INTS 2703: Nuclear Weapons and International Security

Fall 2018

Sié Complex 2115

Monday, Wednesday: 10-11:50am

Faculty Instructor: Assistant Professor Julia Macdonald
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Office Hours: Mondays 1-3pm. Sign up at https://juliamacdonald.youcanbook.me/
Teaching Assistant: Sooyeon Kang
Contact Information: Sooyeon.Kang@du.edu

Course Description

This course analyzes the role of nuclear weapons in international politics. The course addresses the origins of the atomic bomb project, early efforts to control nuclear materials, deterrence theory, nuclear strategy and force posture, and considers contemporary challenges to the global nuclear order, including nuclear latency and nuclear terrorism.

The course will start with the initial development and use of nuclear weapons, followed by an in-depth look at the early thinking on nuclear strategy and escalation during the Cold War. These classes will cover the Manhattan Project, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the basics of deterrence theory, the arms race between the United States and Soviet Union, and historical cases of nuclear crises and brinksmanship.

During weeks 5-7 students will explore the politics of nuclear acquisition, evaluating different explanations for why states build nuclear weapons. During these classes, we will also examine the ways in which the international community has sought to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, including the important role of international institutions, norms, and the nuclear disarmament movement.

The final section of the course will be devoted to contemporary topics in nuclear politics, including the threat of nuclear terrorism, nuclear energy and dual-use issues, regional instability in Northeast and South Asia, the Iran nuclear deal, and the implication of new technologies (autonomous systems, 3D printing, precision weapons) for international security.

Each week will include a lecture covering key insights from the readings, student-led discussion and class exercises. A number of expert guest speakers will be featured throughout the quarter.

Learning Objectives

The objective of the class is to help students understand how the rise and spread of nuclear weapons has changed the face of international politics.

By the end of the quarter, each student will:

1) Have improved their understanding of international nuclear history;
2) Understand why some countries have sought nuclear weapons while others have not;
3) Understand the key debates surrounding the political effects of nuclear proliferation;
4) Be aware of the policy tools that governments and international organizations have created and used to limit the spread of nuclear weapons;
5) Be able to assess the most significant contemporary nuclear challenges;
6) And have improved their written and verbal analytical reasoning skills.

Course Requirements

- **Class Participation and Attendance (15%)**. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and material from lectures, and ready to participate in all activities. Quality of participation, rather than quantity, counts.
- **Discussion Leading (15%)** During the first week of class, students will sign up to join a discussion group for a designated week of the quarter. These discussion groups will meet ahead of their assigned class to answer three questions about the week’s readings: 1) What are the most important themes from the week’s readings? 2) Which arguments did you find most convincing and why? Which did you find the least compelling? 3) What questions did the readings raise that you felt were left unanswered? During the second half of the assigned class, the group will be called upon to give a 10-15 minute presentation of their thoughts. This presentation should not simply be a summary of the readings, but rather a thoughtful reflection on the topics raised.
- **Midterm Policy Paper (25%)**. Each student will write a 5-7 page policy paper which showcases their comprehension of material from the first half of the course. The paper topic will be distributed in Week 5 and is due at the beginning of Week 6. Detailed guidelines will be provided early in the semester.
- **Final Take Home Exam (45%)**. A final take home exam will be distributed after class on November 14 and due by 5pm on November 19. The exam will feature one essay question based on the class material, and answers should not exceed 10 pages. More detail on the final exam will be provided throughout the quarter.

Note: All written work should be uploaded in Canvas by the date and time specified. Papers and final exams should be double spaced, in 12-point font, with standard margins. Citations should follow the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines which are available online.

**Required Texts and Readings**

Course readings will be placed on reserve at the library or be available via Canvas. For those who wish to purchase copies of assigned books, most editions are acceptable for this class.

**Expectations and Etiquette**

In general, each class will open with a short 5-10-minute session where students will have an opportunity to ask questions or discuss contemporary events as they relate to course themes. This discussion will be followed by a 50-minute lecture and then a 5-minute break. The second half of the class will involve a discussion of the week’s readings, student presentations, and interactive activities based on that week’s themes.

There are no course prerequisites but students are expected to stay informed of current events through major news outlets such as the *New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*. In addition to
following current events, there are a number of policy outlets that regularly publish on international security issues including *Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, The National Interest,* and *War on the Rocks.*

Passive learning is not an option in this class. Not only is class participation a formal part of each student’s grade, but it is necessary for everyone to get the most out this course. As such, I expect everyone to do the reading ahead of class and to come prepared to discuss the assigned material.

Finally, the classroom is a place to express intellectual curiosity and to explore ideas as they relate to the world around us – it is meant to be a safe place for everyone. To protect this environment, I will not tolerate any form of bigotry, discrimination, hateful rhetoric, or hateful action.

**Cell Phone and Computer Policy**

Cell phones should be placed out of sight for the duration of the class. Students are allowed to use laptops and tablets for note-taking *only.* It is very obvious when students are distracted by other activities, and if students are caught abusing this privilege they will lose the ability to use their devices in class.

**Honor Code**

All students are expected to abide by the [University of Denver Honor Code](#). These expectations include the application of academic integrity and honesty in your class participation and assignments.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability/medical issue protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and need to request accommodation, please visit the Disability Services Program [website](#) or visit the offices on the 4th floor of Ruffatto Hall, 1999 Evans Ave., Denver, CO.

**Additional Information**

The University of Denver provides numerous services to students to help improve writing, quantitative skills, and professional development. The Writing Center can be an invaluable resource for students who need help in this area. Please see the Writing Center’s [website](#) for more information.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Introduction &amp; The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb</td>
<td>Week of September 10</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Effects of Nuclear Weapons on Conflict</td>
<td>Week of September 17</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Nuclear Arms Races &amp; Cold War Crises</td>
<td>Week of September 24</td>
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<td>Nuclear Force Development and Posture</td>
<td>Week of October 1</td>
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<td><strong>4.</strong></td>
<td>Nuclear Force Development and Posture</td>
<td>Week of October 1</td>
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<td><strong>Part II: Nuclear Proliferation and Non-Proliferation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>5.</strong></td>
<td>Nuclear Motives</td>
<td>Week of October 8</td>
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<td><em>Policy Paper Topic Distributed</em></td>
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<td><strong>6.</strong></td>
<td>Nuclear Non-Proliferation: Institutions, Coercion, and Preventive Force</td>
<td>Week of October 15</td>
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<td><em>Policy Paper Due</em></td>
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<td><strong>7.</strong></td>
<td>Nuclear Non-Use and the Drive for Global Zero</td>
<td>Week of October 22</td>
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<td><strong>Part III: Contemporary Issues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>8.</strong></td>
<td>Nuclear Latency, Dual-Use Issues, and New Technologies</td>
<td>Week of October 29</td>
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<td><strong>9.</strong></td>
<td>New Nuclear Threats: State and Non-State Actors</td>
<td>Week of November 5</td>
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<td><strong>10.</strong></td>
<td>The New Nuclear Revolution: Rethinking Conventional Wisdoms</td>
<td>Week of November 12</td>
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<td><em>Final Exam Distributed</em></td>
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**Course Readings**

Academic articles and book chapters are available on Canvas under the modules tab. Books have also been placed on reserve at the library. Op-eds and policy papers can be found online. Please let Sooyeon know if you have trouble locating any of the week’s assigned readings.

**Part I: The Early Years**

**Week 1: Introduction & The Decision to Build and Use the Atomic Bomb**

**Sept 10: Introduction**


**Sept 12: The Decision to Build and Use the Atomic Bomb**


*Optional further reading:*


Primary documents regarding the decision to use the bomb are available at the National Security Archives: https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB162/

For more on the scholarly debate regarding the decision to use the bomb, see http://www.doug-long.com/debate.htm

**Week 2: Effects of Nuclear Weapons on Conflict**

**Sept 17: The Nuclear Revolution**

**GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Mark Bell, University of Minnesota**


*Optional further reading:*


**Sept 19: Criticisms of the Nuclear Revolution**


**Week 3: Nuclear Arms Races and Cold War Crises**

**Sept 24: Nuclear Weapons during the Cold War**


*Optional further reading:*


**Sept 26: Cold War Crises**


*Optional further reading:*


**Week 4: Nuclear Force Development and Posture**

**Oct 1: United States and the Soviet Union**

**GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Frank Gavin, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University**


Optional further reading:


**Oct 3: Extended Deterrence and Regional Nuclear Powers**


Optional further reading:


**Week 5: Nuclear Motives**

**Oct 8: Nuclear Proliferation: Demand and Supply**


Optional further reading:


Oct 10: Nuclear Restraint and Nuclear Reversal


Optional further reading:


Note: Policy Paper Topic Distributed After Class

Week 6: Nuclear Non-Proliferation – Institutes, Coercion, and Preventive Force

Oct 15: The NPT and Arms Control

GUEST SPEAKER: Rebecca Hersman, Director, Project on Nuclear Issues, CSIS

“Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”
https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/


Optional further reading:


Note: Policy Paper Due

Oct 17: Coercion and Preventive Force

Nicholas Miller, “U.S. Non-Proliferation Policy is an Invisible Success Story,” Washington Post Monkey Cage blog, October 16, 2014 (available online).


Optional further reading:

**Week 7: Nuclear Non-Use and the Drive for Global Zero**

**Oct 22: Nuclear Norms: Taboos and Nuclear Acceptance**

**GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Nina Tannenwald, Brown University**


*Optional further reading:*

Carol Cohn, “The Perils of Mixing Masculinity and Missiles,” *New York Times*, January 5, 2018 (pdf. in Files > Additional Readings on Canvas)


**Oct 24: The Drive for Global Zero**


*Optional further reading:*

Week 8: Nuclear Latency & Dual-Use Issues

Oct 29: Nuclear Latency

GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Tristan Volpe, Naval Postgraduate School


Optional further reading:


Oct 31: New Technologies and Dual Use Issues


Optional further reading:


Week 9: New Nuclear Threats: State and Non-State Actors

Nov 5: NSAs: Terrorism and Illicit Networks


*Optional further reading:*


**Nov 7: New State Threats**

**GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. Colin Kahl, Stanford University**

*Iran:*


*North Korea:*


**Week 10: The New Nuclear Revolution: Rethinking Conventional Wisdoms and Future Threats**

**Nov 12: Reconsidering Old Debates**

Olga Oliker, “Moscow’s Nuclear Enigma: What Is Russia’s Arsenal Really For?” *Foreign Affairs* 97, 6 (November/December 2018). Pdf. in Files > Additional Reading on Canvas.

*Optional further reading:*


**Nov 14: Looking to the Future**


*Optional further reading:*


*Note: Final Exam Distributed After Class*