

INTA 2100A Theoretical Approaches to Great Power Relations, Fall 2026

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 students 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

INTA 2100A
Theoretical Approaches to Great Power Relations
Georgia Institute of Technology
Fall 2026

Course Information

Monday & Wednesday 9:30 - 10:45 a.m.
Room: TBD

Contact Information

Professor Dalton Lin
Office: Habersham 219

Phone: (404) 894-5601

Email: dalton.lin@inta.gatech.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 – 4:00 pm in-person or on Teams. However you want to meet, please make appointments on Bookings: [Book time with Dr. Lin](#)

Course Description

How could the international system led by the United States adjust to accommodate China's growing power? This question has become one of the defining issues of the time in world politics. The primary concern is whether China's rise could defy history and be peaceful.

China's rise is only one recent episode in the long history of great power relations, which has played a decisive role in shaping the international system the world has seen. This course's primary goal is to explain the linkages between great power competition and cooperation, and the international order that results from their interaction.

The course begins with an introduction to the primary schools of thought in international relations, which provide the foundation for understanding the stability in great-power relations discussed in the course's follow-on parts. The second part of the course introduces the concept of power transition among great powers, discusses its linkages to great power wars, and reviews historical cases of power transition. The third part focuses on the international order that might emerge from the end of great-power wars and on ways to maintain it. Finally, the course concludes by examining the prospects for great-power relations amid China's rise.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend lectures and have completed the assigned readings before class.

Required Reading

The following books are required for the course:

Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017)

G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

Other readings are available on Canvas or through the Georgia Tech Library online resources.

I also encourage students to read international news (if you haven't already!). Sources of good international coverage include the *New York Times*, *BBC* (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>), *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, and *The Economist*. The Georgia Tech Library provides free access to the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Financial Times*. The *BBC* is not behind a paywall. Listening to NPR news is an excellent alternative.

Grading

Your grade in this course will be determined by two midterms, one discussion handout, one policy memo, and your participation score.

Midterms: There will be two midterms; each midterm will account for **20%** of the final grade. The exams will test students' understanding of the lectures and textbooks.

A policy memo: This assignment asks you to analyze one foreign policy issue that a great power is either ignoring, mishandling, or addressing well that has implications for its relations with other great powers. In this memo, you will need to (1) clearly describe the issue; (2) describe the current policy measures; (3) analytically evaluate the status quo policy by applying the knowledge learned in class; (4) discuss the prospect assuming no change in status quo policy (and be clear about the timeframe you are using to answer this question); (5) recommend either "no policy change" or "policy change," and the recommendation should follow logically from your evaluation of the status quo policy. The policy memo accounts for **30%** of your final grade.

The range of possible issues is vast: The US-China technological competition, climate change, the future of various regional alliances, China's Belt and Road Initiative, supply-chain security, to name a few. Your assignment is to produce a well-researched analytical policy memo on the issue.

Length guidelines: 2 pages, 12-point font, 1" all around.

Stylistic guidelines:

1. Use the policy memo format provided.
2. Don't forget page numbers.
3. Consult scholarly sources for your evidence; do not rely solely on journalistic sources.
4. Use endnotes instead of footnotes for your citations.

Your grade will mainly reflect (1) your demonstrated research effort and (2) your success in presenting and supporting a clear analytical argument with specific evidence from relevant sources. Substantively excellent papers with significant style problems will not be awarded a grade in the A range.

A discussion handout: You are required to submit a handout (no more than one page) of your policy memo proposal to facilitate discussion on 10/20, 10/22, and 10/27. Your discussion handout is **due on 10/21 at 11:59 p.m.** The handout should include background information on the issue and your plan for studying it. The handout accounts for **10%** of the final grade. Presenters will be randomly selected on 10/20, 10/22, and 10/27.

Participation: Your participation grade is determined by your participation in class, your feedback on others' policy memo projects, and your Q&A on the guest speaker's talk. Participation accounts for **20%** of the final grade.

Course Procedures

Announcements: Important information about the course will be announced through Canvas. I encourage students to set up receiving notifications from Canvas to avoid missing critical communication (Go to Canvas, then Account, then Notifications, and check Announcement)

Office Hours: If the assigned office hours do not accommodate your schedule, please email me to set up appointments.

Grade Disputes: Any student may request a grade reevaluation by the professor. The student must accept the revised grade, which may be lower, higher, or the same as the original grade.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and are a direct violation of the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. Plagiarizing is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source." If caught cheating or plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code. For any questions involving these or any other Academic Honor Code issues, please consult the professor or www.honor.gatech.edu.

Learning Outcomes:

Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence the global system

Students will be able to use their knowledge of international affairs in a practical way to address issues of immediate international concern.

Students will be able to understand current political events through an analytical lens of major theories of international relations.