First Year PhD Seminar

Course Information

Instructor: Christos Alexopoulos (christos@gatech.edu)
Course Prefix and Number: ISYE 8010 A
Term: Fall 2026

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce first-year Ph.D. students in the School of Industrial & Systems Engineering at Georgia Tech to all aspects pertaining to their studies including

- identification of a research topic,
- engagement with advisors,
- navigating comprehensive exams,
- research proposal,
- defending dissertation, and
- interaction with other students (undergraduate and graduate).

The course comprises presentations by several parties including

- the Associate Chair of Graduate Studies,
- a librarian,
- the Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC),
- the Center for Academics, Success, and Engagement (CASE), and
- members of the academic faculty regarding their research interests and current projects.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Review of various aspects of Ph.D. research engagement.
- Development of presentation skills.
- Engagement with faculty and their projects.

Required Course Materials

No textbooks or materials are required.

Grading Policy

This course is graded on a **Satisfactory (S) / Unsatisfactory (U)** basis.

- The grade is based on attendance and a synoptic essay for each lecture on paper.
- The synopsis will be comprised of 1-2 paragraphs for each lecture and will receive a score of
    - 20 if it is substantive or
    - zero (0) if it contains erroneous statements. Individuals receiving a zero score will be notified promptly.
- Class attendance will be recorded using the Attendance tool of Canvas.
    - Each prompt attendance (within 15 minutes from the start of a session) will receive a score of 100.
    - Each late attendance by 15+ minutes will receive a score of 80.
    - Every missed class session will receive a score of zero (0).
- The **overall score** will be computed from the following formula: (Average Attendance Score) + (Average Essay Score).

Grading scheme:

Satisfactory (S)	Overall score ≥ 70
Unsatisfactory (U)	Overall score < 70

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. Its impact on the course grade is detailed above.

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.