

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

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Course Overview:

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 track to complete your project. Your work will be completed in stages, each with its own deadline, and you 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 a public colloquium at the end of the semester.

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 expected to attend.

Student Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- ask an empirical research question
- propose a theory to answer your research question, including the the causal mechanism for why you expect the relationship to exist between your variables and the hypotheses that derive from your theory
- write about your research in an op-ed format
- present your research in a public forum on campus
- prepare a grant proposal in response to an RFP

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
- Grant – 10% (5% peer evaluation + 5% group proposal)
- Research Project – 70%
 - 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 – 30%

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), 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).

- **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.

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.

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:

- **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.
- **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)
 - *Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.*
- **This syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester**

Class Schedule

Weeks 1 & 2: Introduction

Week 3: Grant Writing and Preparing Research Proposals

Weeks 4-6: Proposals & Feedback

Weeks 7 - 8: Feedback on Research Outlines

Weeks 9 - 12: Theory & Op-Ed Writing

Week 13: Drafting

Weeks 14-15: Presenting Your Research