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# PLIR 3080

## International Politics in the Nuclear Age

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**Prof. Todd S. Sechser**

Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:00–1:30PM

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**Fall 2019**

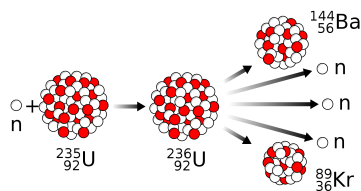
Lectures: Mon./Wed., 3:00–3:50PM

Location: Nau Hall #101

### Course Overview

Nuclear weapons are an old technology, yet they continue to command outsized attention in international politics. This course explores the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. foreign policy, the foreign policies of other countries, and in international relations more generally. It aims to help students understand why countries pursue (or do not pursue) nuclear weapons, what they try to do with those weapons, and how to think through problems of nuclear strategy.

The course is roughly divided into three parts. The first part of the course provides a brief introduction to the technology of nuclear weapons and delivery systems. The second part examines how nuclear weapons are used as tools of influence in world politics, examining theories of deterrence and coercion, different approaches to thinking about nuclear strategy, and the development and evolution of U.S. nuclear doctrine. This portion of the course also explores several modern controversies in nuclear security, including nuclear first-use, the problem of inadvertent escalation, and the morality of using nuclear weapons. Part three considers the phenomenon of nuclear proliferation, exploring the reasons states acquire (or forgo) nuclear weapons and the range of tools available to prevent proliferation.

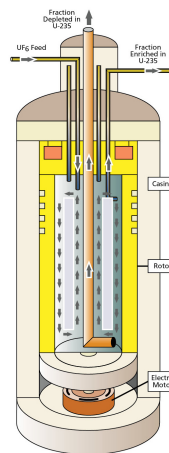


More broadly, this course is intended to give students fluency in the language of nuclear politics. In the last several years, the Iranian nuclear deal, the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty with Russia, the North Korean nuclear confrontation, the Defense Department's new nuclear strategy, and proposed investments in the U.S. nuclear arsenal have kept nuclear weapons in the headlines. But understanding these important policy debates requires first grappling with the complex and often arcane theoretical concepts that lie at their core. This course will provide the foundation that students need in order to become, at a minimum, informed citizens who can critically evaluate the nuclear security challenges – and proposed responses – that we are likely to face in the coming years.

# Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should:

1. Understand and critically evaluate the major theories of nuclear deterrence, nuclear strategy, and proliferation.
2. Understand key debates in U.S. nuclear weapons policy during the Cold War and today.
3. Learn to think more clearly and argue more persuasively.



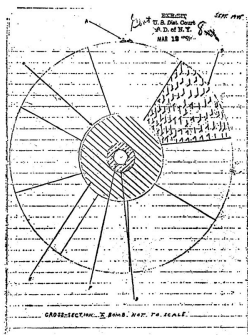
## General Requirements

1. *Lecture.* Lectures will take place from 3:00–3:50PM on Mondays and Wednesdays in Nau Hall #101. The lectures will reinforce and supplement the readings, but much of the material in the lectures will not be contained in the readings.
2. *Readings.* **Be forewarned that this course has a heavy reading load.** On average there are two readings per lecture (plus a few suggested readings), and you will quickly fall behind if you do not keep up. In addition, be aware that the material can be somewhat technical and dense for a political science course. You are required to read all articles marked with “★” on the syllabus. In addition, you are required to write brief summaries of all readings marked with “(★)” (see “Nuclear Notebook” below). Readings marked with “+” are not required, but will be posted on Collab and are strongly recommended.
3. *Nuclear Notebook.* You are required to keep a dedicated journal in which you summarize all readings marked with “(★)” on the syllabus. This is an assignment you must complete on your own. Your journal entries must contain a brief description of the reading’s core arguments. Entries need not be lengthy; a bullet list of key points will suffice. Journals will be collected and graded periodically.
4. *Position Papers.* You will write two short but challenging position papers that require you to take a clear stance on a pressing debate in the field of nuclear security. Essay prompts and more detailed instructions will be posted on the course’s [Collab site](#).
5. *Section Participation.* Students must attend and actively participate in their discussion section each week. A discussion section can succeed only if you arrive prepared and ready to share insightful thoughts and questions about the subject matter. Do not be afraid to ask questions, offer hypotheses, or try out ideas that might not be fully developed.

# Assignments, Grades, and Key Dates

Student performance will be assessed on the following basis:

1. *Quizzes* (5%). From time to time, iClicker quizzes will be given during lecture. Be sure to **bring your iClicker to every lecture**. Quiz questions are worth 2 points for an incorrect answer and 5 points for a correct answer. No make-up quizzes will be given for any reason. However, to accommodate unavoidable conflicts such as emergencies, family events, illnesses, and athletic travel, your four lowest scores (including any missed quizzes, which count as zeroes) will be dropped when calculating your quiz grade. In other words, you have **four “free” absences** – but not more than four.
2. *Nuclear Notebook* (10%). Journals will be collected on a random basis at the beginning of lectures. Your grade will be based on whether you are keeping the journal up to date rather than whether your interpretation of the readings is fully accurate.
3. *Position Papers* (10% × 2). Each position paper is worth 10% of your final grade. Unlike the exam essays, **position papers must be submitted in hard copy only by 3:00PM on October 9 and November 25**. Electronic submissions will not be accepted.
4. *Section Participation* (15%). Teaching assistants will take attendance at each section and will evaluate each student’s participation in section meetings.



5. *Midterm Exam* (20%). The midterm exam is optional (though the grade is binding if you take it). There are two components to the exam. First, an open-book, 48-hour take-home essay will be due by class time on **Monday, October 14**. While position papers must be submitted in hard copy, midterm exam essays must be submitted electronically via Collab. Second, there will be a closed-book, portion of the exam given in class on **Monday, October 14**. Exams are not graded on a competitive curve, so there is no disincentive for collaborative studying.
6. *Final Exam* (30%). The final exam is comprehensive, and it is required to pass the course. Like the midterm, there are two components to the final exam. An open-book, 48-hour take-home essay will be due at **2:00PM on Monday, December 16**. Like the midterm, final exam essays must be submitted electronically via Collab. The in-class portion of the exam will then be given in Nau Hall #101 from **2:00–5:00PM on Monday, December 16**.

## Required Books

There are three required books, which may be found at the University of Virginia Bookstore. All other readings can be found on the course’s [Collab site](#).

1. Futter, Andrew. 2015. *The Politics of Nuclear Weapons*. London: Sage.

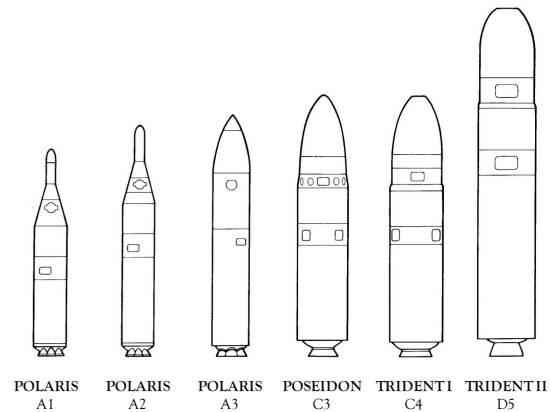
2. Schelling, Thomas C. 1966. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
3. Sechser, Todd S. and Matthew Fuhrmann. 2017. *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

You must also rent or purchase an iClicker or iClicker2, available from the Bookstore. Please register your iClicker on the course's [Collab site](#). Bring your iClicker to every lecture in order to earn participation points.

## Course Policies

1. *In-Class Distractions*. Computers are not permitted in class. This bears repeating: *computers are not permitted in class*. This includes all laptops, smartphones, tablets, and anything else with a screen.\* This is not to be curmudgeonly: [academic research](#) has shown that students learn more effectively taking notes by hand. Screens can be a distraction, and have negative effects on everyone's learning. Please also turn off your ringers before class.

2. *Late Assignments*. Late assignments will not be accepted for any reason. To ensure that illness, computer failures, or other unanticipated events do not cause you to miss an assignment deadline, it is recommended that you begin the assignments well in advance of the deadline. You should also back up your work off-site using the University's [Box service](#), [Google Drive](#), [Dropbox](#), or another free cloud backup service.



3. *Academic Integrity*. Cheating and plagiarism are taken very seriously in this course. All assignments and exams must be solely the original work of the student. Avoid plagiarism by using footnotes (with page numbers) whenever you quote, paraphrase, or otherwise borrow someone else's ideas. If you are unsure whether you are committing plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask your teaching assistant for guidance *before you submit your work*. Examples of serious violations of academic integrity include: using outside notes on a closed-book exam, writing portions of a classmate's paper, copying part of a classmate's journal entry, copying from a book or website without attribution, and submitting someone else's writing under your own name. However, forming a group to study for exams or offering feedback on another student's draft paper are acceptable. Violators risk failing the course and being reported to the Honor Committee.
4. *Grade Appeals*. Hopefully there will be no reason to contest a grade. However, a student who believes strongly that a paper or exam has been graded incorrectly may appeal by writing a one-page, typed memo explaining why the grade was inappropriate. *No sooner than 72 hours and no later than 10 days after the original grade was issued*, the memo must be

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\*Students with SDAC accommodations may be excepted from this rule.

submitted along with the original graded assignment to the student's teaching assistant, who will then re-grade the assignment. If the dispute persists, Prof. Sechser will grade the assignment and issue a final grade, which may be higher, lower, or identical to the original grade.

## Exams

1. *Make-Up Exams.* Make-up or rescheduled exams are not given for any reason, including illness, family emergencies, and other unexpected events. There are no exceptions. Exam dates and times are stated clearly in this syllabus, so please schedule accordingly. If you do not take the midterm exam – whether involuntarily or by choice – then your grade from the final exam will simply be applied to the midterm. For example: if you miss the midterm exam and subsequently receive a B+ on the final, then your midterm grade will also be recorded as a B+. The final exam, however, is required to pass the course. If your final exam schedule is “overloaded” (see the exam schedule [here](#)), you will need to reschedule one of your other final exams or modify your course schedule.
2. *Note to SDAC Students.* If you have received permission for special exam accommodations at the Student Disability Access Center, you will need to make individual arrangements to take the exam at the SDAC. *It is recommended that you schedule both your midterm and final exam early in the semester*, since the SDAC is small and space fills up quickly. Exams at the SDAC will be given at the same time as the rest of the class.

## Teaching Staff and Office Hours

For questions about grades, exams, course policies, or other administrative issues, your first point of contact is always your teaching assistant. The teaching assistants for the course are:

	<i>Email Address</i>	<i>Office Hours and Location</i>
Christopher Dictus	<a href="mailto:cjd3ex@virginia.edu">cjd3ex@virginia.edu</a>	Tuesdays 1:00–3:00PM, Gibson #S195
Hayley Elszasz	<a href="mailto:he4ns@virginia.edu">he4ns@virginia.edu</a>	Fridays 9:00–11:00AM, Gibson #S195
Sunggun Park	<a href="mailto:sp7rt@virginia.edu">sp7rt@virginia.edu</a>	Mondays 1:00–3:00PM, Gibson #S195
Alexis Yang	<a href="mailto:jy9bf@virginia.edu">jy9bf@virginia.edu</a>	Mondays 1:00–3:00PM, Gibson #S195

Teaching assistants are available during their office hours or by appointment. Prof. Sechser also welcomes visitors to his office hours on Thursdays, 12:00–1:30PM in Gibson #282. Please [sign up here](#) for Prof. Sechser's office hours.



# Lecture Schedule

See the List of Assigned Readings on page 9 for complete references to these readings.

## Key to Readings

- ★ Journal entry required.
- ★ Required reading.
- + Recommended optional reading.

## Part I: Introduction to Nuclear Weapons

28 August	<b>No Class:</b> <i>Prof. Sechser away.</i>	
02 September	Introduction	★ Ward 2018. ★ Allison 2010.
04 September	How to Build a Nuclear Bomb	★ Futter 2015. <b>Pages 13–39.</b> + Barnaby 2004. <b>Chapter 1.</b>
09 September	How to Deliver a Nuclear Bomb	★ Futter 2015. <b>Pages 39–44.</b> ★ United States Department of Defense 2018. <b>Pages 41–51.</b>

## Part II: Nuclear Weapons and Strategy

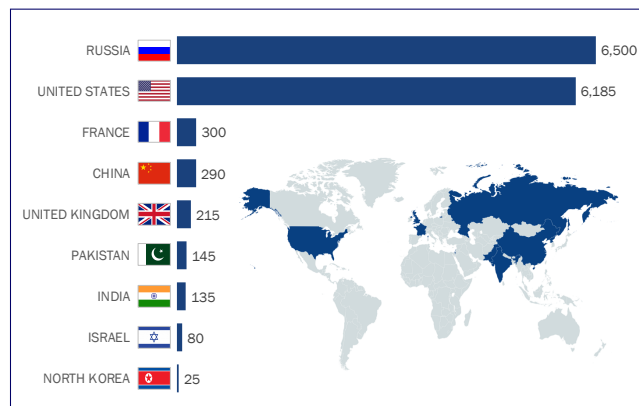
11 September	Military Force in International Politics	★ Schelling 1966. <b>Pages 1–18; 69–91.</b> ★ Art 1980. <b>Pages 3–14.</b> + Jervis 1978. <b>Pages 167–70; 186–206.</b>
16 September	Military Force and the Nuclear Revolution	★ Schelling 1966. <b>Pages 18–34.</b> ★ Art 1980. <b>Pages 14–27.</b> + Jervis 1989. <b>Chapter 1.</b>
18 September	Deterrence in Theory and Practice	★ Schelling 1966. <b>Pages 35–69.</b> + Snyder 1961. <b>Pages 9–30 and 41–51.</b>
23 September	Nuclear Strategy I	★ Futter 2015. <b>Chapter 4.</b> ★ Schelling 1966. <b>Pages 190–204.</b> + Glaser and Fetter 2016.
25 September	Nuclear Strategy II	★ Jervis 1979. ★ Gray and Payne 1980. + Colby 2018.

30 September	The Evolution of U.S. Nuclear Doctrine	★ McNamara 1962. ★ McNamara 1967. ★ Weinberger 1982. ★ Nichols 2014. <b>Chapter 1.</b>
02 October	Brinkmanship and Nuclear Coercion	★ Schelling 1966. <b>Chapter 3.</b> ★ Sechser and Fuhrmann 2017. <b>Chapters 1 and 2.</b> + Trachtenberg 1985.
07 October	<b>No Class: Reading Day.</b>	
09 October	Nuclear Crises ↪ <b>POSITION PAPER 1 DUE.</b>	★ Holloway 2010. ★ Sechser and Fuhrmann 2017. <b>Chapter 6.</b> + Betts 1987. <b>Chapter 3</b>
14 October	<b>Midterm Exam</b> ↪ <b>Take-home essay due 3:00PM.</b> ↪ <b>In-class exam begins 3:00PM.</b>	
16 October	Strategies of Regional Nuclear Powers	★ Narang 2009. ★ Mahnken 2014. + Cunningham and Fravel 2015.
21 October	The Past and Future of Arms Control ↪ <i>Guest Speaker: Michael Krepon</i>	★ Futter 2015. <b>Chapter 9 and pages 133–40.</b> ★ Schelling and Halperin 1961. <b>Pages 1–42.</b>
23 October	Controversies: The Nuclear Taboo	★ Tannenwald 2018. ★ Schelling 1966. <b>Pages 287–303.</b> ★ Sagan and Valentino 2016.
28 October	Controversies: No First-Use, Inadvertent Escalation	★ Tannenwald 2019. ★ Harvey 2019. ★ Talmadge 2018.

### Part III: The Spread of Nuclear Weapons

30 October	The Technology of Nuclear Proliferation ↪ <i>Guest Speaker: Houston Wood</i>	★ Wood et al. 2008. ★ Cirincione et al. 2005. <b>Pages 49–54.</b> + May 1994. + Ferguson 2007.
04 November	Causes of Proliferation I	★ Sagan 1996/1997. ★ Futter 2015. <b>Chapter 3.</b>
06 November	Causes of Proliferation II	★ Futter 2015. <b>Chapter 6.</b>

11 November	The Nonproliferation Regime	★ Futter 2015. <b>Pages 89–93 and 140–45.</b> ★ Cirincione et al. 2005. <b>Pages 27–34.</b> + Ford 2015.
13 November	Nonproliferation Tools	★ Braut-Hegghammer 2011. + Green 2018.
18 November	Controversies: The Consequences of Proliferation	★ Sagan 1994. ★ Sechser 2010. + Schlosser 2016.
20 November	Controversies: Nuclear Terrorism	★ Futter 2015. <b>Chapter 8.</b> ★ Schelling 1982. + Allison 2004.
25 November	Controversies: The Iran Nuclear Deal ↪ <i>Guest Speaker: <a href="#">Stephen Mull</a></i> ↪ <b>POSITION PAPER 2 DUE.</b>	★ <i>BBC News</i> 2019. + Fitzpatrick 2015. + Bolton 2015.
27 November	<b>No Class: Thanksgiving break.</b>	
02 December	Controversies: Do Nuclear Weapons Even Matter?	★ Mueller 2018. ★ Sechser and Fuhrmann 2017. <b>Chapter 7.</b> + Gavin 2010.
04 December	The Nuclear Future	★ Futter 2015. <b>Pages 211–214.</b> ★ Legvold 2019.
16 December	<b>Final Exam</b> ↪ <b>Take-home essay due 2:00PM.</b> ↪ <b>In-class exam from 2:00–5:00PM, Nau Hall #101.</b>	



**NUCLEAR ARSENALS OF THE WORLD, 2019**

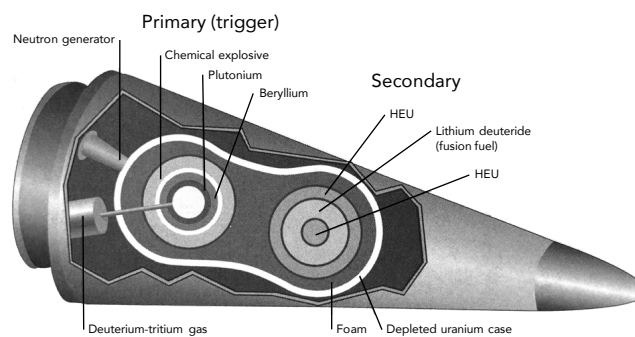


## List of Assigned Readings

- Allison, Graham. 2004. "How to Stop Nuclear Terror." *Foreign Affairs* 83(1): 64–74.
- Allison, Graham. 2010. "Nuclear Disorder: Surveying Atomic Threats." *Foreign Affairs* 89(1): 74–85.
- Art, Robert J. 1980. "To What Ends Military Power?" *International Security* 4(4): 3–35.
- Barnaby, Frank. 2004. *How to Build a Nuclear Bomb and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction*. New York: Nation Books.
- BBC News. 2019. "Iran Nuclear Deal: Key Details." (June 11). Available at <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33521655>.
- Betts, Richard K. 1987. *Nuclear Blackmail and Nuclear Balance*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
- Bolton, John. 2015. "Facing Reality on Iran." *National Review* (September 7).
- Braut-Hegghammer, Målfrid. 2011. "Revisiting Osirak: Preventive Attacks and Nuclear Proliferation Risks." *International Security* 36(1): 101–32.
- Cirincione, Joseph, Jon Wolfsthal, and Miriam Rajkumar. 2005. *Deadly Arsenals: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Threats*. 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
- Colby, Elbridge. 2018. "If You Want Peace, Prepare for Nuclear War." *Foreign Affairs* 97(6): 25–32.
- Cunningham, Fiona S. and M. Taylor Fravel. 2015. "Assuring Assured Retaliation: China's Nuclear Posture and U.S.-China Strategic Stability." *International Security* 40(2): 7–50.
- Ferguson, Charles. 2007. "Proliferation Risks of Nuclear Power Programs." Nuclear Threat Initiative. Available at <http://nti.org/4191A>.
- Fitzpatrick, Mark. 2015. "Iran: A Good Deal." *Survival* 57(5): 47–52.
- Ford, Christopher A. 2015. "An NPT Net Assessment: Flawed, Problematic, and Indispensable." In *Routledge Handbook of Nuclear Proliferation and Policy*, edited by Joseph F. Pilat and Nathan E. Busch, pp. 113–30. New York: Routledge.
- Futter, Andrew. 2015. *The Politics of Nuclear Weapons*. London: Sage.
- Gavin, Francis J. 2010. "Same As It Ever Was: Nuclear Alarmism, Proliferation, and the Cold War." *International Security* 34(3): 7–37.
- Glaser, Charles L. and Steve Fetter. 2016. "Should the United States Reject MAD? Damage Limitation and U.S. Nuclear Strategy Toward China." *International Security* 41(1): 49–98.
- Gray, Colin S. and Keith Payne. 1980. "Victory is Possible." *Foreign Policy* (39): 14–27.
- Green, Brendan Rittenhouse. 2018. "Primacy and Proliferation: Why Security Commitments Don't Prevent the Spread of Nuclear Weapons." In *U.S. Grand Strategy in the 21st Century*, pp. 42–57. New York: Routledge.
- Harvey, John R. 2019. "A Considered 'No' on 'No First Use'." *Texas National*

- Security Review* (July 2): 33–40. Available at <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-nuclear-first-use-and-presidential-authority/#essay4>.
- Holloway, David. 2010. “Nuclear Weapons and the Escalation of the Cold War, 1945–1962.” In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War, Vol. 1: Origins*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Odd Arne Westad, pp. 376–97. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jervis, Robert. 1978. “Cooperation under the Security Dilemma.” *World Politics* 30(2): 167–214.
- Jervis, Robert. 1979. “Why Nuclear Superiority Doesn’t Matter.” *Political Science Quarterly* 94(4): 617–33.
- Jervis, Robert. 1989. *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.
- Legvold, Robert. 2019. “The Challenges of a Multipolar Nuclear World in a Shifting International Context.” In *Meeting the Challenges of the New Nuclear Age: Nuclear Weapons in a Changing Global Order*, edited by Steven E. Miller, Robert Legvold, and Lawrence Freedman, pp. 28–61. Cambridge, Mass.: American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- Mahnken, Thomas G. 2014. “Future Scenarios of Limited Nuclear Conflict.” In *On Limited Nuclear War in the 21st Century*, edited by Jeffrey A. Larsen and Kerry M. Kartchner, pp. 129–43. Palo Alto, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- May, Michael M. 1994. “Nuclear Weapons Supply and Demand.” *American Scientist* 82(6): 526–37.
- McNamara, Robert. 1962. Commencement Address by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (June 16).
- McNamara, Robert. 1967. Address by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara. San Francisco (June 16).
- Mueller, John. 2018. “Nuclear Weapons Don’t Matter But Nuclear Hysteria Does.” *Foreign Affairs* 97(6): 10–15.
- Narang, Vipin. 2009. “Posturing for Peace: Pakistan’s Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability.” *International Security* 34(3): 38–78.
- Nichols, Thomas M. 2014. *No Use: Nuclear Weapons and National Security*. Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Sagan, Scott D. 1994. “The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons.” *International Security* 18(4): 66–107.
- Sagan, Scott D. 1996/1997. “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb.” *International Security* 21(3): 54–86.
- Sagan, Scott D. and Benjamin Valentino. 2016. “Would the U.S. Drop the Bomb Again?” *Wall Street Journal* (May 19).
- Schelling, Thomas C. 1966. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Schelling, Thomas C. 1982. “Thinking About Nuclear Terrorism.” *International Security* 6(4): 61–77.

- Schelling, Thomas C. and Morton H. Halperin. 1961. *Strategy and Arms Control*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund.
- Schlosser, Eric. 2016. “World War Three, by Mistake.” *The New Yorker* (December 23).
- Sechser, Todd S. 2010. “Should the United States or the International Community Aggressively Pursue Nuclear Nonproliferation Policies?” In *Controversies in Globalization: Contending Approaches to International Relations*, edited by Peter M. Haas, John A. Hird, and Beth McBratney, pp. 164–174. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Sechser, Todd S. and Matthew Fuhrmann. 2017. *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Snyder, Glenn H. 1961. *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Talmadge, Caitlin. 2018. “Beijing’s Nuclear Option: Why a U.S.–Chinese War Could Spiral Out of Control.” *Foreign Affairs* 97(6): 44–50.
- Tannenwald, Nina. 2018. “How Strong Is the Nuclear Taboo Today?” *The Washington Quarterly* 41(3): 89–109.
- Tannenwald, Nina. 2019. “It’s Time for a U.S. No-First-Use Nuclear Policy.” *Texas National Security Review* (July 2): 8–20. Available at <https://tnsr.org/roundtable/policy-roundtable-nuclear-first-use-and-presidential-authority/#essay2>.
- Trachtenberg, Marc. 1985. “The Influence of Nuclear Weapons in the Cuban Missile Crisis.” *International Security* 10(1): 137–63.
- United States Department of Defense. 2018. *Nuclear Posture Review*. February.
- Ward, Alex. 2018. “This Is Exactly How a Nuclear War Would Kill You.” *Vox* (December 26). Available at <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2018/10/19/17873822/nuclear-war-weapons-bombs-how-kill>.
- Weinberger, Caspar W. 1982. “Secretary of Defense Weinberger’s Letter of August 23.” *New York Review of Books* 29(17). Available at <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1982/11/04/secretary-of-defense-weinbergers-letter-of-august-/>.
- Wood, Houston G., Alexander Glaser, and R. Scott Kemp. 2008. “The Gas Centrifuge and Nuclear Weapons Proliferation.” *Physics Today* 61(9): 40–45.



[Syllabus Version: October 7, 2019 ]