INTL 4425R: Advanced Research in International Security Policy
BBCITS Richard B. Russell Security Leadership Program
University of Georgia – Spring 2026
MW 2:55-4:15pm – CITS 6th Floor

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Course Overview and Objectives:
INTL4425R is the second required course in the Benson-Bertsch Center for International Trade and Security's Richard B. Russell Security Leadership Program (SLP). In this course you will build upon the skills you developed in last semester's practicum to complete an independent research project focused on a national or international security issue. The purpose of this project is to further develop your research and writing skills, and to provide you with a significant independent research experience. You will have opportunities to present this research on and off campus and to submit it for publication.

Conducting independent research can be both empowering and daunting. My role in this course as your research mentor and supervisor is to provide you constructive feedback, help when you're stuck, and keep you on course to complete your project. Your work will be completed in stages, each with its own deadline, and we will meet in small groups approximately every three weeks to discuss your progress and to review the work you've submitted. In addition to receiving feedback from me, you'll receive support and suggestions for improvement from your colleagues. Since this is a 3-credit course with an "R" designation, you are expected to dedicate a **minimum** of **9 hours/week** to your research and you are all required to present your research at the SPIA Undergraduate Research Colloquium on Friday, April 24, 2026.

Although the primary focus of this semester is your independent research project, we will also work on grant writing skills and continue your professional training for careers in national and international security. Beyond class meeting, there will be CITS-related events and alumni visits that you are invited (and in some cases expected) to attend, and of course, the BBCITS Spring Break Trip to Washington, DC.

Course Requirements:
- **Grading:** Your final grade will be determined by the following assessments:
  - Research Log – 10%
  - Participation – 10%

- Engagement in class, short assignments, and engagement with CITS guests/Global Decisions, and questions on DC visit
  - o Grant – 5% peer evaluation
  - o Group Brief on DC Site Visit – 5% (Written and oral presentation)
  - o DC Trip Participation, Reflection & Survey – 5%
  - o Research Project – 65%
    - Proposal & Annotated Bibliography – 5%
    - Revised Proposal & Outline – 5%
    - Draft of Lit Review – 2%
    - Draft of Theory – 2%
    - 1st Full Draft for Peer Review – 3%
    - Peer Review (3 x 2%) – 6 %
    - Op-Ed – 12%
      - 2% hook and proposal assignment + 10% completed
    - In-class Presentation – 5%
    - Final Paper – 25%

Letter grades correspond to the following 0-100 scale:

94-100	A	74-76	C
90-93	A-	70-73	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
80-83	B-	60-63	D-
77-79	C+	00-59	F

Required Text:
There is 1 required text for this course. We'll read and discuss several chapters; however you are expected to rely on the rest of the text to help guide your individual project. The book is available in an e-version through UGA Library.

Leanne Powner. 2014. *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. CQ Press.

Grant Proposal – grant writing is an important skill that many of you will encounter in your careers and is rarely taught to undergrads. But lucky for you, we will discuss the key elements of a grant and you will practice writing and submitting a grant proposal. Most excitingly, your grant proposal may shape the future of this program and BBCITS, and one group will be awarded a scholarship for their proposal. Details on the grant writing assignment will be provided later in the semester.

Research Log & Participation: Your participation will be based on your preparation and engagement during class meetings (including professionalization meetings, alumni visits, and CITS evening events, and questions asked on the DC trip), as well as small-group meetings and completion of ELC short assignments on time.
- **Research Log**: As you know, you are committed to working for ***at least 9 hours a week*** on your research for this course. One of the key struggles for scholars is setting aside

time to work given constant other (seemingly urgent) demands on our time. To help develop a successful research practice we will set weekly research goals starting week 2 and log our research activity using a shared Google doc (see ELC). You can choose to record your time in minutes or "Pomodoros." We'll discuss ways to set goals for using this time effectively during the first week of class.

- **Attendance**: You are expected to be in class for all class meetings, *including* days when I'm meeting with a small group other than yours. Those days are for your *independent research* and your progress during this time should be reflected in your research log updates.

Group Briefs on DC Site Visit: Working in your research groups, you will be assigned one of the places we will visit in DC to create a BLUF and "top 5 things to know" about the visit on the provided google doc as well as a 2 min brief followed by 5 min Q&A for each group. Your top 5 list should highlight the functions of the organization, key policy areas, where it fits amongst other institutions, and any recent developments. The written portion must be **on the DC Trip Google Doc by March 2** with discussions taking place on Wednesday, March 4.

Research Papers: each student will write an independent research paper and a related op-ed. We'll go over in detail what the project entails during the first weeks of classes. We have an SLP alumnus who will serve as a PLA this semester to be a resource in the active learning that is key to developing your research skills.

All students will have the following deadlines for graded submissions:
- 2/9 – **Topic Proposal & Annotated Bibliography** (5%): 1-2 paragraphs describing your primary question, why this question is important/relevant, your theory (i.e. expected answer to the question and *why*), primary hypothesis (if your theory is right/wrong, what will you see), what methods you think you'll use (e.g. likely case selection). The bibliography must include **at least 5 academic sources** with 2-3 sentences below each citation explaining how/why it is relevant to your paper. Upload to ELC Assignment folder.
- 2/23-25 (depends on group) – **Revised Proposal and Outline** (5%): 1-2 Paragraph revised project proposal at top of page followed by a detailed outline (min 4 pages) of final paper, demonstrating structure/organization of (sub-)sections within paper, specific arguments, and quotes from sources. Upload to SAME ELC Assignment folder as the original proposal.
- 3/23 – **Draft of Lit Review** (2%): Uploaded to Lit Review Discussion Group (based on completion)
- 4/1 – **Draft of Theory** (2%): Uploaded to Theory Discussion Group (based on completion)
- 3/25 – **Op-Ed Proposal & Hook** (2%): Upload to Discussion Group
- 4/5 - **Op-Ed Due** (10%): Post on SLP website
- 4/10 – **First Full Draft of Paper** (3%): Draft of approximately 1/2 of paper (should be completed lit review and theory with outline of remaining parts). Uploaded to Draft Discussion Group on ELC as a **word or PDF** doc – NOT GOOGLE DOC
- 4/13 – **Peer responses** (6%): 1-page response to each of the drafts of your group members (uploaded as response to the discussion post)
- 4/20-22 – **Class Presentations** (5%): 3-minute brief of your research project followed by Q&A (no PPT)

- 5/4 – **Final Project** (25%): uploaded to original Assignments folder on ELC.

AI Tools Policy:
I'm open to you using AI in this course if you adhere to the following 3 principles:
- ***Originality of YOUR Ideas***. It is most important that the ideas and analysis presented are your own. AI may be useful in this course for editing purposes, but if you use it as your starting point - if it is generating the ideas and analysis - then you are not developing the skills at the heart of this pre-professional program. Do not undermine yourself and weaken your skills development for the sake of a grade. It's not worth it.
- ***Openness.*** If using AI, you must be open about doing so and document your use. **Using AI without documenting that you did so will be considered a VIOLATION of UGA'S Honor Code.** I will have a link to a Google form on ELC. **EACH TIME** you use AI for an assignment in this course, you **MUST COMPLETE THE GOOGLE FORM on ELC within 48 hours of submitting the assignment**. As a course that centers Active Learning, the form is there to help you (and me!) learn how AI was (or wasn't) useful for your assignment.
  - The form will ask you for (1) the site used, (2) **specific prompt/commands used** (copy and pasted) (4) a copy and paste of the output in response to your prompt and (5) any changes to those prompts/commands, explaining why the changes were made and what the effect was on the output.
- ***Referencing and validating.*** You take full responsibility for any AI-generated information included in your work. This means all ***ideas*** must be attributed to an actual source (not AI) with a citation that you have checked, and information presented as facts must be true and cited. AI can present some issues that you should be aware of before using it. (1) All AI relies on existing language/materials, which can be out of date, so be sure you know the most up-to-date information on a situation. Outdated information will lead to poor policy analysis. (2) AI can "hallucinate" by misattributing a reference (so be sure to go to the original source) or may not cite sources (but you must). (3) AI can produce biased outputs as it relies on data that is not fully representative, especially of marginalized communities. You will be held accountable for the information you provide and thus must validate all information included in your work.

Other important information:
- **Communication and Email:** I will keep you updated about the course and any changes to the syllabus through the "ANNOUNCEMENTS" board on the class ELC page. ****PLEASE REGISTER FOR ANNOUNCEMENT NOTIFICATIONS!**
  - Again, to sign up for Announcement Notifications: your name on the class ELC page > Notifications > Scroll to "Instant Notifications" > Announcements
- **Office Hours** – Think of office hours as "student hours. They are an opportunity to get to know your professor, ask questions about the course, the major, or life beyond UGA. I will be available to meet with students during the office hours listed above. **You can sign up for an office Hours appointment and find the zoom link on ELC.**
- **Academic Honesty –** As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: http://www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy

is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be referred to Judicial Affairs, as required by university policy. The most common issue of academic dishonesty I have come across is plagiarism. To be clear, plagiarism is copying from any source material (direct or paraphrasing of ideas), published or unpublished (this includes Wikipedia!), without giving proper credit. I will post a link to the Chicago Manual of Style citation format on ELC.
  - *****Reminder about Generative AI tools*.** The use of Generative AI tools for any assignment in this course must be documented within 48 hrs using the link on ELC (see above for details). Suspected uses of AI when the form has not been submitted will be directly reported to the Office of Academic Honesty.
- **Accessibility:** UGA is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and university-administered activities and reasonable modifications to students with disabilities. Students in need of academic accommodations need to request such services from the Accessibility and Testing office located at 114 Clark Howell Hall (for more information visit https://accessibility.uga.edu/) and should make an appointment to see me with their appropriate paperwork within the **first two weeks** of classes.
- UGA's code of conduct protects student privacy and intellectual property and thus **prohibits recording and digital release of classroom lectures and conversations unless a student has an accommodation from the Accessibility & Testing office**. Students with A&T approved accommodations for recording should make an appointment with me to discuss a plan that protects your right to privacy, that of your classmates, and everyone's intellectual property.
- UGA has a vast array of resources to support students facing a variety of challenges. Please don't hesitate to speak with me or contact these resources directly. *Please be aware that UGA faculty and staff are obligated to report any knowledge of sexual assault/harassment and/or relationship violence to UGA's Equal Opportunity Office.* UGA's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (info below) can speak to students confidentially.
  - **Office of Student Care & Outreach** (coordinate assistance for students experiencing hardship/unforeseen circumstances) – 706-542-7774 or by email sco@uga.edu
  - **Counseling and Psychiatric Services** (CAPS) - 706-542-2273 (during regular business hours) *After Hour Mental Health Crisis:* 706-542-2200 (UGA Police—ask to speak to the CAPS on-call clinician)
  - **Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP)** – 706-542-SAFE (The advocates at RSVP can provide students confidentiality).
- **This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester**

Class & Deadline Schedule

WEEKS 1 & 2: Introduction

Complete "Research Ideas" Short Assignment on ELC by the start of class 1/12

Monday, January 12 (class 1) Semester Expectations and thinking about your research project
- TURN NOTIFICATIONS ON FOR COURSE!

Complete Book Club Assignment on ELC before the start of class Jan 14

Wednesday, January 14 (class 2) - Winter Book Club

Monday, January 19 – No Class: MLK Day

Complete "Big Questions" Short Assignment on ELC by the start of class on 1/21

Wednesday, January 21 (class 3) - What is Empirical Research? Big Questions and Smart Goals
- Read Research Project Directions
- **Watch video on doing an empirical research project (on ELC) – ***seriously, you need to watch this*** as I will reference the video and assume you have watched it.
- Powner Ch. 1

WEEK 3: Grant Writing and Preparing Research Proposals

Monday, January 26 (class 4) - Professionalization Day: Grants & Grant Writing
- Read Grant Writing Assignment on ELC

Complete Proposal BLUF Short Assignment on ELC before the start of class 1/28

Wednesday, January 28 (class 5) - Continuing to Discuss Research Projects
- Powner Chs. 2 & 3

Weeks 4-6: Proposals & Feedback

Research Proposal Draft due to short assignment discussion on ELC before class 2/2

Monday, February 2 (class 6) - Peer Workshopping Research Paper Draft Proposals

[2/3 Last office hours before proposal due! Make sure you've come in before then!]

Wednesday, February 4 (class 7) - Professionalization Day: Post-Bach Ed (Grad/Law School)

Email Full Draft of Group Grant Proposal to me by Friday, 2/6 (1 person/group)

Monday, February 9 (class 8) - Grant Proposal Feedback & Updating Resumes/Cover Letters

***Mon 2/9 - Final Research Project Proposal & Annotated Bibliography due to ELC ASSIGNMENT Folder*

Wednesday, February 11 (class 9) - Feedback on Proposal: Small groups 1 & 2

Monday, February 16 (class 10) - Feedback on Proposal: Small groups 3 & 4

Wednesday, February 18 (class 11) Professionalization Day: Internships, Jobs
- Visit with Will Donnelly, SPIA Career Services Coordinator

**Final Revised Grant due as PDF Thursday 2/19 – emailed to me (2 copies – one without names)*

**Grant Peer Eval due by Friday, 2/20 – see announcements for link*

WEEKS 7 - 8: Feedback on Research Outlines

Monday, February 23 (class 12) - Professionalization Day: Fellowships & Competitive Scholarships

** Mon 2/23 – Groups 1 & 2 Outlines due*

Wednesday, February 25 (class 13) - Feedback on outline: Small groups 1 & 2

** Fri 2/25 – Group 3 & 4 Outlines due*

Monday, March 2 (class 14) - Feedback on outline: Small groups 3 & 4

Wednesday, March 4 (class 15) - Professionalization Day: The DC Trip
- National Security Strategy of the United States of America. November 2025. https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2025-National-Security-Strategy.pdf
  - Everyone reads up to page 15 – after that pick 1 region.
- Oral Briefs on DC Site Visits

March 8-12 BBCITS Spring Break in DC Trip

WEEK 9 - 12: Theory & Op-Ed Writing

**Reflection on DC Trip and Survey due before the start of class 3/16*
        o *Students who do not participate in trip will have separate reflection to complete*

Monday, March 16 (class 16) – Debriefing the DC Trip & Professionalization Follow-up

Wednesday, March 18 (class 17) SPIA Reference Librarian Elizabeth White

Draft of Lit Review uploaded to ELC Discussion Board before start of class on Mon. 3/23

Monday, March 23 (class 18) What is a Lit Review?

- Review Powner!

Complete Op-Ed Hook Assignment discussion on ELC by start of class 3/25

Wednesday, March 25 (class 19) Op-Ed Writing: Hooking your Audience

Complete Op-Ed Draft Assignment on ELC before the start of class 3/30

Monday, March 30 (class 20) - Op-Ed Peer Workshop

Draft of theory uploaded to ELC discussion board before start of class on Wed. 4/1

Wednesday, April 1 (class 21) - Theory Check-In Day (Nunn Scholars w/ Dr. Powers)

**Op-Ed Due to the SLP's Google page Sun. 4/5*

Monday, April 6 (class 22) Research Design & Data Collection
- Powner Ch. 4

Complete Data Short Assignment on Discussion Board on ELC before start of class 4/8

Wednesday, April 8 (class 23) – Research Design & Data Collection Part II.

WEEK 13: Drafting

**Research Paper Drafts (full lit review and theory – with rest outlined) Due by Friday 4/10 to Drafts Discussion Board (Word or PDF only – NOT G-doc)*

**Peer responses to drafts due before start of class Mon, 4/13 – see discussion board prompt for peer response directions*

Monday, April 13 (class 24) Peer-Workshopping Research Paper Drafts

Upload Draft of Presentation/Poster to "Presentation" Discussion board by start of class 4/15

Wednesday, April 15 (class 25) Symposium Prep & Professionalization Day: Undergraduate Publishing & Conference Presentations
- Powner Ch. 11

WEEKS 14-15: Presenting Your Research

Monday, April 20 (class 26) - SLP Presentation of Research Projects

Wednesday, April 22 (class 27) - SLP Presentation of Research Projects

Friday, April 24 SPIA Undergraduate Research Colloquium

- Everyone will be presenting their research either on a panel or as a poster
- Family/friends invited!

<u>Monday, April 27 (class 28) – Nicest Day</u>

- *Peeps End of Year Dinner Celebration at Casa Muddegher!*

Tuesday, April 28 – CITS End of Semester Celebration

**Final Research Projects Due Monday, May 4