

INTA 6003: Empirical Methods (Fall 2011)

Instructor:	Dr. Esther Skelley Jordan
Instructor Email:	estherjordan@gatech.edu
Class time:	Monday, 6:05 – 8:55 p.m.
Class location:	Habersham G-17
Office Hours:	Mon., 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., and by appointment
Office Location:	138 Habersham (across Marietta St. from Engineers' bookstore)

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 several homework assignments that allow you to practice statistical analysis and may take one comprehensive exam.

Required Reading

Roselle, Lauren, and Spray, Sharon, *Research and Writing in International Relations*, 2nd Ed., Boston, MA: Longman, 2012.

Pollock, Phillip H., *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 3rd Ed., Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2009.

Yockey, Donald D., *SPSS Demystified: A Step-by-Step Guide to Successful Data Analysis*, 2nd ed., Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2010. (**Yokey**)

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

Software Requirements

SPSS 18.0 Integrated Student Version -- NOTE: You will not need this until late September, and you may access the software in the Hab Lab and (with limitations) on the VLab from your own PC or Mac. Some of the shrink-wrapped Yokey books for sale at the bookstores have this software included. Make sure that the software that is included is the 18.0 version or later, before purchase. Mac Snow Leopard is not compatible with early versions.

Class Requirements

Essays and Presentation (40%)

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 Ideas (1 page, 2.5%), Draft Operationalization Plan (3 pages, 2.5%), Research Proposal (10 pages, Optional Grade, 15%), Draft Research Report (15 pages, Optional Grade, 15%), Presentation (5%), and Final Research Report (15 pages, if required, 30%). You will be assigned preliminary grades on your Research Proposal and your Draft Research Report. If you earn an average of 90% or higher on these two essays, you can opt. out of the final research report. If you earn an average of 89.99% or less on these two essays, then you will be required to submit a Final Research Report. If you submit a final research report, then your grade for it will replace the two preliminary grades. In all, your combined essays and presentation will comprise 40% of your total grade. 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 and Exam(35%)

There will be seven homework assignments. Each will be worth 5% of your grade. If you earn an average score of 90% or higher on all homework, you can opt out of the comprehensive exam. If you earn an average score of 89.99% on homework, you must take the comprehensive exam. If you take the comprehensive exam, then your grade for this category will be equally weighted between your homework average and your exam. Late assignments will not be accepted, except in the event of an officially documented medical emergency or official university excuse.

Participation (25%)

Participation will account for 25% 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 to discussion 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. Be sure to complete all assignments, in case you need to opt out of the exam or final report, for an officially excused absence.

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

Specific instructions regarding collaboration and citations will be provided for each assignment. Deviations from the instructions will be reported to the Dean Of Students.

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

Meeting	Assignments (always hand copies, stapled)	TOPIC	Pollock Reading	Yockey: Reading & SPSS Practice Problems	Other
		PART I: BUILDING BLOCKS OF RESEARCH DESIGN			
8/22/11		Introduction to the Fields and Subfields of International Affairs			
8/29/11	Due in class: Bring a list of three potential research topics	MARY AXFORD @ LIBRARY (Homer Rice Center, 6:05 - 7:35 p.m.) re: research resources; Variables, Research Questions, Hypotheses	3		ROSELLE & SPRAY: Part 1, Read Thoroughly; Parts II & III: Skim
9/5/11		No Class: Labor Day			
9/12/11	Due in class: Lit Review & Theory Critique	Causality, Theories, Literature Reviews	Intro, 4		TSQUARE: Van Evera & Sample Lit Reviews
9/19/11	Due in class: Draft Operationalization Plan	Definition, Measurement	1, 2		
9/26/11	Due in class: Draft Research Proposal	PART II: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS			
10/3/11	SPSS HW1 due in Yajia's office by 9AM	Data Matrices, Missing Data, Descriptive Statistics, Graphs		1, 2, 3	
10/10/11	SPSS HW2 due in Yajia's office by 9AM, Monday 10/10; SPSS HW3 due in Yajia's office by 5PM, Friday 10/14	Comparison of the Means and Inference	6, 7	5, 6, 7	
10/17/11	SPSS HW4 due in Yajia's office by 9AM	Cross-Tabulation, In Class Practice (CM v. CT)	5	16	
10/24/11	SPSS HW5 due in Yajia's office by 9AM	OLS Regression	8	12, 13, 14	
10/31/11	SPSS HW6 due in Yajia's office by 9AM	Logistic Regression	9		TSQUARE: Logit
11/7/11	Due in class: Draft Research Report	In Class Practice (OLS and Logistic Regression)			
11/14/11		Review	10		
		PART III: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER			
11/21/11	COMPREHENSIVE EXAM	Research Feedback			
11/28/11		Presentations			
12/5/11		Presentations			
12/12/11	Due in class: Final Research Reports	Write-up			