late Assignments**

Late assignments are discouraged and will incur penalties except in the event of an illness or emergency (verification will be requested from the Office of Student Life as in the case of excused absences). Any major scheduling conflicts – including those that arise due to participation in “approved Institute activities” - should be discussed with me *at least one week before the assignment due date*. The penalty for a late assignment will be a deduction of 2% of the assignment mark for a paper handed in on the due date but after the time specified and an additional 2% of the assignment mark for each subsequent day that the paper is not turned in. An assignment turned in more than one week late will receive a mark of zero unless in the event of a documented illness or emergency. *A missed case study presentation or discussion co-lead session will also receive zero marks unless in the event of an illness or emergency verified by the Office of Student Life (see above policy on excused absences).*

### **Course Website and Communication**

I will be conducting the course using Canvas. Please make sure that you set up necessary alerts so you are up to date on important course announcements posted on Canvas. You are expected to have read any Canvas announcements within 24 hours of posting them. Email is the best way to contact me outside of class. Unless specifically stated otherwise, I will **not** accept electronic copies of assignments via email. All assignments must be submitted in the designated place on Canvas.

### **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 \(gatech.edu\)](#))

## **Optional Course Expectations, Policies, and Resources [Remove this heading in your final syllabus and eliminate the separation between the required and optional policies]**

*[While the following policies are not required, they include important expectations and resources that you may choose to share with your students. [Visit our Course Policies page](#) to find more sample policies, information about Georgia Tech specific rules and regulations, and suggestions for what to consider when setting each policy.*

*As you write this portion of your syllabus, use language that emphasizes your students' role in the process, and aim for a tone that communicates both authority and approachability. Each policy should make it clear what is and is not expected/missible in this class, what the rationale or motivation behind the policy is, what students need to do in extenuating circumstances, and what the consequences will be if they fail to live up to the expectations laid out in the policy. Finally, your policy should represent something that you are comfortable implementing consistently throughout the course.]*

### **Pre- &/or Co-Requisites**

*[If applicable, list pre-requisites here. In some instances, you may also want to describe the background knowledge/experience that is most likely to lead to success in your course (this is often relevant in a graduate level seminar and upper-level elective courses).]*

### **Extra Credit Opportunities**

*[If applicable, include a statement about opportunities for extra credit here. Views on extra credit opportunities vary among faculty. You might decide not to offer extra credit opportunities because you want your students to work hard in class and spend time working on actual assignments, or because you think extra credit lowers academic standards. However, extra credit can also be a good learning opportunity because it gives students an additional chance to learn the material (especially students who are struggling in the course). It also reduces student anxiety and builds their motivation and confidence.]*

### **Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI**

*[The university's Honor Code gives you the job of defining for your students the levels of collaboration that are permitted, as well what outside resources they are permitted to use (on assignments, exams, projects, etc.), and how they are supposed to report their use of those outside resources. You may also choose whether or not and to what extent*

*students may collaborate with Generative AI in their course work. CTL provides guidance and some adaptable template syllabus statements for use of GenAI in [this web resource on Establishing Course Policies](#). Articulate your policy here.]*

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

*[Students need to know what your policy is on things like late assignments and missed exams. You should be as clear as possible about your rules and the consequences for your students if they do not follow them. You want to help students focus their efforts appropriately and make it easy for you to be consistent throughout the course. Note also that, at Georgia Tech, some exceptions are made for “approved Institute activities” (e.g., field trips and athletic events) and religious observances. [Read more about approved exceptions](#). Note also that instructors are encouraged to consider the impact of events like the [All-Majors Career Fair](#) and off-campus interviews, and to plan accordingly.]*

### **Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days**

*[If a weather-related event affects campus operations, instructors have the discretion to cancel class or pivot to digital instruction. Informed by departmental and/or program considerations, you may choose to include language here that proactively instructs students what they should expect in such an event. Read more about the policy regarding the requirements, procedures, and responsibilities related to [Digital Learning Days for Modified Campus Operations](#). Explore the [Digital Learning Day Toolkit](#) to learn more about guidance and tools that will make pivoting to digital learning easier.]*

### **Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom**

*[To set this policy, think about individual students, the overall dynamic you would like to see at work in your classroom, and your own tolerance of distractions in the classroom. See [our Course Policies page](#) for more information about factors to consider when it comes to setting your policy for the use of mobile devices in your classroom.]*

### **Additional Course Policies**

*[There are a variety of additional policies you might include in your in your syllabus, depending on your specific context and approach to your course. For example, many instructors include at least one of the following policies explicitly on their syllabus ([View additional course policy examples](#)):*

- *Remote proctoring*
- *Accommodations for religious observances*
- *Food and drink in the classroom*

- *Freedom of expression and guidelines for discussion*
- *Institute-approved absences*
- *Lab safety*
- *Preparation for guest speakers*
- *Re-grading and re-submission*
- *Recording class activities]*

## Campus Resources for Students

---

*[Students might not be aware of all available campus resources. In this section you can include specific resources that might help students succeed in your class (e.g., the library, The Communication Center, or Tutoring and Academic Services).*

### **Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:**

*[For undergraduate courses, a sample statement that might be included in your syllabus for this section is “A list of resources for undergraduate students’ academic success and information about advising can be found at [Success at Tech.](#)]*

- Academic Support: Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) 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](http://success.gatech.edu/tutoring), email us at [tutoring@gatech.edu](mailto:tutoring@gatech.edu), or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

### **Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources:**

*[For graduate courses, a sample statement that might be included in your syllabus for this section is*

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:**

*[Some faculty include resources that support students’ mental and emotional well-being. Including these additional resources on your syllabus communicates to students that you care about them and that you are committed to facilitating their academic progress. For all courses, a sample statement that might be included in your syllabus is*

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))

*[More resources on supporting student well-being on the syllabus and beyond are available through the Learning Well Initiative.]*

### **Additional Syllabus Components [remove this heading from your final syllabus]**

*[Depending on your specific context, as well as your own approach to your course and your teaching, you might decide to add other components to your syllabus. Research suggests that a more detailed syllabus is seen by students as a sign of teaching effectiveness, instructor approachability and flexibility, and as a motivating factor in class preparation. Additional information on your syllabus might include:*

- *a statement of your teaching philosophy;*
- *Consider linking to the strategic plan and emphasizing the intention to create a holistic learning environment where all individuals can grow and learn to lead healthy, purposeful, impactful lives;*
- *a statement about the importance of student mental health and well-being.*
- *rationale for your teaching techniques;*
- *grading rubrics;*
- *information about labs, recitations, etc.;*
- *advice on how to succeed in your course.]*

