

INTA 4803-AY/8803-AY
European Research Seminar
Fall 2017

TR 3-4:15

IAC/Habersham 307

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Office Hours: TR 10-11

Course description

This course enables students to research in a structured manner a topic of their choosing concerning Europe. The course reviews social science research techniques and explicitly applies them to students' research projects. The projects will be developed and discussed throughout the course. Thus, in addition to developing their own research projects, students will be expected to provide constructive feedback on their peers' projects. The course will culminate with presentations of the students' research findings to an invited audience. The aspiration is that students will present their work at national student conferences and/or publish it in a suitable outlet.

Intended learning outcomes

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

- apply appropriate social science methodologies to answer a research question (Scientific analysis of international politics);
- understand the impact of political institutions and political culture on outcomes (Cultural, contextual and ethical awareness); and
- convey complex ideas effectively orally and in writing (Professional development).

Course text (Required)

Brians, C. L., Willnat, L., Manheim, J. B. and Rich, R.C., *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, 8th edn, Longman, 2011.

To access electronic journal articles through the library website:

- click on 'eJournals' on the left-hand side of the library homepage (under 'research tools');
- type the name of the journal in the search box;
- select the database option that includes the appropriate issue of the journal;
- browse the journal to the appropriate volume and issue.

Course requirements

The final assessment will be based on a research paper, which will also be presented to an invited audience. That paper will be based on a research plan developed during the first portion of the course. Students will also have to give two reports on the progress of their research. In addition, each student will participate in a group presentation.

Assignment	Due	Share of final grade
Research question	9/6 by email (5 pm)	5%
Research reports (2)	9/20 and 11/6 (5 pm)	10%
Group presentation	9/26	10%
Research plan	10/18 by email (9 am)	15%
Final paper	11/15 by email (noon)	30%
Presentation	12/5	15%
Class participation	continuous	15%

Late assignments will NOT be accepted, except for medical or personal emergencies upon verification.

Extra-credit assignment (25 points for a serious effort) (up to 2 assignments may be submitted)

Write a reflective summary (500 words max) of an approved public talk. Due by the next class.

Grading

Grade	Points	Descriptors
A	20 19 18	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.
B	17 16 15	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	14 13 12	Adequate performance demonstrating an adequate understanding of the subject matter, an ability to handle relatively simple problems.
D	11 10 9	Minimally acceptable performance demonstrating at least partial familiarity with the subject matter and some capacity to deal with relatively simple problems, but also demonstrating serious deficiencies.
F	<8	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.

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 either 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, and then the lower grade will be assigned.

Attendance policy

Attendance is required, although each student can have 2 (two) unexcused absences without penalty. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in the student's class participation grade being lowered 1 (one) point on the 20 point scale.

- 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.
- In order to get the most out of the course and to be able to participate effectively in class, you are expected at a minimum to read and reflect upon required readings before class. You should also read daily a quality newspaper (*Financial Times*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* or *Washington Post*) and the *Economist* (weekly).
- 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.
- **All telecommunications devices are to be switched off during class.**
- **Computers and tablets are not to be used in class without express permission.**
- **No food in class**

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>).

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:

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

- 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 persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism).

Course outline

<i>Class</i>	<i>Subject</i>
8/22	<p>Introduction</p> <p>During this class will be introduce ourselves and our interests in Europe 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.</p>
8/24	<p>Issues and controversies in Europe</p> <p>This class will introduce contemporary debates in European studies as a means of introducing students to active research agendas and questions. It will also discuss issues associated with Europe of particular interest to students as a way to highlight empirical problems that might be suitable topics for research.</p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Young, A. R. (2016), "An inflection point in EU studies?," <i>Journal of European Public Policy</i>, 23/8, 2016, 1109-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2016.1186214. (w)</p> <p>Archick, K. (2017), "The European Union: Current Challenges and Future Prospects," Congressional Research Service R44249, 27 Feb.</p> <p>European Council (2017), "Rome Declaration," Press Release 149/17, 25 March.</p> <p>European Commission (2017), "White Paper on the Future of Europe: Reflections and Scenarios for the EU27 by 2025," COM(2017)2025, 1 March.</p>
8/29	<p>Developing a research question</p> <p>In this class we will discuss what makes a good research question and workshop the students' prospective questions in advance in order to refine and develop them.</p> <p><u>Assignment</u></p> <p>Circulate 3 potential research questions by <u>5 pm on 8/28</u>. Be prepared to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why you think that they are interesting/significant? • How you might go about answering them? <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>EPA8, Chapter 1.</p>

Shively, W. P. (2011), *The Craft of Political Research* (Prentice Hall 8th edn). Ch 1 and pp. 21-31) (t)

8/31 **Tailored discussion of European politics and policy**

This class will discuss those European issues most relevant to the students' research interests in order to ensure that they have a basic understanding of the relevant material before they begin their research.

Reading

TBD

9/5 **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. We will workshop the students' selected research questions, 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?

Assignment

Circulate **research question** by 5 pm on 9/4. You should be prepared to discuss it in class

Reading

EPA8, Ch. 2

Van Evera, S. (1997), *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, Cornell University Press, pp. 7-27. (t)

9/7 **Finding sources**

This class, which will be led by the INTA subject librarian, will introduce students to the resources particularly appropriate for their research questions.

9/12 **Literature review**

This class will have two 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 student's ability to critically read published works.

Assignment

Critical reading exercise (guidance on t-square):

- Price, R. (1998), 'Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines,' *International Organization*, 52/3, 613-44 (l)

Reading

EPA8, Ch. 3 and pp. 395-8.

9/14 Selecting sources

This class will consider how to assess the reliability of sources of information.

Reading

Columbia College, "Evaluating the Credibility of Your Sources," Available at:

<https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/integrity-sourcecredibility>

Berkeley Library, "Real News/Fake News," Available at:

<http://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=620677&p=4322330>

Allcott, H. and Gentzkow, M. (2017), "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31/2, 211-36.

Shuster, S. (2017), "Russia Has Launched a Fake News War on Europe. Now Germany Is Fighting Back," *Time*, 9 August.

9/19 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.

Assignment

Circulate a list of alternative (rival) hypotheses for your research question by 5 pm on 9/18.

Reading

EPA8, pp. 77-81; 88-93; 99-102; 123-9.

Shively, W. P. 2011. *The Craft of Political Research* (Prentice Hall 8th edn). pp. 78-90 (t)

9/21 Student research report I

Students will report on their progress and discuss any problems they have encountered. A written report must be circulated by 5 pm on 9/20. The report should:

- Explain how the research question has evolved;
- Address what the key concepts are and how they might be operationalized;
- Identify what are the alternative hypotheses that you are considering;
- Incorporate the literature review (e.g., where did the different concepts, operationalizations and hypotheses come from).

9/26 **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.

Assignment

Group presentation on one article addressing why states join human rights regimes.

Group A

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

Group B

Vreeland, J. 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, D. (2004), 'Explaining Costly International Institutions: Persuasion and Enforceable Human Rights Norms,' *International Studies Quarterly*, 48, 2004, 779-804.

Reading

EPA8, pp. 81-6; 94-9.

Collier, D., Brady, H. E. and Seawright, J. (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, pp. 177-99. <available as an ebook through the Library catalogue>

9/28 **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). Reflect upon how the issues of sampling, validity and reliability apply to your planned project.

Reading

EPA8, pp. 102-115; 131-5; 145-9; 151-60; 162-8; 174-7; 180-2; 194-200; 204-7; 209-19.

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

	<i>EPA8</i> .
Surveys	Chs. 8 & 9
Content analysis	Ch. 10

Aggregate data	Ch. 11
Social network analysis	Ch. 13
Coding	Ch. 14

10/3 **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.

Reading

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.]

Wheelan, C. (2013), *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*, W.W. Norton, pp. 212-24. (t)

10/5 **Qualitative methods and case study selection**

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.

Reading

Odell, J. S. (2001), "Case Study Methods in International Political Economy" *International Studies Perspectives* 2/2:161-176.

Seawright, J. and Gerring, J. (2008), "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative." *Political Research Quarterly* 61/2, 294-308.

Bennett, A. (2010), "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," in H. E. Brady and D. Collier (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd edition, Rowman & Littlefield, Ch. 10. <available as ebook through the Library catalogue>

10/10 **No class. Student recess**

10/12 **Writing a research paper**

This class will discuss writing a research paper. It will cover everything from structure through presentation and referencing. It will also address how to write a research plan as an intermediate step.

Reading

EPA8 Chs. 15 and 22.

10/17 Research ethics

This class will introduce and discuss the key ethical issues involved in conducting social science research, including plagiarism and dealing with human subjects.

Assignment

Complete Georgia Tech's training on the use of human subjects. Instructions available at: http://researchintegrity.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/documents/citi_gt_users.pdf. This will take several hours. Bring proof of completion to class.

Reading

APSA (2012), *A Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science*, 2nd edn. pp. 8-11.

10/19 Workshopping research plans I

The class will discuss some of the students' **research plans** focusing on how to improve and implement them. All students must circulate their research plans by 9 am on 10/18. All students must be prepared to discuss their and the others' research plans.

10/24 Workshopping research plans II

The class will discuss the remaining students' research plans focusing on how to improve and implement them.

10/26 Research presentation

Dr. Young will present his research the EU's compliance with World Trade Organization rules, focusing on methodological issues and choices

10/31 No class: Research day. Meet individually with instructor during class hour.

11/2 Guest research presentation

Dr. Eliza Markley will present her research on building social capital among European security elites, focusing methodological issues and choices

11/7 Student research report II

Students will report on their progress and discuss any problems they have encountered. Reports must be circulated by 5 pm on 11/6.

11/9 Guest research presentation

Dr. Scott Brown will present his new research project on the EU's strategic partnerships, focusing on methodological issues and choices.

11/14 No class: Writing day. Instructor will be available to give advice.

11/16 Substantive feedback and review

The class will discuss students' research papers.

Papers to be circulated by noon on 11/15

11/21 No class: Individual feedback (if desired) and preparation for presentation

11/23 No class. Thanksgiving Day

11/28 Practice presentations I

Some of the students will give their presentations and receive feedback.

11/30 **Practice presentations II**

Some of the students will give their presentations and receive feedback.

12/5 **Public presentations**