International Affairs 4744: Global Development Capstone

Syllabus Spring 2026

Instructor:	Dr. Franziska Roscher Sam Nunn School/Habersham 110 franziska@gatech.edu (*include INTA 4744 in subject line*)
Course Timings:	Wednesdays, 5:00 – 7:45 Skiles, Room 308
Office Hours:	Mondays, 12:00 – 2:00, or by appointment Habersham 110

Course Description

This capstone course challenges you to apply everything you have learned in the Global Development Minor to address a real-world development challenge. Building on your foundation from INTA 2050 and other development courses, you will conduct an in-depth investigation of a development problem and propose either a practical solution (applied project) or present evidence-based research findings (research paper).

The course is organized around a central question: How can we address development challenges ethically and effectively? You will engage with this question by analyzing stakeholder perspectives, understanding why past interventions have failed, and designing feasible solutions or conducting rigorous research.

By the end of this course, you will have hands-on experience conducting development research, the analytical skills to critically evaluate interventions, and the professional competencies to communicate complex ideas to varied audiences. Most importantly, you will leave with a deeper understanding of what it means to work ethically and effectively in global development.

Course Objectives

This course is designed with student success in mind and aims to impart not just subject-specific knowledge about Global Development, but to equip students with transferrable skills in the process.

Years from now, students will be able to

- examine complex development problems from different stakeholder perspectives
- critically assess development programs, policies, or research by evaluating their supporting evidence, underlying assumptions, and ethics
- develop evidence-based interventions OR conduct systematic research that addresses real development challenges while respecting ethical boundaries and stakeholder voices
- approach development work with humility, recognizing that good intentions do not guarantee good outcomes, that you must continually question whose voice matters, and that ethical practice requires ongoing reflection
- view feedback as a gift rather than criticism, recognize that good work emerges through iteration, and have the skills to revise your work substantively

Prerequisites

INTA 2050 – Introduction to Global Development

Assessments & Grading

Your final grade will be based on six parts:

Participation & Engagement	15%
Discussion Participation	5%
Peer Feedback	10%
Written Assignments	65%
Problem Memo	5%
State of the Field Memo	5%
Stakeholder Report	10%
Prospectus	15%
Final Report	20%
Poster	10%
Presentations	20%
Problem Presentation	5%
State of the Field Presentation	5%
Prospectus Presentation	5%
Final Presentation	5%

1. Participation & Engagement (15%)

This course requires your active engagement throughout the semester. This includes:

- **Class participation (5%)**: Paying attention to peers' presentations, asking constructive questions, and engaging thoughtfully with course material.
- **Peer review quality (10%)**: Throughout the semester, you will provide feedback on your peers' early drafts of written assignments. Providing substantive, helpful feedback is vital for everyone's project development. When providing feedback to peers, you should offer specific, constructive suggestions that help them improve their work. Generic comments like "looks good" or vague criticisms without suggestions do not constitute quality peer review. You will receive structured feedback forms to guide your peer review.

To ensure that everyone receives comparable, high-quality feedback, attendance is essential. You cannot score highly on Participation & Engagement if you do not attend class. You are also depriving your peers of valuable feedback mechanisms that are crucial to the iterative process of project development.

2. Written Assignments (65%)

All written assignments follow a **draft-and-revision process**. You will submit a first draft for peer review, receive feedback, and then submit a revised final version. Your grade for each written assignment reflects both the quality of your draft (showing serious effort and engagement with the task) and your final revised version (showing integration of feedback and polished work).

Problem Memo (5%)
A short (1 to 2 pages) memo introducing your development problem or research question. What is the problem? Why does it matter? How are you planning to approach this problem (applied project vs. research paper)?
Draft will be peer-reviewed in Week 5, and revised version presented in Week 6.

Stakeholder Report (10%)
A comprehensive stakeholder analysis identifying all relevant actors in your development context. For each stakeholder group, you will analyze: who they are, how they are affected by the challenge, what their priorities and constraints are, and how they would be involved in any proposed solution. This assignment requires you to consider multiple perspectives and understand the context your problem is situated in.
Draft will be peer-reviewed in Week 6; revised version due Week 7.

State of the Field Memo (5%)
A 4 to 6 page review of what solutions have been tried or what research exists on your topic. What has worked? What has failed? Where are the gaps?
Draft will be peer-reviewed in Week 7, and revised version presented in Week 8.

Prospectus (15%)
A 6 to 10 page proposal that builds on all your previous work. The prospectus lays out: (1) the problem and stakeholder context, (2) what you've learned about the field, (3) your proposed solution (for applied projects) or research argument (for research papers), (4) your roadmap for completing the final report, and (5) what additional work you plan to do.
Draft will be peer-reviewed in Week 10; revised version presented Week 12.

Final Report (20%)
Your final paper is a complete research paper or applied project report that incorporates all the work you have done throughout the semester. It should clearly state the problem, identify stakeholders, provide background on the setting and state of the field, and present your proposed solution or research findings. The final report should also include policy lessons learned and your reflections on what you've learned over the course of the semester.

First draft will be presented and peer-reviewed Week 14; revised version due after the semester ends (incorporating feedback from poster showcase).

Poster (10%)
A professional poster that visually synthesizes your project for a public audience. You will present this poster at a department showcase where you'll practice giving "the elevator pitch" about your project to professors, peers, and potentially clients or community members.
Draft will peer-reviewed Week 14; final version due Week 15.

3. Presentations

You will give four presentations (5% each) throughout the semester. These presentations represent distinct milestones in your project development and provide opportunities to receive feedback from peers and the instructor.

Problem Presentation (5%, Week 6)
A short presentation (no more than 10 minutes) introducing your problem or research question and explaining why it matters. Use 6 to 8 slides.

State of the Field Presentation (5%, Week 8)
A medium-length presentation (no more than 20 minutes) reviewing what solutions have been tried or what research exists, why previous approaches failed or succeeded, and where you see potential to contribute. Use 12 to 15 slides.

Prospectus Presentation (5%, Week 11)
A medium-length presentation (no more than 20 minutes) of your project plan, including your proposed solution or research argument, the rationale behind it, and your roadmap for completing the final report. Use 12 to 15 slides.

Final Presentation (5%, Week 13)
A short presentation (no more than 15 minutes) focusing on your proposed solution (for applied projects) or research findings (for research papers). Your presentation should explain your recommendations, discuss any changes from your original prospectus plan, and reflect on what you learned and the contribution of your project. Use 8 to 10 slides.

These presentations are not meant to be stressful, but to help you: At each stage, you will benefit from questions and suggestions from your peers. These presentations also help keep you on track throughout the semester, ensuring you have plenty of time for each stage in the process.

Deadlines for Graded Assignments

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments are due by EOD on Monday. That will allow me (and your peers) enough time to review drafts and give meaningful feedback by Wednesday evening. (You are, of course, free to hand in earlier than that!)

Below is a (preliminary) schedule of major deadlines for graded deliverables.

Feb 9	First draft Problem Memo
Feb 16	Revised Problem Memo; first draft Stakeholder Report
Feb 23	Revised Stakeholder Report; first draft State of the Field Memo
Mar 2	Revised State of the Field Memo
Mar 16	First draft Prospectus
Mar 30	Revised Prospectus
Apr 13	First draft Final Report, first draft poster
Apr 20	Revised poster
Apr 27	Revised Final Report

Philosophy on Drafts and Revision

This course is designed around the principle that good work emerges through iteration. You will receive feedback on drafts from peers and from me, and you will have opportunities to revise before final submission. Your grade reflects both your initial effort and your ability to integrate feedback and improve your work.

The draft-and-revision process means:

- Drafts matter: Submit serious, substantive drafts. A draft should represent your best thinking at that stage, not a rough outline.
- Feedback is a gift: Approach peer feedback with openness and gratitude. Use it to strengthen your work.
- Revision shows learning: Your final grade on each assignment reflects whether you engaged meaningfully with feedback and improved your work.

If you submit a weak draft but an excellent final version, your grade will reflect the overall quality and growth. If you submit a strong draft but don't improve it despite feedback, your grade will reflect the lack of growth.

Final Grade

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

A   90-100%
B   80-89%
C   70-79%
D   65-69%
F   0-64%

Required Readings

Required readings are listed below for each class. Completing assigned readings before the class is essential. In the first few sessions, we will lean heavily on ideas and concepts from the assigned readings to think deeply and practically about development. Ideally, these readings and discussions will inform your project, from the choice of topic to thinking about stakeholders to the path to a solution/answer. Readings will be made available on Canvas.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity. Per the Center for Teaching and Learning, "Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, which will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. For more information on the Honor Code, visit the OSI website."

Students can employ AI (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, etc.) or their peers as a limited tool to support the work they complete at home, but not as a substitute for completing the assignment themselves. Acceptable uses of peer collaboration and/or AI include the following: Preliminary searches for information, which a student will subsequently assess for validity and put in their own words; light copy editing; review for completeness. However, students cannot use AI or peers to produce partial or full drafts or assignments for them. Students must be able to pinpoint and appropriately cite the original source of any statistics, quotations, or claims. AI platforms often fail to accurately document the

source of information they provide; in this respect, these platforms do not constitute an acceptable source.

Student-Faculty Expectations. At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to continually strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/ for an articulation of some basic expectations. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

As an instructor, I strive to support you and be flexible, where possible; in return, I expect you to be engaged and communicative. I am willing to work with you through problems you face, from scheduling conflicts to difficulties with the materials and beyond. But in order to do so, you need to talk to me *ahead of time*. I cannot fix problems that I don't know about; and I cannot make accommodations *after* deadlines have passed or grades have been given. If you tell me about problems, I am happy to consider options to address them (as long as these options do not interfere with the integrity and equity of learning experiences within the course). You can always send me an email or stop by office hours to discuss any issues you might face.

Please note that students never need to disclose physical health status, mental health status, and/or experiences of sexual harassment or sexual assault in order to receive accommodations. If you are experiencing hardship and you choose to tell me, I can help connect you with appropriate university resources. Students should be aware that, in my capacity as a responsible employee, I must alert the Title IX Offices of any instances of sexual harassment or assault that I learn about from students. If you are a survivor of sexual harassment or sexual assault and prefer to discuss your experiences using confidential resources, please contact the Center for Mental Health Care & Resources (404-894-2575 or visit at Smithgall Student Services Building, Suite 238).

Attendance Policy. Regular attendance is essential to your success in this course. This isn't an arbitrary attendance-for-attendance's-sake policy. Rather, key learning activities happen in class and cannot be replicated outside of class time. During class time, you will both give and receive feedback on the

- Problem Memo,
- Stakeholder Report,

- State of the Field Memo,
- Prospectus,
- Final Report and
- Poster

In addition, in-class activities will help you think through how to scope a capstone project, how to practice ethical development, and much more.

Accordingly, you cannot score a top grade without regular attendance and engagement.

Policy for Late Assignments. Deadlines matter. Managing your time and meeting deadlines are important skills to learn that will serve you well all your life. However, I also recognize that life happens and rigid policies can penalize students facing circumstances beyond their control. If you need an extension on any of the written assignments, you may request an extension in advance of the submission deadline. No justification is required for an extension, but students must propose an alternative submission deadline within **1 week** of the original deadline. If a student either fails to request an extension in advance or fails to meet their proposed alternative deadline, they will incur a penalty of 20% off the assignment grade within the first 24 hours after the deadline. No assignments turned in more than 24 hours past the deadline will be accepted.

Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities. If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (often referred to as ADAPTS) at (404)89-2563 or http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. If you would like to discuss your learning needs, please email me as soon as possible to set up a time to do so.

Date	Topic(s) & Readings
Jan 14	**Introduction** Required Readings: - Syllabus In addition: - Browse UN Sustainable Development Goals: https://sdgs.un.org/goals → pick 2 to 3 that interest you!
Jan 21	**Development Challenges** Required Readings: - Easterly, William (2006). *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*, Chapter 1 ("Planners vs. Searchers") - Andrew Chambers (2009), "Africa's not-so-magic roundabout", The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/nov/24/africa-charity-water-pumps-roundabouts
Jan 28	**Perspectives & Ethics in Global Development** Required Readings: - Holcombe, Susan H., and Wendy S. Howard (2020). *Practicing Development: A Guide for Practitioners,* Chapter 2 ("Understanding Stakeholder Perspectives") - Angela Bruce-Raeburn (2019), "International development has a race problem", Devex: https://www.devex.com/news/opinion-international-development-has-a-race-problem-94840
Feb 4	***Individual Consultations***
Feb 9	***Draft Problem Memo due***
Feb 11	**Research Resources; Problem Memo Workshop** Required Reading: - Problem Memo draft

Feb 16	***Draft Stakeholder Report due*** ***Revised Problem Memo due***
Feb 18	**Student Presentations (Problem); Stakeholder Report Workshop** Required Readings: - Stakeholder Report draft
Feb 23	***Draft State of the Field Memo due*** ***Revised Stakeholder Report due***
Feb 25	**State of the Field Report Workshop** Required Readings: - State of the Field Report draft
Mar 2	***Revised State of the Field Memo due***
Mar 4	**Student Presentations (State of the Field)**
Mar 11	**Prospectus Development** Required Readings: - "What is a prospectus, and how do I write one?"
Mar 16	***Draft Prospectus due***
Mar 18	**Prospectus Workshop** Required Readings: - Prospectus draft
Mar 25	*Spring Break – No Class*
Mar 30	***Revised Prospectus due***
Apr 1	**Student Presentations (Prospectus)**
Apr 8	**Poster Workshop**
Apr 13	***Draft Final Report due*** ***Draft Poster due***
Apr 15	**Student Presentations (Final Presentation)**
Apr 20	***Revised Poster due***
Apr 22	**Poster Showcase**
Apr 27	***Revised Final Report due***