

INTA 4740
Senior Seminar: International Political Economy

FALL 2011

M 9:05am – 11:55am

LOCATION: Habersham G-17

Course Website: <https://t-square.gatech.edu/>

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Introduction

This capstone course will attempt to synthesize your prior learning by bringing together the diverse methods, theories, and data which you have studied over the past several years. The ultimate goal of this course is to prepare you to produce an original research or policy paper. To this end, each student will design a research proposal in which you pose a research question and then outline a scientific strategy by which to answer it. In the Spring 2012 semester students have the option of implementing their proposal through writing a senior thesis as an Independent Study (INTA 4903).

This course is intended to equip you with the skills necessary to conduct and critically assess social science research, with international political economy as the substantive focus. This course, therefore, will introduce you to framing researchable questions, operationalizing key concepts, specifying and measuring variables, identifying sources of evidence, selecting appropriate methods for analyzing evidence, and situating your research within broader debates in the discipline, as well as considering the ethical implications of these myriad choices. Since social science research is often used as an input to the policy process, a central aim of this course is to make you a more sophisticated consumer of diverse empirical research. This course adopts a hands-on approach in which students grapple with these issues in the course of developing a research design.

Intended learning outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- recognize and frame a researchable question;
- operationalize key concepts;
- specify and measure variables;
- identify appropriate sources of evidence;
- select appropriate methods for analyzing evidence;
- recognize the implications for the interpretation of their findings of all of these choices;
- situate their research within broader debates in the discipline;
- appreciate the ethical implications of their research design and ensure that it meets or exceeds the standards for the discipline; and
- critically assess research conducted by others (and themselves).

Course requirements

As this is a hands-on seminar, it is **essential** that all students come fully prepared to engage critically and constructively in class. This means not only that students must prepare their own work for class and submit it on time, but also that you must engage with your classmates work prior to class.

Consequently,

- you must submit (almost) all assignments to the instructor and all classmates no later than 5 pm on the Friday before class;
- you should be prepared to discuss your classmates work critically, but constructively in class.

Engaging with others' work has both diffuse and specific benefits. The additional feedback will assist everyone. Moreover, reading others' work reflectively will enable to hone your skills in assessing research done by others, but should also yield insights into how you might improve your own practice (you may discover a better way of doing something (sharing best practice) or you might recognize a weakness in your own approach (it is often easier to be critical of others' work than your own). Note that it is essential to be constructive; don't only point out weaknesses, but also suggest solutions.

Assessment

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| • Developed research question | 5% |
| • Annotated bibliography | 5% |
| • Group presentation | 5% |
| • Write-up of critical reading exercise | 5% |
| • Presentation of previous year's research plan | 5% |
| • Quizzes (2) | 20% (10% each) |
| • Final presentation | 10% |
| • General class participation | 10% |
| • Research plan | 35% |
- (hard copy and emailed copy due by **11 am, 14 Dec.**)

Class conduct

- **All cellphones, blackberries, and other telecommunications devices are to be switched off during class.**
- Absences for medical or personal emergencies will be excused upon verification by the instructor. Absences for school athletics will be excused only if they are in accordance with the schedules approved and circulated by the Student Academic & Financial Affairs Committee for Travel or the Associate Athletic Director (Academic Services). Absences due to military service will be handled on a case-by-case basis and subject to verification
- Course participants will treat each other with respect. Constructive questioning and criticism are welcome, even encouraged. Personal attacks and insults are not. The rule of thumb here is that critical comments and questions should be maturely phrased in a manner that encourages constructive and open debate; they should not be phrased as insults, threats, or in a manner that shuts down discussion.
- Students are expected to read and abide by the Georgia Tech Student Code of Conduct and the Academic Honor Code. All violations will be reported. The complete text of these two Codes may be found at: www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/integrity/policies/index.html (see 'Academic Misconduct' below).

Class communication

- Communication will be by email – **students should check their email daily.**
- T-Square (www.t-square.gatech.edu/portal) will be used to post course materials.

Course overview

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Substantive assignment(s)</i>
1.	22 Aug	Introduction	--
2.	29 Aug	Developing a research question	Come up with 3 potential research questions
3.	5 Sept	GT HOLIDAY -- NO CLASS	Meet with instructor to select and develop research question
4.	12 Sept	Theory building: Concepts, relationships and operationalization	Present developed research question
5.	19 Sept	Literature review	Critical reading exercise
6.	26 Sept	READING WEEK -- NO CLASS	Meet with instructor to discuss annotated bibliography
7.	3 Oct	Honing focus: Alternatives and working hypotheses	Identify alternative rival hypotheses
8.	10 Oct	Research methods overview	Quiz 1: The Scientific method Group presentation: 'Why do states join human rights regimes.' What type(s) of evidence need?
9.	17 Oct	GT HOLIDAY -- NO CLASS	
10.	24 Oct	Quantitative methods I	Draft literature review
11.	31 Oct	Quantitative methods II	
12.	7 Nov	Qualitative methods and case study selection	
13.	14 Nov	Putting it all together	Quiz 2: Research methods Presentations of previous year's research plans
14.	21 Nov	Student thesis proposal presentations	Presenters: prepare presentation Non-presenters: prepare comments on circulated papers
15.	28 Nov	Student thesis proposal presentations	Presenters: prepare presentation Non-presenters: prepare comments on circulated papers
16.	5 Dec	Student thesis proposal presentations	Presenters: prepare presentation Non-presenters: prepare comments on circulated papers
Finals	14 Dec		Final paper due

Course readings

This course will make extensive use of Briens, C. L., Willnat, L., Manheim, J. B. and Rich, R.C., *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, 8th edn, Longman, 2011 [denoted below as EPA8]. This book covers the basics. It is available at the Engineers' Bookstore and from Amazon. Additional, more advance readings will also be assigned. These will either be available electronically through the GT library or through the course t-square site.

Academic misconduct

According to the Georgia Tech honor code,¹ academic misconduct is any act that does or could improperly distort Student grades or other Student academic records. Such acts include:

- Possessing, using or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a Student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or person, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism).

Of these collaboration and plagiarism require particular elaboration in the context of this course.

- **Collaboration** is encouraged in the context of group projects. Moreover, the prohibition on collaboration does not extend to drawing on or incorporating the feedback of others in the course on your work. It is, however, good practice to acknowledge (in a footnote) where a particularly good idea or insight comes from.
- **Plagiarism** is the submission or presentation of work, in any form, that is not one's own without acknowledgement of the source.²

The incorporation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement (even with no deliberate intent to cheat) can constitute plagiarism. Work may be considered to be plagiarized if it consists of:

- a direct quotation;
- a close paraphrase;
- an unacknowledged summary of a source;
- direct copying or transcription.

In short:

- if information or ideas are obtained from any source, that source must be acknowledged; and
- any direct quotation must be placed in quotation marks and the source cited immediately.

Any failure to acknowledge adequately or to cite properly other sources in submitted work is plagiarism.

Special cases of plagiarism can arise from a student using his or her own previous work (termed auto-plagiarism or self-plagiarism). Auto-plagiarism includes using work that has already been submitted for assessment.

Guidance on appropriate citation will be provided during the course.

¹ <http://www.osi.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=46>

² This statement is adapted from the University of Glasgow's Plagiarism Statement, which is contained in the University Calendar (p.49). Available at: http://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_165329_en.pdf#page=49&view=fitH,350

Grades

Your grade will be determined by how well you *communicate* to me that you *understand* the *fundamental* definitions, concepts, and applications of empirical research methods *as presented in class and readings*.

As can be seen from the following grade descriptions, individual assignment grading in this course is related to a student's demonstrated mastery of the material. The course, therefore, is not grade on a curve. A satisfactorily completed individual assignment will receive one of the following grades:

A: Exceptionally good performance demonstrating a superior understanding of the subject matter, a foundation of extensive knowledge, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials. Ready for graduate level research.

B: Good performance demonstrating capacity to use the appropriate concepts, a good understanding of the subject matter, and an ability to handle the problems and materials encountered in the subject.

C: Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems.

Other grades awarded include:

D: Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating deficiencies serious enough to make it inadvisable to proceed further in the field without additional work.

F: Failed. Did not demonstrate familiarity with the subject matter, nor the capacity to deal with simple problems in a manner recognizable to the consensus of mainstream academic practitioners within the field.

Note that this course's internal grading system includes plus (+) and minus (-) modifiers for use with the letter grades A, B, C, and D. However, they are not officially part of students' grades, they do not appear on Georgia Tech transcripts, and they do not affect internally or externally reported grade-point averages.

Grade Change Policy

Simple computational or clerical errors should be brought to my attention immediately. Legitimate requests for grade changes are welcome and encouraged. You should, however, resist the temptation to file a frivolous request just hoping to "get lucky". Approach a grade change request as if arguing a legal case: you should have strong and convincing arguments and evidence to support your request. Be aware that appeals to the practices of other professors generally do not constitute good argument or evidence. Note also that grade changes requests can result in re-grades both up or down (or left unchanged). That is, if the greater scrutiny demanded by a grade change request reveals your assignment to deserve a lower grade than previously awarded, then the lower grade may be assigned.

Special Accommodations

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a documented disability are required to register with the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS). Please obtain a form from the ADAPTS office and turn it in to me during office hours or in class in the beginning of the semester. (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>).

Course outline

1. Introduction

During this class will be introduce ourselves and our research interests in order to establish an appropriate environment for the collaborative nature of the course. We will also discuss the objectives and requirements of the course and spell out our expectations. More substantively, the class will introduce the scientific method and make the case for the value for rigorous, reflective analysis of political phenomena. Toward this end we will read, in class, Ben Goldacre's 'Why do clever people believe stupid things?' (*Bad Science*, Fourth Estate, 2009: 242-55). Students will be asked to identify potential areas for research, which will be honed and developed over the coming weeks to provide researchable questions.

I. Questions, concepts and theories

2. Developing a research question

In this class we will discuss what makes a good research question and workshop the circulated questions in order to refine and develop them.

Required preparation

- Circulate 3 potential research questions by 5 pm the Friday before class. You should be prepared to discuss in class:
 - Why did you choose the questions?
 - Why you think that they are interesting/significant?
 - How you might go about answering them?
- EPA8, Chapter 1.
- W. Phillips Shively. 2011. *The Craft of Political Research* (Prentice Hall 8th edn). Ch 1 and pp. 21-31 <.pdf>

3. GT holiday – No Class

Students should arrange to meet with the instructor to select a research question and develop it.

4. Theory building: Concepts, relationships and operationalization

We will discuss what makes a good theory and focus on the importance of specifying concepts, understanding the relationships between them and begin to consider how to operationalize concepts. This discussion will be underpinned by workshopping the circulated questions. We will be paying particular attention to:

- What the key concepts are?
- What are plausible relationships among them?
- How might the concepts be translated into variables
- What is your hypothesized relationship between the key concepts?

Required preparation

- Circulate research question by 5 pm the Friday before class. You should be prepared to discuss in class
- EPA8, Ch. 2
- Van Evera, Stephen, 1997, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Cornell University Press, pp. 7-27 <pdf.

5. Literature review

This class will have three parts. It will begin with a discussion of the purpose and form of a literature review. In the second part we will collectively critique an article in order to help to hone your ability to critically read published works. The third part of the class, which will be led by the INTA subject librarian Mary Axford and held in the GT library, will introduce you to the key search engines and databases available to you.

We will all walk over together, but, in case we get separated, the training room is in the Homer Rice Center

- Go into the Main Entrance to the Library, turn right, go up one floor.
- The classroom is in the far back corner of the 2nd Floor East.

Required preparation

- EPA8, Ch. 3 and pp.395-8.
- Critical reading exercise (guidance on t-square):
 - Price, Richard, 1998, 'Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines,' *International Organization*, 52/3, 613-44
- Take a look at the resources guide for the course; available at <http://libguides.gatech.edu/inta4740>
- Find a guide to using Harvard style referencing, such as this one produced by the University of Queensland (http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/harvard_6.pdf).

6. Reading week – No Class

Students should meet with the instructor (during the normal class time) to discuss an annotated bibliography.

Required preparation

- Send to the instructor by 5 pm the Friday before the meeting an annotated bibliography of 20-30 potential articles. The annotated bibliography should be properly presented and should clearly indicate how each item was found (where and how the search was conducted) and in what way the piece is relevant to your proposed question (it is OK if you identify some items as not relevant, but say why).

7. Honing focus: Alternatives and working hypotheses

This class will introduce the challenges posed by the need to eliminate rival alternative explanations. Toward this end we will discuss alternative rival hypotheses and how to develop working hypotheses. We will workshop students' research questions to identify rival alternative hypotheses and how to isolate them.

Required preparation

- EPA8, pp. 77-81; 88-93; and 99-102
- Shively, W. Phillips. 2011. *The Craft of Political Research* (Prentice Hall 8th edn). pp. 78-90 <.pdf>
- Circulate a list of alternative (rival) hypotheses for your research question by 5 pm the Friday before class

II. Methods for answering social science questions

8. Research methods overview

This class introduces the range of approaches from which you are likely to choose when seeking to answer your question. The aim is to give an overview of their general strengths and weaknesses. The most commonly used quantitative and qualitative approaches will be explored in more detail in the coming weeks. The crucial take away is that the appropriate method is determined by the question that is being asked.

Required preparation

- Prepare for a quiz on the scientific method
- EPA8, pp. 81-6; 94-9; 102-115; and 123-9.
- Collier, David, Brady, Henry E. and Seawright, Jason (2010), "Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology," in H. E. Brady and D. Collier (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, Ch. 9. <available as ebook through the Library catalogue>
- Group presentation on one article addressing why states join human rights regimes.

Group A

Moravcsik, Andrew, 2000, 'The Origins of Human Rights Regimes: Democratic Delegation in Post-War Europe,' *International Organization*, 54/2, 217-52.

Group B

Vreeland, James R., 2008, 'Political Institutions and Human Rights: Why Dictatorships Enter into the United Nations Convention Against Torture,' *International Organization*, 62/Winter, 65-101.

Group C

Hawkins, Daren, 2004, 'Explaining Costly International Institutions: Persuasion and Enforceable Human Rights Norms,' *International Studies Quarterly*, 48, 2004, 779-804.

Group D

Greenhill, Brian, 2010, 'The Company You Keep: International Socialization and the Diffusion of Human Rights Norms,' *International Security*, 54/1, 127-45.

- Be prepared to discuss what type(s) of evidence you would need to look for in order to confirm your hypothesis and challenge alternative rival hypotheses.

9. GT holiday – NO CLASS

Each student should arrange to meet the instructor to discuss the progress of your research. You should continue to build your literature review and to hone and develop your research question, including how you will operationalize key concepts and identifying working hypotheses.

10. Quantitative methods I

In this class we will begin by reviewing some of the basic of quantitative research methods. Thus we will consider the problem of sampling, the issues of internal and external validity, and the reliability of data. We will also discuss sources of quantitative data (surveys; content analysis; aggregate data).

Required preparation

- EPA8, pp. 131-5; 145-9; 151-60; 162-8; 174-7; 180-2; 194-200; 204-7; 209-19
- Reflect upon how the issues of sampling, validity and reliability apply to your planned project.
- Send to instructor (only) a draft of your literature review by 5 pm on the Friday before class.

- If you are considering using any of the following techniques, you should do the associated background reading:

	<i>Empirical Political Analysis</i> , 8 th edn.
Surveys	Chs. 8 & 9, esp. pp. 151-60; 162-8; 174-7; 180-2
Content analysis	Ch. 10, esp. pp. 194-200; 204-7
Aggregate data	Ch. 11, esp. pp. 209-19
Social network analysis	Ch. 13
Coding	Ch. 14

11. Quantitative methods II

In this class we will discuss bivariate and multivariate regression. Multivariate regression analysis is a very powerful tool for isolating and specifying the relationships among variables. We will pay particular attention to how to read and interpret regression results. Our discussion will focus particularly on the problem of how to establish causation. We will consider the strengths and limitations of quantitative methods.

Required preparation

- EPA8, Chs. 16-18 (Chs 16 & 17 provide the basics, our main focus will be on the material covered in Ch. 18). [Don't worry about the equations.]
- Taylor, Mark Zachary, 2010, 'Bivariate and Multivariate Regressions: A Primer' <.pdf>
- Reflect on how you might apply a regression analysis to answering your question and whether it would be appropriate.

12. Qualitative methods

Although not as precise as statistics, qualitative methods can provide insights into causal relationships that quantitative methods cannot. We will focus mostly on case studies and process tracing. Since case study research necessarily entails a small number of observations, we will consider carefully how to choose which cases to observe. We will also discuss the primary sources of evidence used in qualitative research: elite interviews and documentary analysis.

Required preparation

- Odell, John S. 2001. "Case Study Methods in International Political Economy" *International Studies Perspectives* 2:161-176.
- Seawright, Jason and Gerring, John. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative." *Political Research Quarterly* 61/2, 294-308.
- Bennett, Andrew, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," in H. E. Brady and D. Collier (2010) (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, Ch. 10. <available as ebook through the Library catalogue>
- Reflect on how you might use case studies and/or process tracing to answering your question and whether it would be appropriate.
- If you are considering using any of the following techniques, you should do the associated background reading:

Direct observation	Ch 19, esp. pp. 324-9; 340-5
Focus groups	Ch. 20, esp. pp. 347-53
Elite interviewing	Ch. 21, esp. pp. 365-8

III. Producing research plans

13. Putting it all together

Following a quiz on the research methods that we have discussed during the past few weeks, we will develop our understanding of what makes a good research proposal (and what doesn't) through presentations of proposals written by previous students.

Required preparation

- Prepare for quiz on research methods
- Read two previous research proposals (one good, one not so good). For each, be prepared to discuss what it tries to do; what the critical choices were; and what its strengths and weaknesses of the plan are.

14-16 Student presentations

Students present their proposals (20 minutes each followed by 15 minutes Q&A). Drafts of research plans should be circulated to the other participants by 5 pm on the Friday before class. All students are expected to provide constructive feedback in class.

Week 14: Students A-D

Week 15: Students E-H

Week 16: Students I-L

Highly Recommended Readings

General

- Brady, Henry E. and Collier, David, (2010) (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, <available as ebook through the Library catalogue>
- Heath, Chip & Dan Heath. 2007. *Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die* (Random House)
- McCloskey, Deirdre N. 2000. *Economical Writing*. (Waveland Press).
- Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics". *American Political Science Review*. 94(2): 251-267.
- Shively, W. Phillips. 2011, *The Craft of Political Research*, 8th edn., Longman.
- Van Evera, Stephen, 1997, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Cornell University Press.

Quantitative Methods

- Achen, Christopher H. *Interpreting and Using Regression* #29 (Sage Publications)
- Beck, Nathaniel. 2001. "Time-Series Cross-Section Data: What Have We Learned in the Past Few Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 4:271-293.
- Berry, William Dale. 2000. *Understanding Multivariate Research: A Primer for Beginning Social Scientists*. Westview Press.
- Berry, William Dale. *Understanding Regression Assumptions* #92 (Sage Publications)
- Berry, William Dale. & Feldman, Stanley *Multiple Regression in Practice* #50 (Sage Publications)
- Fox, John. 1991. *Regression Diagnostics: An Introduction* (Sage Publications) booklet #79
- Gonick, Larry and Woollcott Smith. 1994. *The Cartoon Guide to Statistics*. (Harper Perennial)
- Huff, Darrell, and Irving Geis. 1993 *How to Lie With Statistics* (W. W. Norton & Company)
- King, G. "How Not To Lie With Statistics: Avoiding Common Mistakes in Quantitative Political Science" *American Journal of Political Science* 30 (Aug 1986) p. 666-687.
- Levin, Irwin P. *Relating Statistics and Experimental Design: An Introduction* (Sage Publications) booklet #125
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1980. *Applied Regression: An Introduction* #22 (Sage Publications)
- Pampel, Fred C. 2000. *Logistic Regression: A Primer* (Sage Publications) booklet #132
- Rudas, Tamas. 2004. *Probability Theory: A Primer* (Sage Publications) booklet #142
- Smithson, Micahel. 2003. *Confidence Intervals* (Sage Publications) booklet #140

Qualitative Methods

- Collier, David and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research" *World Politics* 49: 56-91.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics" *Political Analysis* 2: 131-150
- Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?" *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341-354
- King, Gary, Keohane, Robert O., and Verba, Sidney, 1994, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton University Press.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1975. "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research" *Comparative Political Studies* 8:158-177.
- Lustick, Ian. 1997. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias" *American Political Science Review*
- Mahoney, James, 2010, "After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research," *World Politics*, 62/1, 120-47.
- Ragin, Charles. 1997. "Turning the Tables: How Case-Oriented Research Challenges Variable-Oriented Research" *Comparative Social Research* 16: 27-42.
- Ragin, Charles and Howard S. Becker (eds.). 1992. *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. (Cambridge Univ. Press).
- Yin, Robert. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Sage Publications)