Nuclear Weapons in World Politics
GOVT-270

Spring 2020
Monday/Wednesday, 5:00-6:15pm
Intercultural Center 107

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Course Objectives
This course has three objectives. First, the course provides an introduction to the major theories and issue areas related to the causes and consequences of nuclear weapons in international politics. We begin by reviewing major theories of international relations. Then, we engage scholarly questions related to nuclear weapons: Why do nuclear weapons spread? Why do countries try to stop nuclear proliferation? Do nuclear weapons deter conflict? How much is enough for deterrence? What are the broader ramifications of nuclear weapons on international politics?

Second, the class provides a history of nuclear weapons in international politics. This history will be interwoven through the topical lectures to detail the development of nuclear issues over time. Not only is this history intrinsically important, but it also provides empirical evidence with which to evaluate the validity of different theoretical approaches and as a basis for policy analysis.

Finally, this class evaluates the most important contemporary policy debates, including those related to: the nonproliferation regime; arms control; disarmament; nuclear strategy; and nuclear-armed powers, including Russia, China, and North Korea; and potential proliferant states, such as Iran.
**Course Requirements:**
Attendance is mandatory. Assigned readings must be completed before class. Active participation in discussion at the end of lectures is expected. Laptops are permitted, but accessing the internet is prohibited and will be punished. The grading proportions are as follows: midterm exam (30 percent); attendance and participation (10 percent); final exam (30 percent); term paper (30 percent). Plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty will result in failing the course and referral to the Georgetown Honor Council. All readings are available on Blackboard.

**Readings**

Required readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned. The exams and essay will require you to have a strong comprehension of the material covered in both the readings and the lectures. In addition to the books and articles below, you should read the international affairs section of a major national newspaper, such as the *New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*, on a daily basis. You might also consider reading the *Economist*, which is generally considered the best weekly news magazine available. Lectures will often include references to contemporary events, so it is critical that you are aware of important developments in international affairs.

The following required texts are available on Amazon or your local bookstore.


All readings for this class are available in the assigned texts or online.

**Essay Assignment**
Students will have a choice between writing a short essay and participating in an in-class debate. The essay is due in hard copy on April 1. The essays should be ~ 2,000 words in length. More details on these assignment will be distributed in class.

**Late Essays**

Deadlines are strict. No extensions will be granted in the absence of a genuine emergency or documented illness. Predictable events, such as a heavy workload or extracurricular activities, are not grounds for an extension. All appeals for extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade for each day they are late.

**Plagiarism**
Plagiarism or other acts of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. As defined by the Georgetown University Honor Council, plagiarism is “the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another.”

**Introduction**
January 8  
Introduction

**Nuclear Physics 101**
January 13  
How to Make Nuclear Weapons


January 15  
Nuclear Weapon Effects

The Atomic Archive, “The Effects of Nuclear Weapons,” pp. 1-24, available online at  

January 20  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 22  
Nuclear Arsenals around the World

Joseph Cirincione, Jon Wolfstahl, and Miriam Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenals*. Skim chapters 6-14, available at:  

**Theories and Issue Areas**
January 27  
The Nuclear Revolution and Nuclear Deterrence


January 29  
Nuclear Strategy and Warfighting


February 3  
Nuclear Compellence and Crisis Outcomes

Matthew Kroenig, *The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy*, Introduction, and Ch. 1, 3, 4, and 5

February 5  
Extended Deterrence and Assurance

Matthew Kroenig, *The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy*, Introduction, and Ch. 1, 3, 4, and 5
February 10  Strategic Stability
Kroenig, Chapter 6

February 12  Arms Control & Arms Races
Schelling, Chapter 7
Kroenig, The Logic, Chapter 7
The New START Treaty. Available online

February 17  President’s Day. (Class will be held on Tuesday)

February 18  Nuclear Proliferation
Kroenig, Chapter 8

February 19  Nonproliferation
The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons, available at
https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/text

February 24  Counterproliferation
Matthew Kroenig, “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike is the Least Bad Option,” Foreign Affairs
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2012-01-01/time-attack-iran

February 26  The Nuclear Budget
Kroenig, Chapter 9

March 2  Abolition and Global Zero
https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB116787515251566636

https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111903554904576464571545999158
March 4  Midterm Examination

March 9, 11  Spring Break

Country Studies
March 16  US Nuclear Posture

March 18  Europe & Russia

March 23  India and Pakistan


March 25  The Middle East

March 30  China

April 1  Paper Due
April 6       Nuclear Terrorism

April 8       Guest Lecture # 1

April 13      Easter Break

April 15      Guest Lecture # 2

April 20      Simulation, Day 1

April 22      Simulation, Day 2

April 27      Conclusion: The Future of Nuclear Weapons/ Paper Due in Class

May 6        Final Exam. 4-6PM