IAFF 6501: Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Location: 1957 E 211
Time: Wednesdays, 3:10-5:00
Credit Hours: 3.0.

Instructor

Professor Eric Kramon
Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs
Email: ekramon@gwu.edu
Office: 472 Monroe Hall (2115 G St NW)
Student Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m (SIGN UP!)

Why Are You Here? What Our Course Is About

This course will focus on developing data analysis and data science skills that are relevant for international affairs practitioners. We assume no prior background in statistics, data science, or data analysis. Students will develop coding, data visualization, data analysis, and data presentation skills that will allow them to use data to answer questions related to international affairs and to contribute to data driven policy and programmatic decision making.

Course Objectives: What You'll Be Able To Do

Course and module objectives are guides to gauge your skill and knowledge development. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Analyze data sets using modern computational tools (using R).

- Identify and access data sets, and apply data wrangling concepts to optimize data for analysis and modeling purposes.
- Use data visualization to summarize simple and complex relationships between and among variables in a data set.
- Use tools of statistical inference to test hypotheses
- Develop and use models for prediction/forecasting, and for causal inference
- Create professional and reproducible data analysis outputs (reports, websites, slides, and so on) using Quarto

Course Website

All details about the course (including the schedule and this syllabus) can be found on the Course Website. Please bookmark and remember this page! Any updates that need to be made to the course schedule or materials will always be reflected on the website.

Course Schedule

The complete course schedule with topics, slides, readings, and assignments for each week can be found here in the Course Schedule of the course website.

Aiming For Success

I care about your learning and also about this subject matter, and I am here to help you have a meaningful learning experience. I expect you to take ownership of your learning: you can get more out of the course by thoughtfully participating in discussions, actively taking notes on readings and lectures, and giving your best effort overall. I will hold you to the highest standards for academic honesty and integrity in your work. I will also encourage you to collaborate and learn from your peers through thoughtful and respectful discussion. I must highlight that communication is vital, so I hope you feel comfortable reaching out to me if you are struggling or have concerns or need accommodations beyond accessibility. We can determine strategies to set you up for success. Finally, I look forward to collaborating with you in this course to create a meaningful experience for everyone.

Student Office Hours

Another way we can work toward your success in the course is through office/student hours. Please make an appointment to talk with me during this time. You can work with me to:

- Clarify any questions about the syllabus or course content
- Review an assignment you've completed and have questions about

- Step through practice problems or questions
- Get study strategies
- Discuss grades

To make the meeting more effective, you can:

- Gather materials (assignments, notes, etc.) ready in advance
- Be ready to take notes during office hours
- Ask follow up questions if you need clarification
- Confirm any action plan at the close of the meeting
- Following through on any action plan

Professor Kramon's office hours are on Wednesdays, 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m in his office in 472 Monroe Hall (2115 G. ST NW) (or by appointment). Please sign up for a slot (or two). Student office hours will be held in his office in 472 Monroe Hall (2115 G. ST NW).

Student office hours sign up link.

Prerequisites

Academic

None! You can succeed in this course without any prior background.

Technological

Configuration and software

To fully participate in our course, you will need regular access to broadband Internet access as well as other technology components. Please consult GW Online's Technical Requirements and Support for details on recommended configurations and software available to you. You will need to use the following tools and platforms:

- Posit Cloud (see Blackboard for information on how to access the course workspace)

For our course, you should be able to:

- Access and use GW's Blackboard system.
- Use your GW email for university-related communications per university policy.
- Use productivity software (e.g., Office 365, Google Suite) to collaborate with peers and submit assignments.
- Use web conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom, Webex) to collaborate with peers and me.
- Use a mobile device and/or computer to upload documents, images, and recordings.

- Seek technology help and tools by contacting GW Information Technology | (202)-994-4948 | ithelp@gwu.edu.

If you need assistance with technology tools we'll use in this course, please visit the **Technology Support** link in the left navigation menu in our course on Blackboard.

Materials You'll Need

Most of our readings are available for free online. You can find other weekly assigned readings through GW libraries. You must use your GW credentials to access these readings.

Course Credit Hour Policy

In this 3 credit graduate course students are expected to work for 450 minutes per week (this includes 110 minutes of time spent in class per week); totaling to 112.5 hours of work over the duration of this 15-week semester.

How this applies to you

Use the credit hour policy to plan and manage your workload and time spent on this course. Please contact me if you are having difficulty managing your workload, and we can discuss strategies to help you succeed in the course.

How You Will Learn and Demonstrate Knowledge

My aim is to provide you opportunities for active learning and skills development that help you meet course learning objectives and also grow in your knowledge of this field.

Instruction

I've designed the following instructional components to support your learning and growth in the course.

- **Class Sessions:** Class sessions will involve a mix of lecture and active learning activities that ask you to practice the skills we are learning in a given session. Please come prepared to actively participate in class.

Assessment

The following assessments help you gauge and demonstrate your progress in the course and support you in meeting course learning objectives.

- **Participation and In-Class Learning (10%):** In most weeks, we will have in-class data analysis activities for you to complete. You will get full credit for participation if you engaged and doing the best you can on the in-class activities.

- **3 Homework Assignments (20% each = 60%)**: Students will complete three data analysis homework assignments. These assignments are designed to provide students with the opportunity to apply their newly-acquired skills to an international affairs related question or problem. Thoughtfully and thoroughly completing these assignments helps you meet course objectives.

- **Team Project (30%):** In your final project, you will work in teams to apply your new data analysis skills in an international affairs project.

Key Dates

- Homework Assignments (will provide time in class to work on these before they are due)

    - Assignment 1: due by 11:59pm on **February 18**

    - Assignment 2: due by 11:59pm on **March 25**

    - Assignment 3: due by 11:59pm on **April 22**

- Final Team Project: due by 11:59pm on **Thursday, May 8**

Demonstrating Academic Integrity

All of us in the course will comply with the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states that "we, the Students, Faculty, Librarians, Staff, and Administration of The George Washington University, believing academic integrity to be central to the mission of the University, commit ourselves to promoting high standards for the integrity of academic work. Commitment to academic integrity upholds educational equity, development, and dissemination of meaningful knowledge, and mutual respect that our community values and nurtures. The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity is established to further this commitment."

Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For details and complete code, see the Code of Academic Integrity.Common examples of academic dishonesty include cheating, fabrication,

plagiarism, falsification, forgery of University academic documents, and facilitating academic dishonesty by others. Learn more about avoiding these:

- GW guidance for students on academic integrity.

- Plagiarism: What is it and how to avoid it from GW Libraries.

- Maintaining academic honesty can be a challenging skill to learn. If you have questions about maintaining our course standards, please talk with me early on.

Course Grading

The grading scale below maps your final point or percentage total to your final letter grade for the course.

Range	Letter Grade
96-100	A
90-95	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
<59	F

Late Work

We understand that sometimes emergencies arise that might prevent you from submitting work on time. If you think you might miss an assignment deadline, it is your responsibility to contact me via email. We know life happens sometimes and will be as accommodating as possible, but it **is important that you communicate with us in advance.**

If we do not hear from you, we will deduct 2.5 percentage points from your grade for every 24 hours the assignment is late.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades may be given to graduate students only if for reasons beyond the student's control (such as medical or family emergency) they are unable to complete the final work of the course. Faculty should not assign an Incomplete grade if not asked by the student.

For further information, please consult with your advisor.

Course Communication

Communication in our course is essential; clearing up questions earlier than later is a good practice, so please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

We will communicate to you primarily through GW's Blackboard System. Announcements and emails sent through Blackboard automatically go to your GW email address (i.e., userid@gwu.edu). Please check your GW email account on a daily basis or forward your GW email to another address that you check daily.

If you have general course- and content-related questions, please post them to our class Discussion Board on Blackboard. This way, all students can learn from the response. And, if you happen to know the answer, feel free to respond and help out your classmate!

If you have a question that is more personal in nature (grading, absences, etc), please email me directly.

Expectations

To ensure safe and meaningful learning experiences for everyone, we all agree to:

- Remain professional, respectful, and courteous at all times, both in person and online (e.g, on our discussion board).
- When upset, we'll wait a day or two prior to posting online. Messages posted or emailed in anger are often regretted later.
- Ask one another for clarification if we find a communication offensive or difficult to understand.
- Avoid sweeping generalizations. Back up our stated opinions with facts and reliable sources.
- Understand that we may disagree and that exposure to other people's opinions is part of the learning experience.
- Just as we would like our privacy respected, we will respect the privacy of other course participants and what they share.

I (the instructor) reserve the right to delete any post or communication in our course that is deemed inappropriate without prior notification to the student. This includes anything containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful. Items that are seriously off-topic or serve no purpose other than to vent frustration will also be removed.

I am aware that you and your peers might communicate using tools outside of GW's Blackboard, the course website, or email systems. Rules of netiquette and appropriate communication extend to these tools as well as to Blackboard. If you see any tool being used inappropriately (i.e., any communication containing language that is offensive, rude, profane, racist, or hateful; uses that promote cheating of any kind), contact me as soon as possible to speak privately about it.

(Adapted from Lake Superior Connect, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0)

Policies

To make this a meaningful learning experience for everyone, please read and understand the following policies. All GW policies can be found on the GW Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Privacy site. All GW community members are responsible for adhering to and activating in accordance with all university policies. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Policy on AI Tools

Overview:

The use of ChatGPT can be a valuable tool for students in this course, but it is important to use it ethically and appropriately. By following the guidelines and expectations outlined in this syllabus policy, students can maximize the benefits of using ChatGPT while also demonstrating their own critical thinking, research, and programming skills.

As part of this course, students will have the option to use ChatGPT, a large language model trained by OpenAI, to assist in the writing of their R scripts for specific course assignments. ChatGPT can provide students with a starting point for their code or help troubleshoot problems, but often the code is incomplete or error-prone. It is important to recognize that ChatGPT is a tool and not a substitute for critical thinking, research, or programming skills. Therefore, this syllabus policy outlines the guidelines and expectations for using ChatGPT in this course.

Guidelines:

Use ChatGPT ethically and honestly. Do not use ChatGPT to plagiarize or take credit for work that is not your own. Any use of ChatGPT must be properly cited and referenced in accordance with the university's code of academic integrity.

Recognize the limitations of ChatGPT. ChatGPT is a machine learning model and may not always provide the most accurate or relevant information. Therefore, it is important to critically evaluate the information and verify it with other sources.

Use ChatGPT appropriately. ChatGPT should only be used to assist in writing boilerplate syntax for this course. It's a starting point. It should not be used to attempt to complete other assignments or assessments in this course or in other courses.

Accessibility and Accommodations

GW's Disability Support Services

If you are a student with a disability, or think you may have a disability, you can let me know, and/or you can talk to GW's Office of Disability Support Services (DSS). DSS works with both students with disabilities and instructors to identify reasonable accommodations. Contact the DSS office at (202) 994-8250, by email on dss@gwu.edu, or in-person in Rome Hall Suite 102 to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. If you have already been approved for accommodations, please send me your accommodation letter and meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

How are course technology tools accessible to everyone? To find out, access **Technology Support Technology Tools Policies** in the Blackboard course menu.

Accommodations Beyond Disability

Everyone has different needs for learning. If you don't have a documented disability but feel that you would benefit from learning support for other reasons, please don't hesitate to talk to me. If you have substantial non-academic obligations or other concerns (e.g., food insecurity, work, childcare, athletic commitments, language barriers, financial issues, technology access, commuting, etc.) that make learning difficult, please contact me. I'll keep this information confidential, and together, we can brainstorm ways to meet your needs.

Other Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact GW's Office of Student Financial Assistance for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable doing so. Some other resources to support you are found under the course menu item **Student Resources** and include support for academic achievement and personal well-being. *(Adapted from Goldrick-Rab, 2017)*

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW's Health Center offers counseling and psychological services to GW students. ***Please note that staff is licensed to offer short term therapy to students in Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia. If you are living outside these regions, the office may be able to refer you elsewhere.*** Assistance and referrals 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be reached on (202) 994-5300.

The Center provides assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include: crisis and emergency mental health consultations, confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals.

Virtual Workshops are open to any student regardless of geographic location. These can be exceptionally valuable and help you build essential skills and cope with common ongoing mental health concerns. Please contact the GW Health Center on (202) 994-5300 for more information.

Religious Observances

As members of the GW community, you have the right to observe religious holidays. University policy requires that students notify their instructors during the first week of the semester if they plan to be absent from class on days of religious observance. For further details, please consult the university policy on religious holiday observance.