*The primary task of a useful teacher is to teach his students to recognize* inconvenient *facts—I mean the facts that are inconvenient for their party opinions* (Max Weber). Critical thinking is essential. One cannot be a good global citizen without being a critical thinker and understanding basic current events.

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**INTA 1xxx: The World Today: Current Events, Comparative Politics, and Societies**

There are no prerequisites for this course

This course fulfills the Social Science and Global Perspective GEN ED requirements at Georgia Tech.

**Course Description**: This course introduces current issues of politics around the globe, using a wide variety of media and sources. In order to understand current international politics, the following foci are emphasized:

• basic geography and demographics that drive and shape politics and power relations

• the interrelationships between science and technology and political variables

• basic frameworks of understanding dynamic change in political systems, including path dependency, prospect theory, individual utility maximization, global power relations, and transnational activist networks.

• an understanding of the concept and application of power in local and national politics

• an understanding of international current events through weekly reading of *The Economist*

**Learning Outcomes:**

*Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.*

*Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence the global system.*

*Science, Technology and International Affairs. Students will explain the causal and determinant relationships between science and technology (S&T) and international affairs across different topic areas of comparative politics.*

*Students will demonstrate the ability to describe principal current events from around the globe and explain them using basic social science frameworks and theories.*

*Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic global geography.*

**Required Texts:** All students must subscribe to *The Economist* and read weekly. Additional readings will be added to TSQUARE.

**List of Graded Assignments:**

Midterm: 35%

Global Film Written Assignment: 15%. Students are to watch two films on a similar topic based in two different countries and write a 5-page article about how the power relations, institutions, culture, identity, or other domestic factors shape the different outcomes in each case. A rubric can be found in the Resources tab of TSQUARE as well as a list of pairs of potential movies. Students can also select their own films and please feel free to discuss with professor at office hours.

5 pop quizzes: 15

Final Exam: 35% (Final exam given at time as shown on GT calendar)

**Attendance Policy**

Attendance is mandatory as is reading before class. There will be 7 short pop quizzes at the beginning of class on reading. The two lowest scores will be dropped and the remaining 5 quizzes will count as 15% of your final grade.

**ADAPTS**

The professor will work with ADAPTS so that all students have an equal opportunity for success. For information on ADAPTS, see <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>

**Honor Code Statement:**

Plagiarizing is defined by Webster’s as “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source.”If caught plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code.

For more information see: <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>

**Week by week schedule**

Week 1: *Economist* from week before and article on political geography (Sachs)

Week 2: *Economist* from week before and article on demographics from *Foreign Affairs* (2010): “The Demographic Future,” by Nicholas Eberstadt.

Week 3: *Economist* from week before and article on the interrelationship between Science, Technology, and politics (TBD).

Week 4: *Economist* from week before and excerpt from James Mahoney article on path dependency

Week 5: *Economist* from week before and excerpt from Keck and Sikking on transnational activists networks

Week 6: *Economist* from week before and except from Johan Galtung on global harmony and disharmony of interests

Week 7: *Economist* from week before and excerpt from Kurt Weyland on prospect theory and politics

Week 8: *Economist* from week before and short reading on rational choice theories of political change

Week 9: *Economist* from week before and short reading on Dahl’s conceptualization of pluralist power

Week 10: *Economist* from week before and short reading on Lukes 3 faces of power

Week 11: *Economist* from week before and excerpt from primordial view of identity (Walker Connor) and excerpt from constructed view of identity (Benedict Anderson)

Week 12: *Economist* from week before and short reading claiming role of technology in Arab Spring and one article challenging role of technology in Arab Spring

Week 13: *Economist* from week before and article from *Foreign Policy* TBD

Week 14: *Economist* from week before and article from Michael Klare on resource wars and revolutions

Week 15: *Economist* from week before and article from journal *Democracy* on decline of democracy around globe