

INTA 4500/4740 Syllabus

International Affairs Capstone (INTA 4500, Section A; INTA 4740, Section B; 3 credits)

Mondays 5:00-7:45 PM; Habersham G-17; Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Hamilton

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Office Hours: TBD

General Course Information

Description

This course allows students to develop and demonstrate mastery of international affairs via an original empirical research paper or proposed research design. This course enables students to understand and participate in the social science research process, including reviewing existing literature, analyzing empirical evidence, using evidence to support arguments, producing academic writing and presentations, and receiving and delivering constructive critical feedback.

Course Learning Outcomes

Through this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and synthesize relevant existing scientific literature to identify empirical gaps or inconsistencies and to build theoretical arguments
2. Analyze and apply qualitative and/or quantitative evidence in support of argument to answer a social science research question
3. Convey their research process and findings through a written paper and oral presentations
4. Provide, receive, and integrate constructive critical feedback to improve the quality of research outputs

Required Course Materials

Powner, L. C. (2014). *Empirical research and writing: A political science student's practical guide*. CQ Press.

Grading Policy:

When assigning course grades, I will round your weighted average to the nearest whole number and assign a letter grade based on this breakdown: 0-59% F, 60-69% D, 70-79% C, 80-89% B, 90-100% A.

To dispute grades, you must submit a regrade request via email within the dispute window. The dispute window starts 24 hours after students receive the returned graded assignment and ends 72 hours after students receive the returned graded assignment. The regrade request must include a specific description of where and why I should have awarded additional points. I will not accept generalized requests to regrade assignments without this specific description. Upon regrading, I can either raise the grade, lower the grade, or keep it the same.

Assignments

Component	Weight
Participation	25%
Pre-workshop activities & contributions	10%
Workshop comments	10%
Poster feedback	5%
Paper Components	40%
Annotated bibliography & self-assessment	5%
Literature memo & self-assessment	10%
Design memo & self-assessment	10%
Workshop draft & self-assessment	15%
Final Outputs	35%
Poster presentation	5%
Research paper or design & self-assessment	30%

Description of Graded Components

Pre-workshop activities & contributions: Students will receive credit for contributions to class discussions and completion of in-class activities prior to the in-class workshops. Discussion contribution can include either substantive comments or raising questions.

Workshop Comments: Students will receive credit for providing constructive critical feedback to other students based on draft papers during the workshop portion of the course. To receive an A for this component, students need to provide substantive and actionable feedback at least three times during each workshop meeting.

Poster feedback: Students will receive credit for providing constructive critical feedback to other students based on poster presentations. To receive an A for this component, students need to provide substantive and actionable feedback for at least four other students' posters presentations. The students to whom you provide feedback need not be enrolled in our section.

Annotated bibliography & self-assessment: Students will receive credit for identifying, summarizing, and analyzing at least six academic sources (e.g., book from an academic press or peer-reviewed journal articles). For each source, students must provide a full citation in a standard format, identify the research question and argument, explain the evidence employed, and provide commentary regarding the relevance and/or shortcomings of the source. Students will also receive credit for a simultaneous self-assessment designed to develop self-awareness and accountability skills.

Literature memo & self-assessment: Students will receive credit for providing a preliminary draft of their literature review and/or theory sections of their research paper. Overall, this memo must meaningfully incorporate at least ten sources with appropriate citations. It should leverage these sources to identify existing knowledge and gaps or contradictions therein (literature review) and/or propose a theoretical argument to fill the gap or resolve the contradiction (theory). Students will also receive credit for a simultaneous self-assessment designed to develop self-awareness and accountability skills.

Design memo & self-assessment: Students will receive credit for explaining how they plan to analyze and leverage empirical evidence to test their theory or otherwise answer their research question. Overall, this memo must both identify the specific empirical evidence the research paper will analyze (e.g., data source, items or indicators, cases) and explain what steps they will take to analyze that evidence (e.g., statistical models or tests, empirical approaches). The memo will also justify why this evidence and approach are appropriate for the research question and/or hypothesis tests. Finally, students will identify a pre-existing peer-reviewed paper that uses a similar empirical approach on which to model their own paper. Students will also receive credit for a simultaneous self-assessment designed to develop self-awareness and accountability skills.

Workshop draft & self-assessment: Students will receive credit for providing a draft research paper at least one week in advance of their assigned workshop slot. The draft need not be fully complete. It must minimally include, however, an introduction, literature review, theory section (where appropriate), and research design section. Additionally, it must be at least half the length of the required final submission. The more students can provide within their draft, the more meaningful feedback they will receive. Students whose workshop slot is early will have less time to prepare the draft, but more time to incorporate feedback from the workshop. Students will also receive credit for a self-assessment submitted within 24 hours following their workshop slot; this self-assessment will encourage students to consolidate feedback and identify actions they will take based on that feedback.

Poster presentation: Students will receive credit for bringing and present a poster summarizing their research project during the final course meeting. A rubric for the poster will appear on Canvas by November 1.

Research paper or design: Students will receive credit for submitting a final draft of their research paper or (where pre-approved only) research design. A rubric for the submission will appear on Canvas by November 1. Students will also receive credit for simultaneous submission of a self-assessment designed to develop self-awareness and accountability skills.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is not a directly graded component of the course; however, students who do not attend class regularly will nonetheless struggle to earn a good grade within the course. Attending class regularly is the easiest way to earn credit for participation components, although attendance alone is not sufficient for these components. Students who miss class but wish to otherwise receive credit for demonstrating participation in the course must contact the instructor within 48 hours following the missed class meeting; they must subsequently complete any activities required to demonstrate participation within one week of the missed meeting. The reason why a student misses class is not important; I will not adjudicate what is a reasonable excuse for an absence. Rather, what matters is that they otherwise demonstrate participation in the course.

Student Conduct

International affairs is a field with ample disagreement, and I expect disagreement to become evident during class discussions. Discussion of contentious issues is central to

intellectual development. Moreover, a core component of this course is learning how to deliver and receive critical feedback.

There are appropriate and inappropriate ways to engage in disagreement and deliver critical feedback to produce a constructive learning atmosphere. You are free to disagree with one another, as well as with leading theorists in the discipline. You are encouraged to identify flaws and shortcomings in your peers' research projects. However, you must justify such comments with reference to ideas and evidence, not with reference to identities or origins. Ad hominem attacks will not be tolerated; you must engage respectfully. To be constructive, critical feedback must be specific and actionable.

You must adhere to the requirements outlined in the Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct and the Sexual Misconduct Policy, thereby contributing to the establishment of a respectful and productive learning community. Disruptive conduct includes (but is not limited to) routinely arriving late or departing early in a disruptive or inconsiderate manner; repeatedly interrupting or interjecting during class without being called upon; repeated audible disruptions such as ringing or dinging cell phones or side conversations; clear disengagement with learning activities in order to text or conduct non-course related activities online; harassment of or threatening behavior toward the instructor or classmates, either verbally or physically; or repeated use of profane language, except when directly quoting material relevant to course conduct. Failure to cease disruptive activity upon instructor request will result in dismissal for the remainder of the class meeting; repeat offenses will result in referral to the Dean of Students.

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](#). We will draft a collaborative and binding agreement regarding the use of generative AI for course assignments as a collective exercise within the first unit; the use of generative AI prior to this exercise is prohibited. If you are uncertain what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, it is imperative on you to clarify in advance; ignorance is not an acceptable excuse for violations.

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.

Generative AI Usage

As the goal of this course is for students to understand and participate in the process of original social science research, generative AI usage policy is adapted from leading peer-reviewed journals relevant in this field. (This policy language is closely adapted from the *American Journal of Political Science*.)

Students cannot use generative AI to draft submissions or substantial elements of submissions. For example, students cannot have a generative AI platform conduct the literature review on their behalf or ask generative AI to draft annotated bibliography entries. If you are uncertain whether a particular application of generative AI exceeds permitted usage, you must clarify the permissibility in advance of submission.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the veracity and validity of any elements produced or influenced by generative AI. It is also the student's responsibility to ensure that any generative AI usage falls within permissible use cases.

When they submit each paper component and the final research paper or design, students must disclose the following:

1. What (if anything) they use AI for. Students must describe the specific tasks for which AI tools were employed, including tasks such as data collection and management, copyediting, code generation, data processing, literature search, research design, and statistical analyses. Students should indicate whether the usage directly shaped the paper's substantive contents (e.g., collecting data, generating analysis code) and tasks that indirectly supported the writing process (e.g., proofreading or formatting).
2. Which AI tools they used. Students must identify each tool by name (e.g., "Claude Opus 4, Anthropic"); in case they are unable to identify the exact version, students should report the dates during which they used the AI tool. If the student used multiple tools, they must identify which tools they used for which specific tasks.
3. How they maintained human oversight. Students must describe the degree of human review applied to AI outputs, indicating whether they reviewed, edited, or approved AI-generated content.

This disclosure should appear prior to the bibliography section in any relevant submission. If you did not use generative AI, you should write, "I did not use generative artificial intelligence at any stage in the development of my submission." This disclosure both ensures the transparency and reproducibility of scientific research and attributes appropriate credit for scientific outputs.

In case students fail to faithfully disclose generative AI usage or use generative AI beyond the boundaries permitted here, the usage shall qualify as a violation of academic integrity. Students are encouraged to maintain detailed logs of generative AI usage (e.g., preserve drafts both before and after using generative AI for copyediting, saving genAI transcripts) to demonstrate that violations of academic integrity did not occur; in case of suspicion or when need for clarification arises, instructors and other relevant assessors may ask students to provide such detailed evidence of AI usage. The instructor will interpret failure to provide such evidence as indication that a violation occurred. If the instructor suspects generative AI usage in excess of permitted usage, i.e., to draft entire submissions or sections of submissions, the instructor may ask students to demonstrate their knowledge orally in an informal one-on-one meeting to make sure the ideas represent their own work.

Extensions & Late Submissions

Extensions and late submissions will not be permitted in cases where it will affect fellow students and/or directly impede progress of the course (e.g., workshop drafts and poster presentations). In these cases, students should prepare the best submission possible and submit on time: even if the submission includes identifiable flaws, these submissions are meant to be works in progress to facilitate feedback rather than final products for summative assessment. Students will incur a twenty-five percentage point penalty off the assignment grade for each 24 hours that elapses without a workshop submission. In case a student fails to prepare a poster for the poster presentation day, the maximal assignment grade they will earn for their poster will be 70%. Late submissions also will not be permitted for submissions to demonstrate participation in case of absence.

In case of extraordinary circumstances preventing timely submission, students should consult with the Dean of Students.

For all other assignments, the instructor will accept late submissions within four days of the original submission deadline without penalty if and only if the student requests the extension using the appropriate form on Canvas in advance of the submission deadline. Students requesting an extension should assume it is approved. In case a student fails to request an extension in advance or exceeds the requested extension, they will incur a ten percentage point penalty off the assignment grade for each 24 hours that elapses. The maximal such penalty will not exceed thirty percentage points.

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.

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:

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:

Even the best and brightest students face challenges during their academic careers, whether related to coursework or other aspects of life. Prioritizing your physical and mental well-being can help ensure your best performance as a student. The Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-Being has compiled a comprehensive list of wellness-related resources available to students, which you can access [here](#).