INTA 2803 Introduction to Space Policy Syllabus

Introduction to Space Policy

3.0 Credits

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

Space technologies play a major role in everyday life—from GPS on our phones to satellite imagery used for weather forecasting and national security. This course introduces students to how decisions about space activities are made, including which missions to fund, how space exploration priorities are set, and how governments engage with the commercial space industry. Students will gain a basic understanding of key institutions, policies, and milestones that have shaped space activities over time.

The course also explores the importance of international cooperation and competition in space activities. From the geopolitical context of the space race to the challenges of addressing space debris in an increasingly congested environment, we examine how countries determine when and how to work with other nations. By the end of the course, students will have a clear, accessible introduction to the major issues, actors, and debates in space policy.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence the global system
- Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the causal and determinant relationships between science and technology (S&T) and international affairs across different topic areas.
- Students will be able to express their arguments clearly and effectively both in written reports and in their research and oral presentations.
- Students will be able to work in small groups in a way that demonstrates respect for their colleagues and efficiency in working collaboratively towards projects and goals.
- Students will be able to identify a variety of space policy issues and develop arguments for and against particular policy options.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze an international space policy issue in depth, acknowledging the role of both science and technology and international affairs in identifying and choosing among policy options.

Required Course Materials

Required: The readings for this course will be journal articles, government and industry reports, and newspaper articles. These additional readings will be listed on Canvas at least one week in advance of the class for which they should be read and can be found online through the Georgia Tech library.

Suggested: *These texts provide useful background information related to the lecture material*

Alver, James and Micheal Gleason. *A Space Policy Primer: Key Concepts, Issues, and Actors*. The Aerospace Corporation, January 2021.

https://aerospace.org/sites/default/files/2018-11/Gleason-Alver_SpacePolicy_11162018.pdf

Burrows, William E. *This New Ocean: The Story of the First Space Age*. New York: Modern Library, 1999.

Moltz, James Clay. *Crowded Orbits: Conflict and Cooperation in Space*. Columbia University Press, 2014.

Simpson, Michael et al. *Handbook for New Actors in Space, 2nd Edition*. Secure World Foundation, 2024.

https://www.swfound.org/publications-and-reports/handbook-for-new-actors-in-space

Grading Policy:

- *10% Class Participation*
- *40% Weekly Policy Response*
    - *10 Policy Response worth 4% each*
- *20% Midterm Project*
    - *Written submission (10%), In-class Simulation (10%)*
- *30% Final Presentation*
    - *Main Paper (25%) and Policy Memo (5%)*

Description of Graded Components

- Class participation is based on both attendance and active engagement in-class discussion and activities.

- Weekly policy responses are completed in class, as closed-book, written assignments. They are completed during a 10-minute writing period at the beginning of class.
- The midterm project will consist of an in-class space policy simulation activity. Students will have both a written component and an interactive component of the simulation.
- Students will write a final paper on a space policy topic of their choice. The paper will be accompanied by a one-page policy memo summarizing their analysis and findings.

Course Policies

Attendance

As noted above, attendance and active participation in class are required and account for 10% of your course grade.

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.

Core IMPACTS

Core IMPACTS is the University System of Georgia's General Education curriculum. If you are teaching a course that counts towards Core IMPACTS, you should include a syllabus statement about the Core area and associated career competencies. This resource developed by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and Online Education at Georgia State University includes template syllabus statements for each of the Core IMPACTS areas that you may adapt for your course.

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.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

You are allowed to discuss course work with other students and work in groups on out-of-class assignments, but any work you turn in must be written in your own hand. Similarly, Artificial Intelligence tools may be leveraged for research and planning for assignments, but material should not be copied verbatim from AI. All in-class written assignments will be closed book and should represent your own work.

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

Late work may be penalized. Extensions for approved institute activities or religious observances.

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:

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, email us at tutoring@gatech.edu, or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

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)