

## INTA 2010: Empirical Methods (Fall 2010)

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Instructor: Dr. Esther Skelley Jordan  
Instructor Email: [esther.skelley@inta.gatech.edu](mailto:esther.skelley@inta.gatech.edu)  
(Do not use TSquare to email me)

Class time: Mon., Wed. & Fri., 3:05 –3:55 p.m.  
Class location: Instructional Center 115

Office Hours: Mon. 4:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m., and by appointment  
Office Location: 138 Habersham (across Marietta St. from Engineers' bookstore)

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### Course Description

The study of international affairs can take many forms and employ many methods. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the methodologies favored by the political science discipline. Indeed, there is no one-size-fits-all method for research. However, if you want your work to be taken seriously, you must conduct it in a methodical and replicable way.

Over the course of the semester, you will learn about the science of studying politics. You will practice developing a quality research design that employs the discipline's state of the art quantitative methods. At the end of the semester, you will present your research design to the class and submit a report of your findings.

The course format will be a combination of lectures, class discussion, and in-class research workshops. In addition to your research essays, you will complete two group homework assignments that allow you to practice statistical analysis and will take three exams.

### Required Reading

Janet Buttolph Johnson and H.T. Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods, Sixth Edition*. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2007. **(JJR)**

Yockey, Donald D., *SPSS Demystified: A Step-by-Step Guide to Successful Data Analysis*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008. **(DY)** NOTE: You will not need this until October.

Various assigned articles will be posted in the "Resources" section of TSquare. **(TSquare)**

### Software Requirements

SPSS 17.0 Integrated Student Version, 17/E. NOTE: You will not need this until October, and you may access the software in the Hab Lab and (with limitations) on the VLab from your own PC or Mac.

## **Class Requirements**

### *Exams (45%)*

There will be three exams. Each will be worth 15% of your total grade. The exams will include multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank and short answer questions. All exams will be somewhat cumulative.

### *Essays and Presentation (35%)*

You will write individual and group essays, and present your findings on the international affairs puzzle of your choice (instructor approval required). There will be five parts: Topic Selection (1 page, 1%), Essay 1 (8 pages, 5%), Essay 2 (8 pages, 7%), Presentation (7%), and Essay 3 (12-15 pages, 15%). Combined, all parts of the research project and presentation will be worth 40% of your total grade. You will receive an average of your individual and group grade for the first two essays and the presentation. You will receive a group grade only for the final essay. Your research design and methodology must follow the approach taken in this course. It is highly recommended that you meet with me to discuss your research project very early in the semester. You must turn in a **STAPLED HARD COPY** of each paper at the beginning of the class session in which it is due. Email submissions will not be accepted.

### *Homework Assignments (10%)*

There will be two group homework assignments, each worth 5% of your total grade. These must be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late assignments will not be accepted, except in the event of an officially documented medical emergency.

### *Participation (10%)*

Participation will account for 10% of your total grade. Credit will be given based on attendance, as well as the quality and consistency of contributions you make to class discussion. High quality contributions include prepared and informed comments and questions which demonstrate critical thinking regarding assignments and lectures. You must demonstrate that you have thought critically about each reading assignment. This part of your grade will be awarded subjectively, at the instructor's discretion.

## **Make-up Policy**

No make-up assignments or exams will be offered and no late assignments will be accepted. In the event of an **excused** missed exam, the average grade of the completed exams will substitute for the missed exam. Only exams missed for a medical emergency or official university team activity will be **excused**.

## **Disability or Health Related Issues**

Students with a disability or a health related issue who need a class accommodation or are concerned about class performance should **make an appointment to speak with me during the first week of class or as soon as the health concern arises**.

## **Academic honesty**

All coursework must meet the Georgia Tech standards of academic honesty. Each student is responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

*NOTE: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced.*