POLSCI 233: Nuclear Weapons
Spring 2019

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Course Description, Goals and Expectations
Are nuclear weapons a source of security or insecurity? How do they figure into the foreign policy of the United States? How do they figure into the foreign policy of other nuclear states? Non-nuclear states? This course will use readings, lectures and class discussion to consider the role that nuclear weapons have played, currently play and will play in international politics.

This course is designed to help establish a depth of knowledge related to the subject matter and to hone various skills. Much of the material will provide students with a rich foundation for understanding the history of nuclear proliferation, the evolution of U.S. nuclear strategy, theories of international politics, the international non-proliferation institutional infrastructure, and the particular details of the nuclear programs in places such as Iran, North Korea, Israel, India and Pakistan. Such knowledge will help students better engage the world around them, and it will serve as a resource from which students can draw in formulating their own perspectives on the issues and in better understanding international politics writ large.

In terms of skills, the course is designed to help students develop their critical thinking, as we will consider a number of policy debates that have emerged in the context of nuclear proliferation and nuclear strategy. Critical thinking is the bedrock for conducting excellent research and policy analysis, as well as for meaningful discourse with peers and experts alike. The course is also designed to specifically cultivate an ability to evaluate policy options and to communicate the strengths and weaknesses of alternative approaches. In this way, the course can help students prepare for careers as researchers (both academic and non-academic) or policy practitioners (both in the public and non-profit sectors).

Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the topics for each class, which will be a combination of lecture and guided discussion. Assignments include an in-class midterm exam, a case-study paper of a country with nuclear weapons, and a final exam.

Required Texts


All other texts are either available online via the library’s website or will be provided on the course’s Sakai site.
Grading

Participation: 5%

Students are expected to be active participants in the course discussion. Attendance will not be taken, but only those students who consistently attend lecture and participate will do well on this grade. Students who do not feel comfortable participating can submit questions to the professor in advance of the class meeting times. These questions are helpful and can be used to structure the discussion portions of the class. Students who cannot attend consecutive classes due to illness should submit a Short-Term Illness Notification Form (STINF). Students who miss an occasional class due to illness are welcome (but not required) to contact the professors to a) keep us informed and b) check to see if there were any important course details provided.

Midterm exam: 30%

On 3/6, students will take a midterm exam. The format of the exam will be short essay. The essay prompts will ask the students questions about key concepts and events related to nuclear proliferation. The exam will draw on both the readings and the lectures and ask the students to demonstrate a mastery of both the key core concepts and the important historical developments. Collaboration of any sort is not permitted on the midterm exam.

Case study essay: 30%

Students will complete an 11-13 page essay assessing the development of nuclear weapons in a country of their choosing. The theme of the essay is “Was it worth it?” Students will choose one country that has developed nuclear weapons besides the US and then research the circumstances in which it proliferated and how its nuclear arsenals have affected its security. The first section of the paper provides the history of the selected country’s nuclear weapons program. This section should be about 6-7 pages long (double spaced).

The second section (5-6 pages, double spaced) of the paper contains the student’s argument for whether the development of nuclear weapons was worth the investment and risks. Students will describe the country’s security environment since the development of nuclear weapons and make a case for whether or not the nuclear weapons improved the state’s security through relating specific examples and drawing heavily from the course concepts. Students should discuss both the positive benefits of the weapons and the negative consequences.

Throughout the paper, students will draw heavily from scholarly books and articles in presenting the historical information and the analysis of the current state of the country’s security. Students should strive to demonstrate a deep knowledge about the selected country, as well as a firm understanding of the course concepts and debates about the relationship between nuclear weapons and international security. All sources should be documented using in-text, author-date, references that are also reflected in a works cited page (not included in the page count). Students should choose a standard format (APA, Chicago, etc.) for the in-text citations and bibliography and be consistent with the chosen format. Students are welcome to talk about their papers with one another but should not share any of their copy (written text).

The complete final paper is due at the start of the final exam, on 4/29, via upload to Sakai. It is considered one day late after the start of the final exam. Late papers will lose two points (out of 16) for each day late.
**Final Exam: 35%**
The final exam will be a comprehensive and cumulative assessment of how well students have mastered the material in the course. The format will be similar to that of the midterm and of appropriate length to be completed during the final-exam period (4/29, 2-5pm).

**In-Class Assessment Extra Credit (up to 2%):**
Extra credit can be earned through performance on periodic, unannounced assessments that will be given at the start of class. In a sense these are pop quizzes, but they are only scored as extra credit. The assessments will cover the material in the reading that is due that day. They will be multiple choice and given via Sakai. Students will complete the assessments using laptops, the Sakai app on smart devices, or pen/paper. To calculate the amount of extra credit, the proportion of correct answers across the entire semester will be converted to a number between 0 and 2 based on the formula: % Extra Credit = 2 x (Proportion Correct^2).

**PSRP Extra Credit (up to 2%):**
Extra credit can be earned through participation in the political science experimental subject pool. Students will need to participate in 2 hours of Political Science Research Pool (PSRP) studies over the course of the semester to receive a 2% extra credit toward their final grade. Besides, students who participated in studies in the PSRP will be entered into a $50 Amazon gift card lottery. More information about this option is available at: https://sites.duke.edu/psrp/ If you wish to participate, you can register and eventually sign up for studies at: http://duke-psrp.sona-systems.com. If you choose to participate, studies will become available throughout the semester and you are encouraged to routinely check for new studies. The deadline for earning additional credits or changing your credit allocation (if you are participating in more than one course) is the last day of undergraduate classes: 11:59pm on April 24, 2019. Researchers will post your final credits by April 26, 2019 at 11:59pm.

**Grading Scale**
All assignments will be graded on a 16-point scale that is basically a 4-point scale stretched out to 16 points. These grades will not be assigned based on the docking of points, but on the comprehensive assessment of the strength of the material. Grading standards used in the assignment of these values are provided at the end of this syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>16-point scale</th>
<th>Scale in terms of percentage points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[15-16] -- A</td>
<td>[93.75-100] – A</td>
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<tr>
<td>[14-15] -- A-</td>
<td>[87.5-93.75] – A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>[10-11] -- B-</td>
<td>[62.5-68.75] – B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>[7-9] – C</td>
<td>[43.75-56.25] – C</td>
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<tr>
<td>[6-7] -- C-</td>
<td>[37.5-43.75] – C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[0-2] – F</td>
<td>[0-12.5] – F</td>
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**Absences and Accommodations**
No extensions will be given for the mid-term exam or for the final paper in all but the most exceptional of circumstances. Absences from a final exam must be approved by an academic dean. Students wrestling with a chronic illness or personal emergency of any sort are strongly encouraged to be in touch with an academic dean, and/or with the Student Disability Access Office as appropriate.

Accommodations will only be considered for those students registered with the Student Disability Access Office and who inform the instructor at least two weeks in advance of when the accommodation is needed.

Duke Community Standard
Students are expected to strictly adhere to the Duke Community Standard in all of their work and participation, and violations will be enforced. Students are welcome to talk about their final papers with one another but should not share any of their copy (written text) and certainly should not use any verbiage provided by fellow classmates or anyone else without attribution.

Schedule

1/9: Course Introduction and Nuclear Threats
   Irwin Redlener TED talk

1/14: Science of nuclear fission and fusion
   Reading: http://www.atomicarchive.com/sciencemenu.shtml (Explore the content in the “Atomic Physics,” “Nuclear Fission,” “Nuclear Fusion,” and “Effects of Nuclear Weapons” modules.)

1/16: History of nuclear proliferation

1/23: No Class
   https://www.understandingwarandpeace.com/ (purchase the e-book chapter)

   Watch at least one of these movies (recommended):
   Dr. Strangelove
   War Games
   Sum of All Fears

1/28: History of Non-proliferation and arms control

1/30: Nuclear weapons as a source of stability
Reading: Sagan and Waltz Chs.1 & 2

2/4: Nuclear weapons as a source of instability
Reading: Sagan and Waltz Chs. 3 & 4

2/6: MAD, brinkmanship, and extended deterrence: Nuclear weapons and foreign-policy leverage

2/11: Nuclear weapons and US foreign policy from Truman to Kennedy

2/13: The Berlin Crisis

2/18: The Cuban Missile Crisis

2/20: Nuclear weapons and US foreign policy from Johnson to Carter

2/25: Nuclear weapons and US foreign policy under Reagan

2/27: Nuclear weapons and US foreign policy from Bush I to Obama


3/4: Nuclear weapons and current US foreign policy

3/6: Midterm Exam

3/18: Missile defense and its critics
Reading: https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/usmissiledefense
3/20: Nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula
   Diplomacy without denuclearization: North Korea in 2018.

3/25: Nuclear weapons and a resurgent Russia
   “Russia is poised to add a new hypersonic nuclear-capable glider to its arsenal.” Washington Post. (26 December 2018).

3/27: Nuclear weapons and China-US Relations

4/1: Nuclear weapons in South Asia
   Reading: Sagan and Waltz Ch. 5

4/3: Nuclear weapons in the Middle East
   Reading: Sagan and Waltz Ch. 6

4/8: Nuclear program in Iran

4/10: Nuclear terrorism

4/15: Nuclear alarmism and Global zero

   Sagan and Waltz Ch. 7
4/17: Potential proliferation looking forward


4/22: Nuclear taboo and restraint


4/24: Evaluating grand strategy

4/29 (Monday), 2-5pm: Final Exam (also, final paper due)

**Grading Standards**
The following standards will be applied to the evaluation of assignments in the class.

A Exceptional Performance.

Consistently outstanding work on all course-related tasks at a level that distinguishes the student from other members of the class. A comprehensive and incisive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A frequently demonstrated exceptional capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. The ability to master and integrate large amounts of factual material and abstract theories. An outstanding ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

A- Excellent Performance.

Consistently strong work on all course-related tasks. A comprehensive command of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A clearly demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands well and can integrate the relevant factual and theoretical material central to the course. A strong ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B+ Very Good Performance.

Consistently above average work on all course-related tasks. A very good grasp of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A generally demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical, and logical thinking. A very good command of factual and theoretical material, and some capacity to integrate the two. A solid ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B Good Performance.
Good and generally consistent work on all course-related tasks. A general understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Modest evidence of the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. A good understanding of factual and theoretical material, but limited evidence of the capacity to integrate the two. A basic ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

B-  Satisfactory Performance

Satisfactory work on course-related tasks. A reasonable understanding of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. An infrequently demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. Understands at a basic level the facts and theories related to the course, but demonstrates weak integration skills. A limited or inconsistent ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

C+/C/C-  Adequate Performance

Adequate performance on course-related tasks. An understanding of the basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A rarely demonstrated capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking. An inability to go beyond a recitation of basic factual material related to the class. Demonstrated weaknesses in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

D/D+  Minimal Passing Performance.

Barely acceptable work on course-related tasks. A generally superficial and often inconsistent familiarity with the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. A failure to demonstrate the capacity for original, creative, critical and logical thinking related to course content. An uneven understanding of basic factual material related to the course; no evidence of fact/theory integration. Demonstrates significant gaps in the ability to discuss effectively course subject matter using both written and oral communication skills.

F  Unacceptable Performance

Fails to meet minimum course expectations. Unable to understand even the most basic elements of the issues, literature, and substantive information relevant to the course. Demonstrates an inability to engage in coherent written or oral discussion of course material. Does not satisfy specific course expectations with respect to attendance, deadlines, participation, etc.