

**Georgia Institute of Technology  
Sam Nunn School of International Affairs  
Fall 2026**

**INTA 4500: Pro-Seminar  
Class Time: Mondays 5:00-7:45 PM  
Classroom: Habersham G-17**

**Instructor:**

Prof. Mikulas Fabry  
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Office hours: by appointment, Mondays 3:00-5:00 PM

**Course Description:**

This is a project-based course. Its purpose is to enable you to produce a senior research paper based on your specific preexisting interests within international affairs. The work you put into it should help you enhance essential skills required by employers and graduate schools, including the collection and processing of relevant sources, clear and concise writing, analytical, critical, and methodological thinking, public presentation, and providing constructive feedback to peers and colleagues. The final product may prove especially useful as you prepare an application portfolio for a job or graduate school. Bearing that in mind, I assign a minimum reading requirement for this course: a concise textbook on writing a research paper in political science. You will spend most of the time presenting the progress you have made on your projects and commenting on the projects of your classmates. Through presentations and Q&A sessions, you will demonstrate your knowledge and critical thinking skills in international affairs.

The course has four intended learning outcomes. Students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of theories of international relations and apply them in analyzing events and outcomes in world affairs.
2. Apply basic statistical skills to include quantitative and qualitative methodologies in academic and professional contexts within the field of international affairs.
3. Apply research skills to address problems in the field of international affairs.
4. Establish proficiency in oral and written communication to demonstrate knowledge and to make cogent and coherent arguments in international affairs.

**This is a Core IMPACTS course that falls under 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

### Course Text:

Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Sage, 2027).

The book is available for purchase from GT Barnes & Noble. The GT Library also has a copy on reserve. All other course material will be posted on the Canvas course page.

### Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Students enrolled in the course have the following responsibilities: (1) to complete four written assignments and to present them in class; (2) to complete a research paper of 5,000 words (this limit excludes footnotes/endnotes and annotated bibliography) on a significant problem, issue or puzzle in international affairs which utilizes at the very least 20 academically reputable sources, including books and journal articles, and has an empirical component; (3) to present their nearly completed papers in a final class Power Point presentation and in a poster session to the INTA community; (4) to actively participate in all class discussions. **Students can choose to work on their projects individually or in pairs.** Those wishing to work in pairs should let the instructor know via email by 12:00 PM on Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>.

The final grades will be determined as follows: four written assignments and their corresponding presentations (20%; 5% each), class attendance (10%), class participation (20%), and the final presentation (10%), poster (10%), and paper (30%).

The four written assignments are due on the day you present them to the class. Their copies should be uploaded to Canvas (under Discussions) **by 12:00 PM before the class of your presentation** (should you choose to present your written assignment with the assistance of PowerPoint, please upload a copy to Canvas/Discussions too). Only Word, PowerPoint, or PDF files are acceptable as submissions on Canvas, and you must verbally present the files you uploaded earlier that day.

The final research papers are due to be uploaded to Canvas (under Assignments) **by 12:00 PM on Monday, December 14.** The papers will be graded based on their originality, the logic and

structure of their argument, the quantity and quality of supporting research, and the clarity, readability, and elegance of their writing style.

In several classes, we will discuss themes raised by the textbook to deepen our understanding of the various elements of a research project. To provide stimulus for these discussions, each student should prepare two questions that they were left with after reading the assigned material for the specified class. The two questions should be uploaded to Canvas (under Discussions) **by 12:00 PM on the day of the relevant class**. These will count towards class participation.

### **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%

### **Class Absence and Penalty Policy:**

Class absence is justified only for documented medical or family emergencies, or for other cases approved by the GT Office of the Dean of Students. All late assignments will be penalized by 10% per day unless a valid justification for missing the due date/time is provided before the due date/time.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Georgia Tech strives to foster a community founded on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit [catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/](http://catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/) or [catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/](http://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/).

Final papers submitted on Canvas will be screened for plagiarism using Turnitin, **which now also checks for AI-generated content**. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on an assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and determine an appropriate penalty.

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or [disabilityservices.gatech.edu](http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also email me as soon as possible so that I know of your learning needs.

### **Additional Student Resources:**

The Center for Academic Success ([success.gatech.edu](http://success.gatech.edu)) offers a variety of academic support services to help students succeed academically at Georgia Tech (e.g., tutoring, peer-led study groups, writing and study skills). Of particular importance for this course is the GT Communication Center ([communicationcenter.gatech.edu](http://communicationcenter.gatech.edu)). The Division of Student Life ([studentlife.gatech.edu](http://studentlife.gatech.edu)) in the Office of the Dean of Students offers resources and support for all students in the Tech community. The Counseling Center ([counseling.gatech.edu](http://counseling.gatech.edu)) offers free mental health services, as well as stress management and wellness workshops, to all currently enrolled students. They are located at Smithgall, Suite 210, and offer virtual and in-person resources.

### **Communications Policy:**

As your official GT email is the only means for the instructor to reach you outside the classroom, you are responsible for checking it **daily**. You are also asked to **enable** notifications to receive **all** course-related notifications on Canvas.

### **Outline of Classes:**

[N.B. The schedule is subject to revision. I will provide ample notice should that occur.]

#### **August 24: Course Introduction**

We will discuss the structure of the pro-seminar and the grading rubrics, and we will introduce the critical importance of selecting good research questions.

#### **August 31: Presentation by GT Librarians Marlee Givens and Jordan Moore + General Discussion of Research Questions**

Read Baglione's chapters 1-2 and post two questions raised by them to Canvas (under Discussions) by 12:00 PM. Your post should, in addition, contain the research question you are planning to answer in the course.

#### **September 7: Labor Day (NO CLASS)**

#### **September 14: Presentations of Research Questions**

Assignment: Find a narrow, specific research question you will investigate this semester in the pro-seminar paper. Prepare a one-page handout in a Word or PDF file for an in-class presentation. The handout should clearly state your research question, describe the problem to be investigated (both in the real world and as a matter of policy/scholarly debates), explain why it is significant (theoretically, empirically, in terms of policy relevance, or all three), and lay out a rough plan for how you intend to go about answering it. [5 points].

Students will present their own research questions and help others refine theirs. The presentation will proceed in ascending alphabetical order by students' surnames.

**September 21: TBD**

**September 28: Presentations of Research Questions Continued**

**October 5: Fall Break (NO CLASS)**

**October 12: Presentation on Posters by Vince Pedicino + General Discussion of Literature Review and Tentative Arguments**

Read Baglione's chapters 3-5 and upload two questions raised by them to Canvas (under Discussions) by 12:00 PM.

**October 19: Presentations of Literature Review and Tentative Arguments**

What are the existing answers to your research question? What are they missing? What explanations do you propose?

Assignment: Prepare a one-page handout to be presented in class. State your research question and then describe existing scholarship and theories in relation to it, grouping them into distinct "schools of thought." Be sure to explain how your project relates to the existing literature on your research question (e.g., Are you filling a gap or resolving a disagreement? What concepts or methods might you utilize? Are they different from what currently exists?). Then present your own tentative theory, hypothesis, or argument. The presentations will proceed in descending alphabetical order by students' surnames. [5 points].

**October 26: Presentations of Literature Review and Your Tentative Arguments Continued + Discussion of Research Design**

Read Baglione's chapters 6-9 and upload two questions raised by them to Canvas (under Discussions) by 12:00 PM.

**November 2: Presentations of Research Design: Method, Evidence, and Case Studies**

How do you design and organize your research inquiry? How do you convince others that your arguments are valid and make sense? How do you operationalize your concepts? What is the nature of your evidence? On what basis do you pick relevant cases/case studies to make your inference sound and persuasive?

Assignment: Prepare a one-page handout explaining your approach or method of inquiry. State your research question. If you are using qualitative methods, explain the case(s) you pick and the implications you expect to find. If you are using quantitative methods, describe the source(s) and periods of data you will use or collect, and the measurement of your variables. The presentation will proceed in ascending alphabetical order by students' surnames [5 points].

**November 9: Presentation of Research Design: Method, Evidence, and Case Studies Continued**

**November 16: Taking Stock of Progress**

Students will report their progress by presenting an “elevator ride” description of the project (or an “elevator pitch”). Imagine stepping into an elevator and, as the doors close, you realize that the person standing next to you is a recruiter at your dream company or graduate school. Could you concisely introduce your research topic in the time of a quick elevator ride—about 60 seconds or less? Your objective is to create a memorable, positive impression that opens the door to further conversation.

In addition to presenting your elevator pitch, you may also raise any research issues you have encountered and seek advice from the class.

Assignment: Prepare an “elevator ride” description of your project, which is a summary of your research question, findings/arguments, and the importance of the issue in a paragraph (maximum 175 words). For example, I did research on XXXXX (*a topic*) because I was intrigued by XXXXX (*your research question*). To answer the question, I did a case comparison between XXXXX (*your methods*) and found that when XX increases, XX decreases (*your argument*). I thought the issue was interesting and important because XXXXX (*why it matters*). [5 points].

**November 23: Final Presentation of Research**

The presentations, containing all elements of the research paper, will be presented in descending alphabetical order by students’ surnames. Please upload your PowerPoint presentation to Canvas/Discussions by 12:00 PM on the day of your presentation [10 points].

**November 30: Final Presentation of Research Continued****December 7: Poster Day**

Assignment: Prepare a physical poster that captures your project for the INTA community session and upload its electronic version to Canvas/Discussions by 12:00 PM. The poster should clearly illustrate your research question, argument, research design/methodology, findings, and implications [10 points].