

POLS 489
Special Topics: Simulations in Nuclear Politics
Spring 2016

Class Meeting Room and Time
Allen 1005
Tuesday/Thursday, 10:20am – 11:35am

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Course Overview

In this course, students will learn about nuclear politics and participate in simulations of real-world diplomatic negotiations and crises. Working in groups, the students will represent key countries or other international actors in simulated international events including: (1) the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference; (2) a United Nations Security Council meeting; and (3) a hypothetical nuclear crisis between India and Pakistan.

We will begin the semester with a series of lectures to provide the students with the requisite theoretical and practical foundations, but they will spend the majority of the semester learning through hands-on experiences. The proposed course is innovative in the sense that it will facilitate learning objectives through student involvement in simulations, and not just professor-driven lectures. Many have argued – and some empirical evidence shows – that this kind of “active learning” approach effectively stimulates critical thinking, in part, by helping students apply seemingly abstract theories and concepts to actual situations.

Learning Objectives

The broad objectives of the class are to disseminate knowledge on a central issue in international security – the spread of nuclear weapons – and to facilitate interest in this important topic. More specifically, by the end of the course, students will:

- Understand the technical dimensions of nuclear proliferation, including how nuclear bombs are made.
- Have an appreciation for different theories on why some countries build nuclear weapons but others do not.

- Comprehend why the spread of nuclear weapons is widely viewed as dangerous, and understand the key debates about the political effects of nuclear proliferation.
- Understand the policy tools that governments and international organizations have in place to limit the diffusion of nuclear weapons.
- Be able to critically assess the most significant contemporary nuclear challenges, including (but not limited to) the crises in Iran and North Korea.
- Have detailed knowledge on the nuclear policies of several different countries.
- Appreciate how diplomacy works in the real world.
- Understand the strengths and limitations of international organizations such as the United Nations.

Course Policies

Meeting Outside of Scheduled Class Time: This course will require you to give briefings and participate in meetings outside of the normally scheduled class time. You will be able to schedule the time of these meetings based on your availability.

Academic Honesty: Students must adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Those who fail to do so will face the greatest possible penalty. “An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.” See <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>. Those who violate this code will face the harshest possible penalty under university policy.

Common Courtesies: I expect that you will be attentive and engaged. Students should turn off cell phones and other electronic devices prior to class. The use of text messaging or other forms of electronic communication is not permitted during class time.

Disability Services: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal statute that provides civil rights protection to persons with disabilities. The ADA requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that accommodates their disabilities, among other things. Students who believe that they have a disability that requires accommodation should contact Disability Services in Cain Hall, Room B118 or call 845-1637. See <http://disability.tamu.edu> for additional information.

Required Books and Readings

You will read from several books and articles throughout the semester. All of the relevant readings will be placed in eCampus.

News. Keeping-up with current events is important to succeeding in this class. Events affecting international relations that unfold during the semester may be covered on the midterm and final exams. Students are expected to read at least one newspaper daily. I recommend the New York Times (www.nytimes.com), but there are many suitable outlets that one may consult.

Course Grades

Students will take two exams and complete three 5-page papers during the course of the semester. They are expected to come to class prepared and participate actively in course discussions and simulations. Grades will be determined based on the following distribution:

Exams 1 (25%). This will be an in-class exam based on Part I of the course.

Exam 2 (30%). This exam will be based on the three simulations. It will be an in depth take-home exam that will be due on the day of the scheduled final exam for the course.

Papers (10% each). The 5-page (double spaced) papers will be completed *before* each simulation.

Performance in Simulations (5% each). This will be based on:

- Your physical presence in class, based on responses via your iClicker. You will be counted as absent if you fail to click-in our appropriately register your clicker.
- The *quality* of your participation during the simulation, based on your prepared statements and ability to respond to questions.

Course Outline

1. Tuesday, January 19 – Introduction
2. Thursday, January 21 – Building Blocks 1
3. Tuesday, January 26 – Building Blocks 2
4. Thursday, January 28 – Building Blocks 3
5. Tuesday, February 2 – Building Blocks 4
6. Thursday, February 4 – Building Blocks 5
7. Tuesday, February 9 – Building Blocks 6
8. Thursday, February 11 – Building Blocks 7
9. Tuesday, February 16 – Building Blocks 8
10. Thursday, February 18 – Building Blocks 9
11. Tuesday, February 23 – Building Blocks 10
12. Thursday, February 25 – Exam #1
13. Tuesday, March 1 – Simulation #1
14. Thursday, March 3 – Simulation #1 – **Paper #1 due**
15. Tuesday, March 8 – Simulation #1
16. Thursday, March 10 – Simulation #1
- Spring Break: March 14-18**
17. Tuesday, March 22 – Simulation #1
18. Thursday, March 24 – Simulation #2
19. Tuesday, March 29 – Simulation #2 – **Paper #2 due**
20. Thursday, March 31 – Simulation #2
21. Tuesday, April 5 – Simulation #2
22. Thursday, April 7 – Simulation #2
23. Tuesday, April 12 – Simulation #3
24. Thursday, April 14 – Simulation #3 – **Paper #3 due**
25. Tuesday, April 19 – Simulation #3

- 26. Thursday, April 21 – Simulation #3
 - 27. Tuesday, April 26 – Simulation #3
 - 28. Thursday, April 28 – Simulation #3
- Exam #2 due: May 5 at 12:30pm**

Detailed Course Schedule and Readings

Part I: Building Blocks

1. What are nuclear weapons? (2 classes)
Reading:
 - Charles D. Ferguson, *Nuclear Energy: What Everyone Needs to Know* (2011), Chapters 1 and 4.

2. Why do countries build nuclear weapons (3 classes)
Reading:
 - Scott D. Sagan, "Why Do Countries Build Nuclear Weapons: Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security* (1996/97)
 - Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics: Contrasting Paths in East Asia and the Middle East* (2007), Chapters 1 and 2
 - Jacques Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation* (2006), Chapters 1 and 2.
 - William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, eds., *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century: A Comparative Perspective* (2010), Chapters 1, 3, and 5.

3. The political and military value of "the bomb" (1 class)
Reading:
 - Sechser and Fuhrmann, *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy*, chapters 1 and 2.

4. Nuclear crisis decision-making (2 classes)
Reading:
 - Sechser and Fuhrmann, *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy*, chapters 5 and 6.

5. Nuclear proliferation: dangerous or innocuous? (2 classes)
Reading:
 - Sechser and Fuhrmann, *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy*, chapter 7.

Exam #1 will take place after the last lecture on "building blocks."

Part II: Simulation #1 – U.S. National Security Council (NSC)

Pre-Simulation Reading:

- Shawn Brimley et. al, *Enabling Decision: Shaping the NSC for the Next President* (2015): http://www.cnas.org/sites/default/files/publications-pdf/CNAS%20Report_NSC%20Reform_Final.pdf
- P.R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Stephen Cohen, *Four Crises and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia* (2007), Chapters 1, and 5-7.

Simulation overview: It's July 15, 2016. Without warning, Pakistan moves forces across the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. India responds by attacking Pakistani troops, and pushes them back towards the LoC. Pakistan appears to be on the verge of a crushing defeat. As events seem to be spiraling out of control, Pakistan alerts its nuclear forces and threatens to launch nuclear attacks against Indian forces if they continue to advance. Back in Washington, the president convenes the National Security Council to consider how to diffuse the situation.

1. Background briefing (1 class)

Paper #1 due prior to the start of the simulation.

2. The simulation: Nuclear instability in South Asia (4 classes)
 - a. Each member of the NSC (played by groups of students) gives a prepared statement to the president (played by Prof. Fuhrmann).
 - b. The NSC deliberates.
 - c. Each member of the NSC gives a final recommendation to the president.

Part III: Simulation #2 – UN Security Council

Pre-Simulation Reading:

- CFR, "UN Security Council," <http://www.cfr.org/international-organizations-and-alliances/un-security-council-unsc/p31649>.
- William C. Potter and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, eds., *Forecasting Nuclear Proliferation in the 21st Century: A Comparative Perspective* (2010), Chapter 7.

Simulation overview: It's August 20, 2016. Chinese intelligence produces a startling revelation: South Korea has a secret nuclear weapons program. It appears that Seoul may be on the cusp of carrying out a surprise nuclear test. The UN Security Council meets to decide whether to pass a resolution condemning, and possibly sanctioning, South Korea.

1. Background briefing (1 class)

Paper #2 due prior to the start of the simulation.

2. The simulation: UN action against South Korea (4 classes).

- a. The P-5 countries (US, UK, Russia, China, and France) give opening statements.
- b. Deliberation continues.
- c. The UNSC votes on a resolution.

Part IV: Simulation #4 – The NPT Review Conference

Pre-Simulation Reading:

--Read information on the 2015 NPT Review Conference here:

<http://www.un.org/en/conf/npt/2015/>.

--Make sure you have carefully read the full text of the NPT (available at the link above).

Simulation overview: It's April 18, 2020. Delegates from all 190-member nations convene in New York for the 5-year review conference of the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The goal is to pass a resolution that outlines future nonproliferation goals.

1. Background briefing (1 class)

Paper #3 due prior to the start of the simulation.

2. Simulation: NPT review conference (5 classes)
 - a. Each country (played by a group of students) issues an opening statement.
 - b. Delegates deliberate.
 - c. Delegates negotiate and draft language for the resolution.
 - d. Delegates vote on the final resolution.