POS 4300 - RESEARCH AND INTELLIGENCE

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Fall 2025
Class Meeting Days: TR
Class Meeting Time: 09:00AM - 10:15AM
Class Meeting Location: HPH O310
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Kelsey Larsen
Title: Assistant Professor
Office Location: HPH305F
Office Hours
1:30pm-3:00pm Tuesday & Thursday (and if needed, by appointment)
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Course Description

POS 4300 COS 3(3,0)Research Methods and Intelligence: PR: POS 3703 The application of unique quantitative skills for intelligence research. Explores how to plan, collect, process, analyze, and disseminate analytical research products, particularly underuncertain conditions. Fall

The purpose of this course is to provide students with elite training in advanced quantitative skills for intelligence analysis. It demystifies—and de-fangs—data science concepts to make them practically relevant for the next generation of policymakers and analysts. It begins with overviews of the stakeholders, agencies, and environments that classify intelligence research, and progresses to explore the common research cycle of intelligence organizations. The course continues with in-depth considerations of research question conceptualization and the intelligence mindsets that inform it; modalities of data collection and sample design; fundamental tools of descriptive and inferential quantitative analysis, particularly under conditions of uncertainty; as well as IC-specific best practices and guidelines for writing and briefing intelligence conclusions.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe the network of actors, agencies, and environments that conduct intelligence research
- Locate and utilize existing and new sources of data relevant to intelligence analysts and organizations
- Apply basic software analysis skills for quantitative intelligence analyses
- Clearly and accurately summarize intelligence research for technical and non-technical audiences
- Produce original research and form conclusions/recommendations for intelligence use

Required Course Materials and Resources

None (all provided in Webcourses)

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Graded Assignments:

- Participation (20%)
- Homework (20%)
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Rapid Analysis Class Exercise (20%)
- Final Exam (20%)

Class Participation (200 points):

Students are expected to attend every class session, to have read the assigned readings thoroughly, and to actively participate in class discussions with thoughtful and informed engagement. Intelligence issues, even in research, especially require the active interaction of different viewpoints—and this can only happen if everyone comes to class ready and willing to make their viewpoints heard and, in turn, hear the viewpoints of others. Students will have multiple opportunities to participate in class conversations and group work as part of this course, and should take advantage of those opportunities when they are presented.

Homework (200 points):

In order to practice the research analytic skills of the course, students will complete a total of five problem sets. These problem sets may, at times, require students to make use of statistical analysis software. The instructor will provide detailed information about the instructions and expectations in advance of each homework assignment.

Midterm exam (200 points):

There will be one in-class midterm exam, designed to assess students' understandings of the readings, lectures, and homework exercises. More information on the exam format and material will be provided by the instructor in-class.

Rapid Analysis Class Exercise (RACE) (200 points):

Students will participate in a multi-day group exercise known as the RACE (Rapid Analysis Class Exercise). In this exercise, students will be pre-assigned to teams and will be provided relevant info regarding an intelligence analysis task requiring a research briefing. Over the course of the following week student teams will be responsible for a

comprehensive analysis of the intelligence issue at hand, culminating in in-class briefings presented for critique.

Final Written Exam (200 points):

At the end of the course, students will complete a final written exam in which they independently analyze and create a professionalized intelligence product. More detail on the contents and structure of the final exam will be shared by the instructor in the weeks before the exam.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Total points
A	93%-100%	925- 1000
A-	90-93%	895 - 924
B+	87-89%	865 - 894
B	84-86%	835 - 864
B-	80-83%	795 - 834
C+	77-79%	765 - 794
C	74-76%	735 - 764
C-	70-73%	695 - 734
D+	67-69%	665 - 694

D	64-66%	635 - 664
D-	60-63%	595 - 634
F	0-59%	0-594

Policies for Course Grade

Grading Policy on Late Homework

Students are expected to submit all homework assignments the assigned due dates. But, we all know that sometimes work/life/otherwise gets in the way—our work schedules get moved, or our car breaks down, or we catch a cold, and just can't quite meet the deadline set. In those cases, **late homework assignments are accepted with a half-grade deduction** (e.g., A to A-) for every 24 hour period the assignment is late. Be smart, and use that policy to your strategic benefit—noting that you can still often earn Bs on assignments that are 2-3 days late, but also that anything more than 10 days late is a failing assignment. However, keep in mind that this policy applies only to homework assignments, and not other categories of assessments like the final project.

Policy on Absences

As noted in the Class Participation grade section, it is expected that any student enrolling in the course is committed to attending every class session, completing course tasks, and engaging in course discussions. Excused absences apply to when a student experiences an emergency (e.g., hospitalization, family death, religious observance, military service, emergency medical provider visit)—any students in this category should contact the instructor as soon as possible to talk about opportunities to catch up on material. However, if a student chooses to miss class for a work obligation, a previously scheduled appointment, non-University affiliated travel, other reasons, that absence is not considered excused, and it is recommended the students book Office Hours appointments or borrow notes from classmates to ensure they do not fall behind.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

All ideas, analysis, and conceptual work you submit must be entirely your own. You may use AI tools only for basic spelling and grammar checks. In order to be successful on the course exams, it is essential that you cultivate independent skillsets-- thus, using AI to generate, outline, or substantially revise ideas, arguments, or text is prohibited.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading

information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Week	Topic
1	Course Introduction + Dangers of Quantitative Intelligence
2	Mental Models
3	Conceptual Models
4	Collecting Intelligence Indicators
5	Authenticating Intelligence Indicators
6	Operationalizing Intelligence Indicators for Analysis
7	Descriptive Assessments for Intelligence

Week	Topic
8	Correlative Assessments for Intelligence
9	Midterm Review + Exam
10	Predictive Assessments for Intelligence, pt 1
11	Predictive Assessments for Intelligence, pt 2
12	Probabilistic Assessments
13	RACE Introduction + Work
14	RACE Work + Briefing
15	Final Review
16	Final Written Exam