

INTA 6003: Empirical Methods Syllabus

Summer 2026

Delivery: 100% Web-Based, Asynchronous

Dates course will run: May 18 – August 6, 2026

Instructor Information

Anjali Thomas, Associate Professor, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs,
athomas424@gatech.edu

Office Hours: Weekly office hours via Zoom. The date(s) and time(s) will be announced via Canvas Announcements. Attendance is optional but highly encouraged.

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, and criticize 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

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply basic statistical skills, including quantitative and qualitative methodologies, in academic and professional contexts within the field of international affairs.
2. Apply research skills to address problems in the field of international affairs.
3. Analyze how, why, and in what ways science and scientific approaches are (and are not) useful in international affairs.

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4. Apply the logic of causation and causal inference while understanding and critiquing social science research.
5. Apply concepts relating to measurement and operationalization while understanding and critiquing social science research.
6. Discuss the logic behind the major methods used to answer social science research questions.
7. Interpret basic regression tables and read and interpret qualitative research.

Course Materials

Course Text

The following are the textbooks required for this course. You can access a digital copy of these books in Canvas under the “Reading List” tab on the left-hand navigation menu.

- Keohane, King, and Verba 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton Univ. Press). Henceforth referred to as “KKV” in the syllabus below.
- Pearl, Judea and Dana Mackenzie. 2021. *The Book of Why: The New Science of Cause and Effect*. New York: Hachette Book Group. Referred to as Pearl and Mackenzie.
- Ethan Bueno de Mesquita and Anthony Fowler. 2021. *Thinking Clearly with Data*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Goertz, G. (2020). *Social Science Concepts and Measurement: New and Completely Revised Edition*. Princeton University Press.
- Groves, R. M., Fowler Jr, F. J., Couper, M. P., Lepkowski, J. M., Singer, E., & Tourangeau, R. (2009) *Survey methodology – Second Edition*. John Wiley & Sons.

Additional Materials/Resources N/A

Course Website and Other Classroom Management Tools

This course will be using Canvas to access all course materials.

Course Requirements, Assignments & Grading

Assignment Distribution and Grading Scale

Assignment Weight Distribution and Due Dates

Assignment	Weight (Percentage)
Homework (3)	30% (10% each)
Midterm: Article Review (1)	25%
Group Project: Survey Design (1)	20% (15% for the group submission; 5% for adequate completion of peer feedback form – graded complete/incomplete)

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Assignment	Weight (Percentage)
Final Project: Elements of Research Design (1)	25%

Grading Scale

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%

Description of Graded Components

Homework: The homework assignments will involve short answer questions. One of the homework's requirements is using a dataset which is provided on the course Canvas page.

Article Review: Students will select a published peer-reviewed social science research article on a topic of their choice (following pre-specified criteria) and answer questions relating to the article's research question, theory, concepts and measurement approaches.

Group Project: Students will work in groups of 3 to 4 students to design their own survey and answer questions related to the sample, design and implementation of the survey. Groups will be assigned on Canvas. Students will also complete a feedback form (graded complete/incomplete) reflecting on each group member's contribution to the project and what they learned from the group work.

Final Project: Students will develop a research design to address a question of their choice. The assignment involves answering questions pertaining to different elements of the research design and defending the choices they make with regard to the design.

Submitting Assignments

All assignments (homework, group submissions, midterm and final etc.) must be completed and submitted within the Canvas. Sending any assignments whether early, on time, or late directly to the instructor via is not permitted and will not be accepted. If there are technical issues, please notify the help desk, as well as the instructor immediately.

Assignment Due Dates

All assignments will be due at the times listed above. These times are subject to change so please check back often. Please convert from Eastern Time to your local time zone using a [Time Zone Converter](#).

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Late and Make-up Work Policy

Late assignments are strongly discouraged and will incur penalties except in the event of an illness or emergency that is verified by the Office of Student Life. Please email the instructor at least one week in advance of the assignment's due date to request an extension or extra time. 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% for each subsequent day that the paper is not turned in. An assignment handed in more than 10 days past the due date will receive a mark of 0 unless in the event of a *verified* illness or emergency. **Please note:** this policy does **not** apply to the Final assignment. Because the Final is due by the last day of the semester, it must be submitted by the posted deadline. You will receive a mark of 0 on the Final if it is not submitted by the posted deadline.

Grading and Feedback

The instructor will try to finish each assignment's grading within one week of submission.

Grade Change Policy

If you feel that an assignment has been marked incorrectly and you wish to appeal your mark during the semester (i.e. before the final grades have been submitted), you should submit a **written request** via email to me within 48 hours of the marked assignment being handed back to you. If your request concerns something other than a clerical error, it should be written in the form of a paragraph that:

- i. identifies what was required in the assignment
- ii. describes *precisely* how these requirements were fulfilled at a level above the received grade
- iii. addresses any relevant comments written by the instructor on the graded assignment (if applicable) and explains why they do not apply.

Please note that I will not consider requests for a grade change that do not follow these guidelines. Also, note that I reserve the right to revise your grade upward, downward or not at all upon reviewing your appeal.

Attendance Policy

Even though the course is asynchronous, it still requires one. You could include something like this: Because this course is fully asynchronous, there are no required class meetings and no attendance is taken. Instead, regular participation is demonstrated through engagement with course materials and completion of assignments by the stated deadlines. Students are expected to access weekly modules, complete required activities, and submit assignments on time.

Technology Requirements and Skills

Computer Hardware and Software

- High-speed Internet connection

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- Laptop or desktop computer with a **minimum** of a 2 GHz processor and 2 GB of RAM
- Windows for PC computers OR Mac iOS for Apple computers.
- Complete Microsoft Office Suite or comparable and ability to use Adobe PDF software (install, download, open and convert)
- Latest versions of Mozilla Firefox, Chrome and/or Safari browsers

Technology Skills

Students must be able to navigate a computer operating system, launching, and quitting applications, connecting to the Internet, using a web browser to search the World Wide Web, downloading, saving, and uploading files, and sending and replying to email. Students must have basic skills in MS Word and MS PowerPoint.

Onboarding Quiz and Proctoring Information

All Georgia Tech online degree and certificate students are required to complete the Onboarding Quiz with Honorlock in the first week of the course. Honorlock is utilized for student identity verification and to ensure academic integrity. Honorlock provides student identity verification via facial and ID photos. You may also be asked to scan the room around you. The Onboarding Quiz is needed to help make sure that your identity is verified and that your system is set up to work with Honorlock online proctoring tool. You are required to complete this quiz early in the semester to avoid problems when taking proctored exams.

Technology Help Guidelines

30-Minute Rule: When you encounter struggles with technology, give yourself 30 minutes to 'figure it out.' If you cannot, then post a message to the discussion board; your peers may have suggestions to assist you. You are also directed to contact the Helpdesk 24/7.

When posting or sending email requesting help with technology issues, whether to the Helpdesk, message board, or me use the following guidelines:

- Include a descriptive title for the subject field that includes 1) the name of course 2) the issue. Do NOT just simply type "Help" into the subject field or leave it blank.
- List the steps or describe the circumstance that preceded the technical issue or error. Include the exact wording of the error message.
- When possible, always include a screenshot(s) demonstrating the technical issue or error message.
- Also include what you have already tried to remedy the issue (rebooting, trying a different browser, etc.).

Course Policies, Expectations & Guidelines

Communication Policy

- Email course questions and personal concerns, including grading questions, to me privately using the Canvas message feature. Do NOT submit posts of a personal nature to the discussion board unless it is a private post on Ed Discussions.
- Email is the best way to contact the instructor outside of class. However, please note that they will often not be available to respond to email inquiries outside of regular working hours and on weekends so please keep this in mind when anticipating response times.

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- Please note that, unless specifically stated otherwise, the instructor will not accept copies of assignments via email. Students must submit their assignments through Canvas in the required slot.
- Virtual office hours will be held using Zoom. Virtual Office Hours date(s) and time(s) will be posted in a Canvas Announcement, as well as special office hours for dedicated topics, such as a large, upcoming assignment. Special topic hours will be announced in advance. I am also happy to schedule one-on-one office hours in person, via...
- For questions related to technology, the Digital Learning Support team at [Digital Learning Support](#) for assistance. You can also reach the Canvas Hotline by phone at 1(877) 2598498 or by email at support@instructure.com.

Online Student Conduct and (N)etiquette

Although it is not expected to be a problem in a graduate-level class, students are asked to behave in the discussions and other class interactions professionally and civilly. If you are in doubt, do not post it! Instructors reserve the right to remove any postings deemed inappropriate, unprofessional, or otherwise distracting from the course.

University Use of Electronic Email

A university-assigned student e-mail account is the official university means of communication with all students at Georgia Institute of Technology. Students are responsible for all information sent to them via their university-assigned e-mail account. If a student chooses to forward information to their university e-mail account, he or she is responsible for all information, including attachments, sent to any other e-mail account. To stay current with university information, students are expected to check their official university e-mail account and other electronic communications on a frequent and consistent basis. Recognizing that some communications may be time-critical, the university recommends that electronic communications be checked minimally twice a week.

Plagiarism & 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. All students enrolled at Georgia Tech, and all its campuses, are to perform their academic work according to standards set by faculty members, departments, schools, and colleges of the university; and cheating and plagiarism constitute fraudulent misrepresentation for which no credit can be given and for which appropriate sanctions are warranted and will be applied. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit [Academic Honor Code](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

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AI Policy

Generative AI agents offer additional opportunities for learning, research and communication. It is therefore allowed in this class as long as the GT Honor Code and the guidelines below are met.

Responsibility: you are responsible for the work submitted/presented, and ensure that any factual statements produced by a generative AI tool are true and that any references or citations produced by the AI tool are correct.

Transparency: Any generative AI tools you use in your work should be clearly acknowledged, including not only content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when a generative AI tool is used in the process of composition and translation.

Documentation: You should cite any content generated by an AI tool as you would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people.

Collaboration & Group Work

Aside from the group project on survey design, each student must complete the course assignment individually.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or [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 to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Copyright

Among the materials that may be protected by copyright law are the lectures, notes, and other material presented in class or as part of the course. Always assume the materials presented by an instructor are protected by copyright unless the instructor has stated otherwise.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgment, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See [XXI. Student-Faculty Expectations](#) for an articulation of 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.

Course Schedule

Course Activities	Release Dates	Due Dates
Module 1: Science and International Affairs		
Lecture Videos	May 18, at 8:00am	N/A
Module 2: The Role of “Theory” in Empirical Social Science		
Lecture Videos	May 18, at 8:00am	N/A
Module 3: Concepts in International Affairs		
Lecture Videos	May 25, at 8:00am	N/A
Module 4: Measurement		
Lecture Videos	June 1, at 8:00am	N/A
Midterm: Article Review	June 1, at 8:00am	June 15, at 11:59pm
Module 5: Data Description and Visualization		
Lecture Videos	June 8, at 8:00am	N/A
Module 6: Probability, Statistical Inference, and Bivariate Hypothesis Testing		
Lecture Videos	June 8, at 8:00am	N/A
Homework 1	June 8, at 8:00am	June 29, at 11:59pm
Module 7: Survey Research		
Lecture Videos	June 15, at 8:00am	N/A

Group Project: Survey Design	June 15, at 8:00am	June 28, at 11:59pm
Peer Evaluations	June 15, at 8:00am	July 1, at 11:59pm
Module 8: What is Causation?		
Lecture Videos	June 22, at 8:00am	N/A
Module 9: Experimentation and Randomization		
Lecture Videos	June 29, at 8:00am	N/A
Homework 2	June 29, at 8:00am	July 10, at 11:59pm
Module 10: Causality in Observational Studies		
Lecture Videos	July 6, at 8:00am	N/A
Module 11: Understanding Regression Analysis		
Lecture Videos	July 13, at 8:00am	N/A
Homework 3	July 13, at 8:00am	July 24, at 11:59pm
Module 12: Qualitative Methods		
Lecture Videos	July 20, at 8:00am	N/A
Final Project: Elements of Research Design	July 20, at 8:00am	August 4, at 11:59pm
Holidays		

Memorial Day: May 25, 2026 (Mon)

Juneteenth: June 19, 2026 (Fri)

Independence Day: July 3, 2026 (Fri)