

# Course Syllabus

## Course Syllabus INTA 2120 Intro to International Security

### General Information

### Course Description

This is a **Core IMPACTS** course that is part of 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

This course examines a sampling of major issues in the field of International Security today through the lens of the subfield of Comparative Politics. We will take a



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modern world. We will examine these issues through a variety of sources including traditional academic texts, popular media, and other sources. You will have opportunities to both learn from and teach me and your fellow students about the world of international security as we explore these issues together over the course of the semester.

### Pre- and/or Co-Requisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of theories of international relations and apply them in analyzing events and outcomes in world affairs.
- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of principal contemporary global challenges in the field of international affairs

### Course Requirements and Grading

Assignment	Due Date	Weight
Participation	NA	10%
Discussion Journal	Variable: Check Schedule	30%
Group Discussion	Variable: Check Schedule	30%
Group Project Rough Draft	Oct 29	15%
Group Project Final Draft	Dec 10	15%

### Extra Credit Opportunities

Students who sign at least 10 class sign-in sheets will have the opportunity to distribute up to 5% additional credit to whomever they choose. Students may not assign themselves additional credit points, nor can students distribute this extra credit amongst multiple other students. All recipients must agree to, via written statement to the professor, their acceptance of this extra credit. Such acceptance must indicate both the giver and receiver of the extra credit points. All extra credit will be added to

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As the primary mode of instruction for this class will be discussion-based, students must come to class having read all assigned material and be prepared to discuss it in sufficient detail. Often class will begin with a general question, after which further discussion and prompting will beget further questions and exploration of the material. I do not prepare slides for this course. I believe slides undermine student learning as students invariably pay more attention to the scant words written on Powerpoint slides and do not actively engage in learning processes, for instance, by taking notes. This class is not meant to be a presentation of facts, but rather a collaborative place of discussion and mutual criticism. It is a space for questioning, argumentation, discussion, and disagreement, all in a respectful manner. If you do not feel like participating one day, that is fine. But I encourage all students to speak up. This means that you should prepare for class not only by reading the assigned material, but also by taking notes on what you have read, writing down questions, thinking about what you have read, and doing other activities to enhance your own understanding of the material. Participation will also encompass your preparedness to lead class discussion during your assigned week. More specific instructions follow in the Group Discussion section below. Participation will also encompass your meeting with the professor to review the rough draft for your final group project. More specific instructions follow in the Group Project Section

## Discussion Journal

All students must prepare and keep a Discussion Journal. This journal will consist of all preparation a student takes for their group project and discussion. It can include notes on material of interest, reflections on material read outside of class for their group project, group project meeting notes and/or timelines, discussion with fellow group members or the professor, or any other material the student finds relevant with respect to their group project topic. This is not to be a venue for class notes or stay musings about off topic material. This journal will serve a student's record of preparation for their group project. It will likewise be graded as such. If a student's journal contains little evidence of preparation at the end of semester when it is submitted, not only will a student receive a poor grade for the Journal portion of their grade, but their Group Project grade will be similarly affected. There is no required format for journal entries, but please be sure to separate entries in some meaningful order (i.e. by date, week, topic, etc.). Journals will be due when the student's group gives their discussion. However, because journals may be sparse for groups that discuss early, those groups will be given a second submission date at the end of the module on genocides. The professor will re-read the expanded journal entries and give those students who submitted early a final grade on their journals at that time.

## Group Discussion

During weeks 6-10 of the semester, each group will lead one class discussion during an assigned

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questions, debates, disagreements, etc. that can serve as a useful jumping off point to engage the class in discussion about their group's chosen group topic. Students should begin by reviewing their case study in Samantha Powers' book *A Problem from Hell*, then work out from that starting point to find additional information in popular and academic media to inform themselves more fully of their case study. Students should focus on how their chosen conflict does or does not fit in with previously examined theoretical ideas about the causes of such conflicts, seeking to inform and/or challenge these theories of conflicts with regard to the specifics of their chosen case study. All students are expected to contribute to discussion during these student-led class periods so that the assigned group does not have to carry discussion for 90 minutes. Groups may feel free to provide some discussion questions to the class before hand to facilitate discussion and help the class prepare, but this is not strictly necessary. Again, because some groups will be discussing early, those students are not expected to present a detailed discussion of their case study, but should have read enough of their chosen case to begin a discussion which will be supplemented by additional discussion by the professor and the class.

## Group Project

All students must either voluntarily join or be assigned a group of fellow students to complete a semester-long group project on a historical case of genocide from Samatha Powers' book *A Problem from Hell*. Groups will start their research into these historical case studies from Powers' text, but will then branch out seeking other material to research these cases. Material may be requested through the Georgia Tech Library, Inter Library Loan service, Google Scholar, all Tech students can sign up for a free account with the New York Times, which can provide access to historical documents, and other sources including documentaries and other sources of media such as Truth and Reconciliation commissions, the archives of the United Nations, and other sources. Students should make sure their sources of information are properly vetted to ensure historical accuracy, as much historical mis and disinformation can still remain regarding these conflicts even decades after the fact.

Students will prepare a 7-10 page final report of their chosen conflict episode. This report should highlight the ways in which aspects of the conflict did or did not conform to theoretical expectations of conflict presented earlier in the semester. Questions to be addressed may include: what role did ethnicity play in this conflict?, or how did perpetrator's use of language affect conflict dynamics? Students should argue for a particular understanding of their chosen conflict topics based on a particular theory of security rather than simply providing a historical overview of what happened. How can theories of security inform our understanding of these conflicts, is the key question to be answered.



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theories of security, and additional historical detail not given in Powers' text. These slides for the rough draft need not be complete. The primary purpose is to check progress towards completion of the group project. Students will be given written and oral feedback by the professor which they must incorporate into their group's final project draft.

Each group will present their project's final draft and submit the final group paper on the day of the final exam. Each group must present a 10-12 minute presentation of their group project and be prepared to field questions from other groups and the professor. This presentation may be in any format the group agrees upon. Students may submit PowerPoint slides, a recorded podcast, a roundtable discussion, or other formats. If doing a "nontraditional" format, please clear the format with the professor in advance. Each group may feel free to bring in a food or beverage item of their choice from the country they studied during this final presentation period.

### Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

This course, as you may have noticed, is weighted much more heavily towards participation and independent work outside of class. There is relatively little structure in terms of assignments, homework, quizzes, tests, midterms, and the like. I know some students do well with that additional structure, while some may prefer a more open-ended course design. Personally, I find the process of memorization for quizzes and tests to be counterproductive to learning in the field of social science. This is not a discipline that lends itself well to the structure of quizzes and tests. Classes, I feel, are more engaging, and the student experience is richer, if there is lively discussion during class, students share a multitude of views, and intellects are freed to contemplate theoretical issues through debate, rather than picking a multiple choice answer on a Canvas quiz. Thus, your Discussion Journals and Group Discussions are worth a significant fraction of your total grade. I do this to both encourage teamwork, which is a necessary skill to develop for life in the job market after college, and to foster an independent work ethic. My approach to grading, further, is similar. I do not want to offer rigid rubrics which force a checklist mentality towards work. I would rather see students' imaginations blossom through their own unique methods of expression. If students at any time have



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## Course Materials

### Course Text

There are no required texts to purchase. All required readings will be posted to Canvas.

### Additional Materials/Resources

### Course Website and Other Classroom Management Tools

All required readings can be accessed through the course Perusall site.

## Course Expectations and Guidelines

*[In agreement with both best practices for teaching and learning and Georgia Tech policies and procedures, there are six types of policies that should be articulated in every Georgia Tech syllabus. In addition to the content below, you can find more sample policies, more information about Georgia Tech specific rules and regulations, and more suggestions for what to consider when setting each policy, by visiting our **Course Policies** [↗ \(http://ctl.gatech.edu/resources/syllabus/policies\)](http://ctl.gatech.edu/resources/syllabus/policies) page.*

*As you write this portion of your syllabus, use language that emphasizes your students' role in the process, and aim for a tone that communicates both authority and approachability. Each policy should make it clear what is and is not expected/permissible in this class, what the rationale or motivation behind the policy is, what students need to do in extenuating circumstances, and what the consequences will be if they fail to live up to the expectations laid out in the policy. Finally, your policy should represent something that you are comfortable implementing consistently throughout the course.]*

### Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services 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

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Attendance is expected, but not mandatory. That being said, as most learning will take place via discussion and debate, missing class will entail a missed opportunity to participate in your own education about the material. I recognize that much of the material we will cover is graphic in nature. However, violence is an aspect of the real world that we as scholars of international security must face. If at any time, anything becomes overwhelming, you may feel free to notify me and take a "mental health" day or two. I will randomly pass around sign-in sheets to "take attendance". Students who sign at least 10 of these will get the opportunity to distribute extra credit points. If you are on a sports team or otherwise involved in athletics, please notify me ASAP and provide me with your schedule so I can excuse you for approved absences. If class falls on a religious holiday which you observe, you may feel free to remain absent.

### Collaboration and Group Work

Group work is essential to success in this course. There are costs and benefits to working in groups. Students may select their groups if they know others in the class, or share similar interests in case studies for the group project. Project drafts will be submitted on behalf of the entire group and all students will receive the same grade for that submission. If students do not select into a group, the professor will assign them to a random group. If students prefer to select their own groups, one member from each group must email the professor with a list of group members for my records. Teamwork is essential to success. No single person is an island, and learning to navigate the social dynamics of work groups is an essential skill to learn when the stakes are relatively low (like grades). You will find yourself working in, among, and across these groups your whole lives. This class gives you some practice in learning to develop these skills.

### Extensions, Late Assignments, and Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Students may submit work up to 3 days late with a penalty of 5% per day late assessed. After the three day period, late work will receive a score of zero. If a student provides a documented reason for why the work was submitted late (for example, a doctor's note), the late penalty will not be assessed. Students may not submit their project rough or final drafts late, however, due to deadlines in providing feedback or submitting final grades. If a group does not submit their draft on time, it will be graded as a zero.

### Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

I strongly prefer that students refrain from the use of any digital device in the classroom, and yes, this includes laptops. Substantial empirical evidence demonstrates that students learn more by taking notes with an analog pen and paper than by using a laptop. I discourage, but will not ban the use of laptops in class. If you are using a laptop, please use it to take notes and not surf websites, complete homework for other courses, send emails, or text message friends. Such activity only harms your learning. Students are asked not to use cellphones for any reason during class. If you

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courses are my intellectual property, and I do not want my property distributed in ways outside of my control. Thank you for understanding.

## Student Use of Artificial Intelligence

Regarding generative artificial intelligence like Chat-GPT and any other large language model or platform: 1) you may utilize these technologies to **help** you in generating ideas, formatting, outlining, organizing, researching, and any other task which may provide **assistance** with your work. You may not use this technology to **replace** your effort with that of generative AI. That includes submitting anything written wholly, or partly, using Gen AI, using Gen AI to replicate another's original work, and/or submitting anything produced by Gen AI while claiming it is your original work.

These AI platforms are exemplary for assisting with scholarly organization, generating ideas, organizing one's thoughts, formulating outlines, generating possible hypotheses, proofreading and/or clarifying prose, translation, and assisting with coding, among other tasks. They can greatly reduce one's workload and enhance one's productivity when utilized correctly. This technology, however, is also extremely easy to use in a dishonest manner and in ways which violate the Georgia Tech Honor Code. Abusing this technology, further, only harms your own educational experience as it substitutes education with thoughtlessly generated false content. An inherent and important part of the learning processes is gaining experience through success **and** failure. Abusing AI provides the illusion of removing failure as an option, and thus wrongly seeming to insulate you from an important component of your own educational experience. This illusion, however, is just that. AI generated content is especially easy to detect when generated by those who lack skill in the use of this technology, especially among experts (i.e. your professors). Please use it to enhance your own knowledge and elevate your own work. It is not worth being seduced by its siren call to plagiarize.

## Additional Course Policies

Given that many religious holidays occur during the fall semester, please notify me if you will miss class due to the observance of your faith. Such absences are excused. Make up the work when you can as per the course policy on late work above.

## Diversity and Inclusivity Statement

The Institute does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status in the administration of admissions policies, educational policies, employment policies, or any other Institute governed programs and activities. The Institute's equal opportunity and non-discrimination policy applies to every member of the Institute community. The Institute's affirmative action program, Title IX program, and related policies are developed in compliance with applicable law. Pursuant to Title IX, the Institute does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs



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inquiries concerning the application of applicable federal laws, statutes, and regulations (such as Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504) may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights [here. \(http://www2.ed.gov/ocr.\)](http://www2.ed.gov/ocr/)

## Additional Syllabus Components



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