Topics in International Relations: Contemporary Security Issues

Fall 2016

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Course Meeting: KIMM 808
Monday, 12:30-3:00PM

Office Hours:
Monday, 3.00-4.30-PM Wednesday, 9.00-10.00AM & 1.30-2.30PM
other times by appointment only

The information contained in this course syllabus is correct at the time of publication, but may be subject to change as part of the IR Program's policy of continuous improvement and development. Every effort will be made to notify you of any such changes.
OVERVIEW OF MODULE

Before the end of the Cold War, security was mainly defined as the threat or use of military force by nation-states, and was therefore primarily of concern for students who were interested in inter-state relations. This is because before 1991 security was largely defined as the ability of a state to defend against external attack and ensure the continued existence of the state. The ‘referent’ object of security was the state rather than the individual.

Our security environment today, however, is radically different from the environment that has governed conceptions of security since the creation of the modern international system in 1648. As Wittes and Blum argued in their book The Future of Violence (2015):

Much of what we think we know about privacy, liberty, security and threat is no longer true. Much of what we have been taught about what threatens us, what protects us, and about the risks and benefits of state power versus individual empowerment is obsolete (p. 5)

Whereas in the past the study of security was associated with the ability of a state to threaten and successfully attack another state, today there are instead a myriad array of security risks and threats. Super empowered individuals can create change at a global level. Modern technology makes life easier, but opens up societies to potentially crippling ‘cyber’ war. This raises the question – what exactly is cyber ‘war’? In the 1930s policy-makers worried about strong states, like Japan or Germany, going on the offensive. But today weak states, such as Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan or Syria are of seemingly greater danger than strong states. Global climate change may alter the environment in such a way that it creates mass conflict, but how can a Ministry of Defence provide ‘security’ against climate change? These are the issues that we will explore in this course.

As Paul Williams writes in your textbook, there are four key questions that this seminar will seek to answer:

What is security?
Whose security are we talking about?
What counts as a security issue?
How can security be achieved?

To explore these questions this course consists of mainly two parts – the first part is conceptual. The second part is applied. It is impossible to answer these questions without first having an intellectual paradigm(s) to make sense of the vast amount of ‘information’
available. Information without analysis is not particularly useful. The create security policy, one has to have an idea of what security is and who is being secured. From this point a policy to achieve security can be created. Consequently the first part of this course looks at the last few decades, during which, the domain of security studies broadened to include, at one end, questions of the well-being of the human individual, and at the other end, questions about how to sustain the globe as such. The contemporary debate about how to define security, who should provide it, and who or what should be secured, pays tribute to the increasing complexity of our globalised world, and the necessity of engaging with phenomena that transcend the nation-state, such as global terrorism or climate change.

The aim of this course is to trace the security studies discipline from its traditional approaches through its evolution to include ever more transnational dynamics. It outlines how scholars have traditionally understood security before progressing to examine how the study of security has developed. Each week of the course is designed to introduce students to important aspects of security studies to give them the theoretical and conceptual awareness to apply to issues of security today.

The second part will then turn to the analysis of particular contemporary security issues, taking place at three different levels: the level of the individual (human security), the level of the state (with the example of so-called ‘failed states’) and the global level (with the examples of global terrorism and environmental change). The seminar will work through these security issues with a problem base learning approach that will require participants to utilize the theoretical tools provided to them in part one to create possible working policy options for senior policy makers.
LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of this course, students should:

(A) Subject Specific

• understand the development of the security studies discipline.

• appreciate the transnational dynamics affecting how we understand security both conceptually and as in the practice of security policy.

• demonstrate competence in explaining and using different approaches to security studies.

B) Generic:

• Critically analyse and evaluate both academic and policy texts.

• Communicate clearly, construct coherent arguments, both in seminars and in written work.

• Work independently on research tasks in order to formulate hypotheses, devise methodologies appropriate to a research task, and generate research materials.

• Adapt knowledge to specific contexts.

(C) Key skills:

• Present complex arguments with clarity and concision.

• Communicate effectively in speech and writing.

• Work independently, demonstrating time management and self-organization.

TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

The course is taught through a weekly brief lecture (about 45-60 minutes) and a subsequent 60-75 minutes seminar, which includes discussions that are based on students’ discussion papers, responding to the weekly readings. Students are expected to have done the core readings from the reading list (usually three journal articles or book chapters) in preparation for the seminar, to write a short critical response paper on three different occasions, and to take part in discussion.
PROFESSIONALISM

My hope is that our classroom can be a learning community. That requires students to be willing to venture ideas and offer differing perspectives and be treated with respect. Let us make sure to critique ideas rather than the people offering them. I also hope to create an atmosphere where all of us can be candid and intellectually open. On the off chance that you might be tempted to, say, blog about something your classmates wrote or your professor said, please don’t. This is doubly true for guest speakers.

WRITING

The academic field of International Relations and the practice of international affairs both require expert analytical skills, as well as exceptional writing skills. This seminar is designed to help you improve your ability to write in both a scholarly and an applied fashion. This seminar, however, is not a writing course. If you feel that you need more assistance with writing, it is highly recommended that you consider taking whilst at NYU the IR Program’s course “Expository Writing for International Relations”.

At the graduate level you are expected to know how to write an academic essay that conforms to best practice in the Anglo-American university system. Students are expected to seek out resources from the library to write their research paper and policy memos. Students are also expected to know how to properly reference a scholarly paper.

This course will teach you how to write a policy memo, but the course will not teach you how to write a scholarly essay. If you would like some pointers to improve your writing I suggest the following texts:


For assistance writing POLICY MEMOS you should visit the USC Libraries online resource, “Organizing your Social Science Research Paper: Writing a Policy Memo” available at: http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/policymemo

A good example of a policy memo written by a grad student can be found here: https://american.edu/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=2960663
A policy memo is a short paper written for government officials (as well as in the private sector, NGOs, IOs etc) intended to present a senior policy maker with an overview of a current challenge, selected paths of actions and then a recommended policy. Generally, a brief offers THREE options. These should be three REALISTIC outcomes – not a sandwich brief, which is one good option stuck between two unpalatable outcomes. These documents should be written in crisp, succinct prose. The writer should avoid excessive language. These documents must get to the point quickly and they cannot be longer than three single spaced pages, approximately 1,500 words. Policy makers generally won’t read longer documents. In real life, a brief does not include a bibliography. For this class you MUST include a list of works consulted, although you should not footnote/cite in the brief as you would in an academic paper. Examples of good policy briefs will be posted on NYU classes.

**Assessment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Max Words</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy Brief 1</td>
<td>FORMATIVE</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>28 October 2016, 5PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Brief 2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>9 December 2016, 5PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>11 November 2016, 5PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>50% +/- 10%</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>20 December 2016, 5PM</td>
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All papers are to be submitted via email by the DATE and TIME above. Documents should be submitted in MSWORD. Email papers to: mjwilliams@nyu.edu

All work must be original work. **Plagiarism** – plagiarism is copying someone else’s work and portraying it as your own without properly referencing it (i.e. not citing it). Plagiarism can be done purposefully or accidentally – either way it is still plagiarism. Plagiarism will be dealt with according to University Regulations. This is a severe offense – not to be taken lightly. **Plagiarism can result in the termination of the MA degree studies and expulsion from the university.**

**ESSAYS:** There will be one research essay for this course. You are expected to write approximately 5,000 words in an academic research standard from one of selected guide questions. This paper should be footnoted and contain a comprehensive bibliography. Papers that are not formatted properly will have marks deducted. The bibliography is NOT optional. Essay questions will be supplied to you during the term.

The assessment in this course is based on your ability to apply theories and cases to advance an argument in a cogent, logical manner befitting a superior university education. Simply regurgitating facts onto the paper does not satisfy this requirement. You are expected to develop your own argument to support it with theories and evidence, as well as to critique others for their shortcomings. The best examples of this type of writing can be
found in a variety of academic journals such as *International Affairs*, *International Security*, *International Organization*, or *International Studies Quarterly*.

**There is no exam for this course.**

**GENERIC MARKING CRITERIA**

**For written work, the following criteria are relevant:**

**95-100% - Work displaying some or all of the following features, depending on the nature of the assignment or task:**

- Publishable quality
- Outstanding research potential
- Ability to plan, organise and execute independently a research project to the highest professional standards
- Exceptional degree of creativity, originality, and independence of thought
- Ability to make informed judgements, develop original insights, and construct productive hypotheses in the absence of complete data
- Highest professional standards of competence, expression and presentation (written, oral, visual)
- Ability to assemble information from different sources to produce exceptionally well-organised and original answers
- Ability to analyse data critically and formulate questions which lead to original lines of enquiry
- Ability to evaluate critically existing methodologies and suggest new approaches to current research or professional practice
- Flexibility of thought, and the ability to employ different approaches to the solution of highly complex and novel problems
- Ability to evaluate published or publicly-presented work critically and to the highest professional standards
- Penetrating analysis of primary sources of literature and information
- An exceptionally high level of understanding of current research techniques and how they can be applied most effectively to investigate challenging new problems
- Outstanding levels of accuracy and technical competence

**90-95% - Work displaying some or all of the following features, depending on the nature of the assignment or task:**

- Excellent research potential
- Ability to plan, organise and execute independently a research project to a very high professional standard
- Very high professional standards of competence, expression and presentation (written, oral, visual)
- High degree of creativity, originality and independence of thought
- Ability to assemble information from different sources to produce very well-organised and original answers
- Ability to analyse data critically and formulate questions which may lead to
productive lines of enquiry
- Flexibility of thought, and the ability to employ different approaches to the solution of complex and novel problems
- Ability to evaluate published or publicly-presented work critically and to a high professional standard
- Ability to analyse primary sources of literature and information critically
- Very high levels of accuracy and technical competence

84-90% - Work displaying some or all of the following features, depending on the nature of the assignment or task:
- Very good professional standard of competence, expression and presentation (written, oral, visual)
- Clear evidence of the potential to undertake original research given appropriate guidance and support
- Evidence of some creativity, originality and independence of thought
- Ability to assemble information from different sources to produce well-organised and insightful answers
- Ability to analyse data critically
- Flexibility of thought, and the ability to solve complex, though not entirely original problems
- Some ability to evaluate published or publicly-presented work
- Some ability critically to analyse primary sources of literature and information
- Good degree of accuracy and technical competence

75-84% - Work displaying some or all of the following features, depending on the nature of the assignment or task:
- Sound knowledge and understanding of the relevant literature and other key sources of information
- Ability to produce satisfactory answers to problems and questions
- Ability to construct coherent and relevant answer to questions, though with few signs of originality
- A competent professional standard of organisation and expression
- Ability to engage in research involving a moderate degree of originality, when provided with close supervision and support
- Satisfactory degree of competence and technical accuracy

70-75% - Work displaying some or all of the following features, depending on the nature of the assignment or task:
- Basic knowledge and understanding of some of the essential literature and other key sources of information, but answers are either incomplete or not entirely coherent
- Shows some grasp of the problem or topic but lacks clarity in written or oral presentation
- Little evidence of independent thought
- Little or no evidence of originality in answers
- Work which is just below an acceptable basic professional standard

60-70% - Work displaying some or all of the following features, depending on the nature of the assignment or task:
• Fragmentary knowledge and understanding of the essential literature and other key sources of information, yielding answers which show only a limited degree of understanding
• Shows little grasp of the problem or topic, and lacks clarity in written or oral presentation
• Almost no evidence of independent or original thought
• Work that is clearly below an acceptable basic professional standard

**Below 60%** - Work displaying some or all of the following features, depending on the nature of the assignment or task:
• Almost entirely lacking in evidence of knowledge and understanding of the essential literature and other key sources of information, yielding answers which, at best, show only the most rudimentary understanding of the question
• Shows almost no insight into the problem or topic
• Confused and incoherent written or oral presentation
• Totally devoid of independent or original thought
• Work that is far below an acceptable basic professional standard
COURSE TEXTBOOK – available at the NYU BOOKSTORE, please purchase

KEY BIBLIOGRAPHY

*These additional books are useful for the study of international security. You are NOT required to purchase these books.*


de Goede, Marieke, and Louise Amoore (eds), *Risk and the War on Terror* (2008)


Relevant Journals:

Scholarly

*International Security*

*European Journal of International Security*

*Security Dialogue*

*Review of International Studies*
Cooperation and Conflict
European Journal of International Relations
International Political Sociology

Policy

Foreign Affairs (USA)
International Affairs (UK)
Survival (UK)
Berlin Policy Journal (GER)

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction to the Course, Establishment of Working Groups, Brief Introductory Discussion

Week 2: The Study of Security Before and During the Cold War

Course Textbook:


Further literature:

Early literature:


Cold War literature:


• Waltz and Art, *The Use of Force* (older editions, e.g. 1988)


On nuclear weapons:


The history of the Cold War:


If not familiar with International Relations Theory:

• Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory* (2011, or earlier editions).


Week 3: Transnational Security? The End of the Cold War and the Globalisation of Politics

Course Textbook:

• Paul D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), chapters 10, 12,

Further literature:
The process of globalisation:

Reviewing security studies:


Course Textbook:
• Paul D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), chapters 5, 6, 12

Further literature:

Textbooks:


General:


Securitization:


Constructivism:


Critical Theory:


**Week 5: Feminism, Postcolonialism, Poststructuralism**

*Course Textbook:*

• Paul D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), chapters 7, 8


**Further literature:**

*Textbooks:*


*Postcolonialism:*


*Feminism:*


• Cynthia Enloe, “Masculinity as a foreign policy issue’, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 5:36 (2000).


Poststructuralism and International Political Sociology:


**Week 6: Securing the Individual: Human Security**

**Course Textbook:**


Further literature:

General:
• Fen Osler Hampson, et al., Madness in the Multitude (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Critical perspectives:
Human rights:


Particular regions:


**Week 7: Collective Security Past and Present**

**Course Textbook:**

- Paul D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), chapters 13, 23, 24, 25,


**Further literature:**

**General:**
• Hurrell, Andrew, *On global order: power, values, and the constitution of international society*, Oxford, OUP, 2007, chapter 7: War, violence, and collective security (pp. 165-194)

**NATO:**

**The UN:**
Week 8: Securing the State: “Failed States” and Global Security

Course Textbook:


Further literature:

Primary literature:


Further secondary literature:

**Week 9: Irregular Warfare: Counter-Insurgency in the 21st Century**

*Course Textbook:*


*Further Literature:*

- The Small Wars Journal
  [http://smallwarsjournal.com/](http://smallwarsjournal.com/)

**Week 10: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism**

*Textbooks:*

- Paul D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2008), 15, 30


Further literature:

Further on terrorism:
• Craig Calhoun, Paul Price, and Ashley Timmer (eds), Understanding September 11 (New York: The New Press, 2002).
• Richard A. Clarke, Against all Enemies: inside America’s War on Terror (New York: Free Press, 2004)

Critical perspectives:
• Carol Stabile and Deepa Kumar, “Unveiling Imperialism: Media, Gender, and the War on Afghanistan,” Media, Culture, and Society 27.5 (2005), 765-82.
• Krista Hunt and Kim Rygiel (eds.), (En)gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflaged Politics (Ashgate, 2006), 27-50.
• Marieke de Goede and Louise Amoore (eds), Risk and the War on Terror (2008).

Week 11: Nuclear Weapons and the International Arms Trade
Textbooks:
• Paul D. Williams (ed.), Security Studies: An Introduction (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2013), chapters 27, 29

• Chapter out of Simon Dalby, Environmental Security (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002)
• Mark J. Lacy, “The World is a Laboratory” in his Security and Climate Change: International Relations and the Limits of Realism (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2005), 29-54.

Week 12: Securing the Globe: Environmental Degradation and Climate Change

• Chapter out of Simon Dalby, *Environmental Security* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002)


**Further literature:**

**Textbooks:**

• Chapter 18 (Environmental Change) in Paul D. Williams (ed.), *Security Studies: An Introduction* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2008).

**Environmental Degradation and Security:**


**Climate Change:**


**Week 13: New Fundamental Threats? Cyber-security**


Further literature:


