

POLS 387:
International Security
Northern Illinois University
Spring 2018

Monday & Wednesday 2:00 - 3:15pm | Dusable Hall 461

Professor:

Dr. Ches Thurber

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Office Hours: Mon / Wed 9:00 - 10:30am

Course Description:

This course offers a broad overview of security challenges facing policymakers and citizens in the 21st century. We will begin with a “traditional” approach to security studies, examining questions surrounding the causes of war, the art of strategy, and the logic of deterrence. We will then move on to address the complex threats posed to security in the 21st century: from nuclear proliferation to environmental conflict, from terrorism to transnational organized crime, and from cyberwarfare to nonviolent resistance. By the end of the course, students are expected to demonstrate not only a deep understanding of each of these concepts, but also an ability to place contemporary challenges in their broader historical contexts and to evaluate the costs and benefits of potential policy responses.

Course Format:

We will be meeting twice a week for 75 minute sessions. While some material will be presented in lecture, we will spend much of our time openly discussing the readings and topics assigned for each day. As such, it is essential that students come to class having completed the readings and participate in discussion every class period. Throughout the semester there will also be in-class exercises and role-plays. Audio-visual materials may also be used as appropriate.

Course Materials:

All readings will be made available on Blackboard.

Evaluation:

1. *Class attendance, preparation and participation: (20%)*

The time we spend in class is for me the most important of this course. As such, punctual attendance is mandatory. But more important than just being present at a desk is that you are actively engaged. I expect that you have done the readings and that you try to participate in discussion each and every class section.

2. *Reading Quizzes and Writing Activities: (10%)*

Over the course of the semester, there will be 5 unannounced reading quizzes. They will consist of multiple choice questions based on the assigned reading for the day. There will also be 5 in-class writing activities which will be graded.

3. *Examinations: (30%)*

There will be two exams held during class in the eighth and fourteenth weeks of the course. Each will count for 15% of your final grade. I will provide a list of possible exam questions one week before the exam. I encourage you to work with others to plan your answers in advance, but your work on exam day must be your own, produced without the assistance of books or notes.

4. *Writing Assignments: (30%)*

You will complete two short (3-page single-spaced) writing assignments over the course of the semester. The first will ask you to analyze an interstate war that occurred in the past using one of the theoretical frameworks discussed in class. The second will be a policy memo to the President regarding the issue you are discussing in the final simulation. The assignments are due by the beginning of class time on Monday 2/19 and Monday 4/16. They should be uploaded electronically to Blackboard where Safe Assign will be used to scan for originality.

5. *Final Simulation: (10%)*

During the scheduled exam period on Monday May 7 from 2-3:50 pm we will hold the final simulation activity, involving a meeting of the US national security council in which each student will play the role of a national security principal on one of two contemporary topics. You are expected to write a policy memo in preparation for the simulation (see above) and your participation will be graded as well.

Course Policies:

1. Successful completion of this course consistent, punctual attendance, completing the readings prior to the start of class, and active participation. If you must miss class due to a conflicting responsibility or an emergency, it is your responsibility to contact me to discuss the situation. I will generally require a short written assignment to be submitted in lieu of class attendance. Any more than 2 absences without prior notification and make-up work will affect your final grade.
2. If you think you need to delay taking an exam or submitting a written assignment, you should talk to me, generally at least two weeks before the exam/due date. Such extensions are never guaranteed, but will be based on university policy, exigency of the circumstances, and timeliness of the request (the earlier the better). Any missed exam or written assignment submitted after the deadline without prior authorization from me will not be accepted and a grade of 0 will be assigned.
3. A missed quiz is less serious in nature. If you miss a quiz, usually due to absence or tardiness, you will be given the opportunity to take a make-up 5 minutes before the next class. The questions may be different and the scoring system more difficult. Students who miss a quiz and do not show up for a make-up will receive a 0.
4. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will lead to an F for the course. If you are unsure as to whether your approach for any given assignment may constitute plagiarism, please be sure to double check with the professor prior to handing in your assignment. Political Science department resources pertaining to plagiarism may be found at: <http://www.niu.edu/polisci/audience/plagiarism.shtml>
5. I am committed to your success in this class – if you feel that you are not performing to your expectations, please come and see me. I am available to answer any questions you may have about course assignments, requirements or content.

Letter Grade Distribution:

You will receive a percentage score for each assignment above that can be translated into a letter grade according to the scale below.

>= 93.00	A	77.00 - 79.99	C+
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 76.99	C
87.00 - 89.99	B+	60.00 - 69.99	D
83.00 - 86.99	B	<= 59.99	F
80.00 - 82.99	B-		

Tentative Course Outline:

Updates will be announced in class and posted on the course website.

Week 1: Simulation

Wed 1/17 Game of Aggression

Week 2: Security Frameworks

Mon 1/22 Approaches to the Study of Security

- James Mattis on Reading
- Gavin, "Thinking Historically"
- Mitchell and Vazquez, *Conflict War and Peace*, Introduction

Wed 1/24 Conceptualizing 'Security'?

- Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?"

Key Questions:

- How do different types of thinkers approach the study of international security? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these different ways of trying to learn the lessons of history?
- What do we mean by "security" in the international system? Whose security do we mean and from what threats? How does the definition of security change depending on the actor involved?

Weeks 3-4: The Causes of War

Mon 1/29 The Condition of Anarchy

- Mearsheimer, From *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*

Wed 1/31 The Security Dilemma

- Jervis, "Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma"

Mon 2/5 Bargaining and War

- Frieden et al, "Why Are There Wars?"

Wed 2/7 Domestic Politics and War

- Frieden et al, "Domestic Politics and War"

Key Questions:

- How do major theories of war differ in their foundational assumptions about the nature of global actors and their interests?
- How do each of these theories fare against historical evidence over the course of the 20th century?
- How do the theories differ in the prescriptions they would provide to policymakers? Can these theories inform policy?

Week 5: Strategy and Ethics in War

Mon 2/12 Strategy

- Cassidy and Tame, "The Wages of War Without Strategy"
- Art, "The Four Functions of Force"

Wed 2/14 Ethics

- Excerpts from Thucydides, "The Peloponnesian War"
- Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, Ch. 1

Key Questions:

- What are the four functions of force? How does this help think about the relationship between policy, strategy and military action?
- How can democracies balance realist imperatives with values of transparency, rule of law, and universal human rights?

Weeks 6-7: Strategy, Policy, and Morality in the Nuclear Age

Mon 2/19 The Logic of Nuclear Deterrence

- Nichols, "No Other Choice: Why the US Dropped the Atomic Bomb on Japan"
- Smith, "Nuclear Deterrence: Behind the Strategic and Ethical Debate"
- NPR, "Hiroshima Survivor Remembers"

Wed 2/21 Nuclear (Non)Proliferation

- NTI, "The Nuclear Threat"
- Waltz, "Nuclear Weapons: Why More May Be Better"
- Schultz et al, "Toward a World Without Nuclear Weapons"

Mon 2/26 *First Writing Assignment Due*

Wed 2/28 Contemporary Debates

- Broad and Pecanha, "The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Simple Guide"
- Sagan, "The Korean Missile Crisis"

Key Questions:

- What is the logic of deterrence theory? What assumptions must hold in order for deterrence to "work"?
- To what degree do we owe the post-WWII peace to nuclear deterrence? Is a world with more nuclear weapons necessarily a more dangerous one?
- What should US nuclear policy be today? What are the implications of upgrading the US nuclear arsenal? Building missile defense installations? Vowing no first-use? To what lengths should the US go to prevent other states from acquiring the bomb?

Week 8: Midterm Week

Mon 3/5 Review Day

Wed 3/7 MIDTERM EXAM

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency

Mon 3/19 Civil Wars

- HSR, "Why the Dramatic Decline in Armed Conflict?"
- Bass, "What Really Causes Civil War?"
- Walter, "Four Things We Know About How Civil Wars End"

Wed 3/21 Counterinsurgency

- Kilcullen, "Three Pillars of Counterinsurgency"
- Luttwack, "Dead End: Counterinsurgency Doctrine as Military Malpractice"

Week 10: Intervention and Peacekeeping

Mon 3/26 Promises and Perils of Intervention

- Luttwak, "Give War a Chance"
- Western and Goldstein, "Humanitarian Intervention Comes of Age"

Wed 3/28 Peacekeeping

- UNSSC, "UN Peacekeeping: An Introduction"
- Paris, "Peacekeeping Works Better than You May Think"
- Rohde, "The UN Still Can't Stop Civilian Slaughter"

Key Questions:

- What is the logic behind humanitarian intervention? On what principles of security is it based? What principles does it challenge? What are its pitfalls and what is its track record?
- What is UN peacekeeping and how does it work? Does it work? What are some of its most notable successes and failures?

Week 11: Terrorism

Mon 4/2 Terrorism as Strategy

- Gilsinan, "Today's Terrorists Want to Inspire"
- Friedman, "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Bombing"
- Cottee, "Is There Any Logic to Suicide Terrorism?"

Wed 4/4 Ideology and Psychology

- Wood, "What ISIS Really Wants"
- Penman and Vendantam, "The Psychology of Radicalization"

Key Questions:

- What drives the behavior of terrorist organizations? Are they ideological zealots? Or do they follow a strategic logic?
- What are some of the major terrorist campaigns that preceded the current era of al-Qaeda/ISIS terrorism? How did they end? What lessons do they offer for how to handle current and future terrorist threats?

Weeks 12-13: New Dynamics of Conflict

Mon 4/9 Conflict and the Environment

- Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict"
- Notaras, "Does Climate Change Cause Conflict?"
- Christy, "How Killing Elephants Finances Terror in Africa"

Wed 4/11 Autonomous Weapons and Cyber Conflict

- LaPointe and Levin, "Automated War"
- Human Rights Watch, "The Dangers of Killer Robots and the Need for a Preemptive Ban"
- Lin, "Cyber Conflict and National Security"
- Maurer, "The Case for Cyberwarfare"

Mon 4/16 *Policy Memo Due*

Wed 4/18 Criminal Organizations

- Williams, "Transnational Criminal Organizations and International Security"
- National Security Council, "Transnational Organized Crime: A Threat to National and International Security"

Key Questions:

- How do new forms of conflict challenge traditional theories and concepts of international security? Or are they mostly "old wine in new bottles"? To what degree do they represent new threats and how should institutions adjust in order to respond?

Week 14: Consequences of Conflict

Mon 4/23 Displacement and Refugees

- Boehler and Pecanha, "The Global Refugee Crisis: Region by Region"
- New York Times, "How the Rohingya Escaped"

Wed 4/25 Sexual Violence in War

- Economist, "War's Overlooked Victims"
- Wood, "Variation in Sexual Violence During War"

Key Questions:

- What are some of the general global patterns of displacement from war and sexual violence in war?
- Are these simply consequences of war, or are they strategic and deliberate?

Week 15: Final Exam Week

Mon 4/30 Review Day

Wed 5/2 Final Exam

FINAL SIMULATION: Monday, May 7, 2:00-3:50pm
