Government 391: The Politics of Nuclear Weapons
Spring 2018

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Office: Tyler 348
Office hours: Tuesdays, 9:30am–11:30am, or by appointment

Course Description
Heated rhetoric with North Korea, an international standoff with Iran, border skirmishes between India and Pakistan, and the US invasion of Iraq—nuclear weapons are important drivers of these and other international crises. This course will introduce students to nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons strategy, with an emphasis on the policy debates surrounding nonproliferation, nuclear security, and nuclear deterrence. Students will learn the fundamentals of nuclear weapons technology, why countries seek nuclear weapons, the risks nuclear forces pose to international security, and the tools policymakers deploy to prevent their proliferation or use. A variety of guest speakers from government and academia will help us examine the complex menu of policy options that face real-world nuclear decision-makers and national leaders.

Objectives
This course has two broad goals. First, the course aims to introduce you to academic scholarship and policy analysis associated with the role of nuclear weapon in international politics. Second, the course will expose you to a variety of perspectives on nuclear issues—and career paths in international security—including from academics, researchers at think tanks, and policymakers in government.

When you complete this course, you will be an educated consumer of world events related to nuclear weapons. You will be able to:

- Apply theories of nuclear proliferation and nuclear coercion to real-world cases.
- Critically evaluate policies and public statements on nuclear nonproliferation and deterrence that you encounter in the popular press.
- Understand the different roles of various intelligence and policy agencies in the field of nuclear weapons, and the distinct perspectives of researchers in and out of government.

Soviet sketch of US atomic bomb, 1946.
Source: Alex Wellerstein, Restricted Data blog.
Class format
This course is structured around a series of guest lectures delivered by policy practitioners, researchers, and academics. Most weeks, we will meet in a smaller discussion section on Tuesday and hear from a guest speaker in a larger session on Thursday (there are some exceptions—see the detailed course schedule later in the syllabus for details). The central role of guest lectures in this course means a certain amount of flexibility will be called for. I appreciate your understanding if speakers are delayed or must reschedule. The schedule of classes and readings on Blackboard will be updated to reflect any changes.

Requirements and Policies
I expect you to attend discussion sections and lectures, complete the readings before the class session for which they are assigned, participate in class discussion, and complete course assignments on time.

Attendance and participation
Because this class is structured around a series of guest lectures, attendance is absolutely essential to your learning in the course. **You must attend the guest lectures!** You will sign in at each lecture you attend. Please arrive to the guest lecture on time. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late or leave more than ten minutes early will not receive credit for attending. Each missed guest lecture will reduce the participation portion of your grade by one letter grade. Please come to the guest lectures prepared to engage with the speaker—listen respectfully, take notes, and ask thoughtful questions.

Discussion sections are designed to achieve learning goals that lectures cannot—helping you think through key concepts, understand alternative perspectives, and gain practice expressing your views to others in a constructive way. In addition, discussions will help clarify the readings, put the guest lectures into a larger context, and introduce new material and tools.

Because discussion is so important to the goals of the course, you must attend sections to do well in this course. But it is not enough to just show up—you must complete the readings before their assigned class session and engage in class discussions and exercises. Students will earn high participation grades by consistently demonstrating careful reading of the course materials and interacting with the instructor and fellow students. If you find you are having trouble speaking up in class, please come see me so we can discuss how to help you participate effectively in the course.

You can earn extra credit toward your participation grade by serving as a research subject for the Government Department’s Omnibus Project. This is an opportunity to be involved with political
science research conducted by students and faculty. There will be an alternative writing assignment for those who don’t want to participate in the Omnibus Project or who aren’t old enough to participate.

Readings and other materials
There are no books assigned for this course. Assigned readings include a mix of academic literature and policy documents. We will also make some use of videos and podcasts. All materials will be linked from the course Blackboard site. The reading list is subject to change, and I will announce any changes in class or via email. I have included optional resources below the list of required readings for some class meetings. These do not have to be read for class, but you may find them helpful to refer to when writing the case study or policy memo.

A number of the assigned readings from the academic literature use statistics or the language of game theory to make their arguments. Don’t worry about the details of the methodology or mathematical proofs in these papers—although we will spend some time in class discussing this—instead, focus on the broader arguments and findings.

Some tips for the readings:

- For empirical articles (whether they use statistics or historical case studies), consider the set of data or facts that the findings are based on. Would we expect these findings to hold up for other cases or data? Does the research really constitute a test of the theory?

- For theoretical articles (whether they use game theory or more informal language), consider the assumptions that lead to the article’s conclusions. Is the logic of the argument internally consistent? What facts in the world would cause us to doubt the article’s conclusions?

- For policy documents, consider the political, bureaucratic, and security context of the document. Who is the author? What is the author’s purpose in writing and releasing the document? What message does the document send to foreign and domestic audiences?

Several of the guest lectures and class discussions will concern current issues in nuclear security, and I expect you to be aware of international news related to nuclear weapons. I recommend that you receive some kind of news summary daily for the duration of the course. One option is a Google news alert: go to www.google.com/alerts, enter “nuclear” as the search term, and set the frequency to once per day. You will then receive a daily email with the day’s nuclear-related news. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace also offers a daily nuclear news summary at carnegieendowment.org/publications/pronews (click on “Subscribe” to receive the daily email).

You should also occasionally check out academic or policy blogs that cover nuclear issues—such as Arms Control Wonk, The Monkey Cage, War on the Rocks, or Nuclear Secrecy—and keep up with international news, generally. Good options for news sources are the New York Times, Washington Post, the Economist, and Foreign Policy. All of these have daily or weekly email digests that can keep you up to date, and the College offers us free access to the New York Times at www.accessnyt.com.

Finally, I will point out several additional resources in class to provide more background on particular issues. One general resource that will be helpful in writing your papers is the Nuclear Threat Initiative at www.nti.org. In particular, I recommend the nuclear tutorials in the
education center on the site. There are also resources available on the nuclear nonproliferation regime, nuclear security and nuclear terrorism, missile testing, and others.

Written assignments
Three written assignments are required for this course:

In a **case study** of 5–7 double-spaced pages, due before class on February 27, you will examine the factors that drove your assigned country to seek nuclear weapons, and decide whether your case lends support to the theories of nuclear proliferation we will discuss in this course.

In a **response paper** of 3–4 double-spaced pages you will discuss two or more of the guest lectures in the course, identifying common themes, areas of disagreement, or opportunities for further research. The response paper may be submitted any time before April 26.

In a **policy memo** of 12–15 double-spaced pages, due by 10pm on May 3, you will analyze a current nuclear weapons policy issue of your choice and provide recommendations for addressing the issue. The policy memo takes the place of the final exam in this course.

All written assignments will be submitted on Blackboard. I will provide more information about each of these assignments later in the course, and those handouts will be available on Blackboard.

The Writing Resources Center, located on the first floor of Swem Library, is a free service provided to W&M students. Trained consultants offer individual assistance with writing, presentation, and other communication assignments across disciplines and at any stage, from generating ideas to polishing a final product. To make an appointment, visit the WRC webpage [www.wm.edu/wrc](http://www.wm.edu/wrc).

**Quizzes**
There will be about 10 short quizzes in this course. Several studies show that frequent quizzes help students integrate and retain new course material. Quizzes also provide more frequent feedback about your performance in the course, and help me understand whether concepts are being understood.

Quizzes will be administered via Blackboard at the end of each week in which we host a guest speaker (dates are marked on the detailed schedule at the end of the syllabus). The quiz will open Friday at noon and must be completed by Tuesday at noon. Each quiz will focus on the week’s guest speaker, but may also include content from discussion sections. I will drop your lowest quiz grade when calculating your grade for the course.

**Grades**
Your grade will be based on the following:

- Attendance/participation: 20 %
- Case study: 25 %
- Response paper: 10 %
- Policy memo: 30 %
- Quizzes: 15 %
You must submit all three written assignments to pass this course. There is no in-class final exam.

I reserve A's for excellent work. I give B's for good, above-average performance in the course. C's are for work of average quality, and D's indicate below-average performance. Those students whose work is substantially below average will receive an F.

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<td>100-93</td>
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<td>92-90</td>
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Late work
Please turn your written assignments in on time. Come talk to me—before the due date—if you are having trouble. Late written assignments will be reduced by a third of a grade for each day (or portion of a day) that they are late. Late quizzes will not be accepted.

Academic Honesty
Your work in this class is governed by the Honor Code. You should feel free to discuss course material with others, but you cannot work together on assignments. Papers and quizzes must be solely your own work. Quizzes in this course are closed-book and closed-note.

Do not plagiarize. If you use someone else's words in written work, you must put them in quotes and cite the source. If you use someone else's ideas in written work, you must cite the source, even if you don't use the source's exact words. Always err on the side of citing other work. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me before you submit the assignment.

For guidance on appropriate sourcing, see the following resources:
- [http://guides.swem.wm.edu/writingandciting](http://guides.swem.wm.edu/writingandciting)
- [http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism](http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism)

Accommodations
William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2509 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. See [www.wm.edu/sas](http://www.wm.edu/sas) for more information.

Communication
The best way to reach me is via email (jkaplow [at] wm.edu). If you have more than a quick question, office hours are better than email. If my regular office hours don't work for you, please email me to set up an appointment.

Technology in class
I will occasionally ask you to fill out an online survey or refer to internet-based resources during discussion sections, so it can be useful to bring a computer or tablet with you to discussion sections (although a phone is generally fine). **During guest lectures, however, please refrain from using electronic devices.** A number of studies suggest that we learn more when we take notes on paper and putting away electronic devices can help avoid distractions that might take our attention away from our guest.
Video/audio recording
Meetings of this course may be recorded as a resource for future course offerings. If the instructor or a William & Mary office plan to use the recordings, students identifiable in the recordings will be notified to request consent prior to such use.

Course Outline
The course is divided into two parts. In the first half, we will discuss issues related to the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Why do some states seek or acquire nuclear weapons and not others? What factors make states more likely to proliferate, and what factors lead to nuclear restraint? What tools are available to policymakers to limit the spread of nuclear weapons, and are these tools effective?

The second half of the course addresses the effect of nuclear weapons on international security. Do nuclear weapons matter? Do they make the world safer or increase the risk of conflict? What kinds of nuclear forces are most useful for states? How do states control their nuclear weapons? What is the risk of nuclear terrorism, and what can states do about it? Will we always have these weapons, or is there a path toward denuclearization?
Detailed Schedule and Readings

Key dates:
   Add/Drop deadline, January 26
   Last day to withdraw, March 16

*Note that some of the links below will not work unless you are logged onto Blackboard. If you're having trouble with a link, log into Blackboard and try again.*

This reading list/schedule is subject to change!

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<th>Tuesday</th>
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| **23** Perspectives on nuclear politics | **January 18**
| Required: | Introduction: Why study nuclear weapons?
| *Francis J. Gavin. 2014. “What we talk about when we talk about nuclear weapons: A review essay.”* *H-Diplo Forum.* | Required:
| Optional: |  |
| Several responses to Gavin's piece are in the [full H-Diplo forum](#). |  |

<p>| 25 How nuclear weapons work |  |
| Required: |  |
| Watch the following two videos: |  |
| <em>Matthew Bunn. 2013. “How nuclear weapons work, 1/2.”</em> (Slides available <a href="#">here</a>.) |  |
| <em>Matthew Bunn. 2013. “How nuclear weapons work, 2/2.”</em> (Slides available <a href="#">here</a>.) |  |
| Optional (in order of difficulty): |  |</p>
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| **January 30**  
The drivers of nuclear proliferation  
Guest speaker: Neil Narang, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Read more about Prof. Narang here.  
Required:  
Optional:  
Nuclear weapons and US foreign policy  
Guest speaker: Jim Webb, former United States Senator from Virginia  
Read more about Sen. Webb here.  
Required:  
Barack Obama. 2009. *Speech at Hradcany Square, Prague, Czech Republic*. (Transcript available here.)  
Optional:  
On the role of the legislative branch in nuclear policy:  
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| **February 6**  
Nuclear latency  

** Quiz 1 closes at 12pm **

Required:

Optional:

**8**  
Nuclear intelligence

Guest speaker: Senior US Intelligence Official

Required:

Optional:
<table>
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| **February 13**
Proliferation networks

** Quiz 2 closes at 12pm **

Required:


Optional:


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| **15**
The Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime

Required:


Optional:

*NTI has a great resource on the treaties and organizations that make up the nonproliferation regime*


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| **February 20**  
**Counterproliferation**  
**Required:**  
**Optional:**  
**Reaching the Nuclear Agreement with Iran and Preserving It**  
Guest speaker: Mark Fitzpatrick, Executive Director, IISS-Americas  
Read more about Mark Fitzpatrick here.  
**Required:**  
**Optional:**  
For background on the Iran deal, see:  
For another option for dealing with Iran, see:  
### Tuesday

**February 27**  
The future of proliferation  

** Quiz 3 closes at 12pm **  

** Case Study due before class **  

No required readings (start reading for Thursday’s class!)

### Thursday

**March 1**  
The Effects of Proliferation: Nuclear Crises and Coercion  

Guest speaker: Todd Sechser, Associate Professor of Politics, University of Virginia  

Read more about Prof. Sechser here.  

Required:  


Optional:  


### Spring Break

**March 13**  
US nuclear forces and posture  

** Quiz 4 closes at 12pm **  

Required:  


[United States Department of Defense. 2018. *Nuclear Posture Review*. (Read at least the Executive Summary, skim other sections of interest.)](https://example.com)  

Optional:  


### 15

The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy  

Guest speaker: Matthew Kroenig, Associate Professor of Government, Georgetown University  

Read more about Prof. Kroenig here.  

Required:  


Optional:  

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<td><strong>March 20</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Nuclear terrorism</strong></td>
<td><strong>Responding to a nuclear attack</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Quiz 5 closes at 12pm</strong></td>
<td>Guest speaker: Michael Gerber, Redflash Group</td>
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| **27**  
Command and (lack of) control  
** Quiz 6 closes at 12pm **  
Required:  
Optional:  
South Asia’s Nuclear Dynamics  
Guest speaker: Sameer Lalwani, Senior Associate and Co-Director of the South Asia Program, Stimson Center  
Read more about Dr. Lalwani here.  
Required:  
Optional:  
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<td><strong>April 3</strong></td>
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<td>‘Paper Tiger’ and ‘Real Tiger’: Making Sense of China’s Nuclear Policy</td>
<td>Missiles and missile defense</td>
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<td><strong>Quiz 7 closes at 12pm</strong></td>
<td>Required:</td>
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<td>Read more about Prof. Zhang here.</td>
<td>Skim Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat. 2017. NASIC.</td>
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<td>Required:</td>
<td>Missiles and Other WMD Delivery Systems. NTI Tutorial.</td>
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<td>** 10</td>
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<td>Dealing with a Nuclear North Korea</td>
<td>The Humanitarian Turn in Disarmament</td>
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<td>** Quiz 8 closes at 12pm **</td>
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<td>Guest speaker: Mitchell Reiss, President and CEO, Colonial Williamsburg</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Rebecca Gibbons, Visiting Assistant Professor of Government</td>
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<td>Foundation</td>
<td>and Legal Studies, Bowdoin College</td>
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<td>Required:</td>
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<td>Paper.</td>
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<td>Check out <a href="#">38 North</a> for current analysis of North Korea</td>
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<td>London: Routledge.</td>
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| **April 17**  
Norms of Nuclear Non-Use  
**Quiz 9 closes at 12pm**  
Required:  
Optional:  
Scenarios for Nuclear Use  
Guest speaker: Lynn Davis, Senior Fellow, RAND Corporation  
Read more about Dr. Davis here.  
Required:  
Optional:  
| **24**  
Cross-Domain Deterrence and Nuclear Weapons  
**Quiz 10 closes at 12pm**  
Required:  
Jon R. Lindsay and Erik Gartzke. “Cross-Domain Deterrence as a Practical Problem and a Theoretical Concept.” *Draft Chapter*. | **26**  
Wrapping up: What do we know about Nuclear Politics?  
**Last day to turn in response papers**  
No required readings |
| **Finals** | **May 3**  
No in-class final exam  
**Policy Memo due by 10pm** |