

## **INR 3135: Contemporary Issues in US National Security Policy**

**Spring 2025**

**Prof. Zachary Selden**

**Office Hours: Anderson 03 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:45-12:45 or by appointment.**

This course will examine current security challenges, as well as the potential range of US actions to meet those challenges. The main topics include:

- Terrorism
- Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Non-Proliferation and Counter-Proliferation
- Alliances and international cooperation
- Technological development and cyber-security
- Great power competition, particularly with China and Russia

The course is organized in a series of sections that delve into specific questions within each of the above topics. For example, is there a firm distinction between the “old” and “new” forms of terrorism? What strategies have worked in the past to defeat terrorist organizations and what lessons can be applied in the current context? What is the appropriate balance between law enforcement, intelligence and military tools of counter-terrorism? We will start with a look at the theoretical and historical approaches to each issue and then move to the policy ramifications.

**All viewpoints are welcome and encouraged.** Arguments are a natural and necessary part of the policy making process, and we will invariably discuss issues that arouse some controversy. The key is keeping discourse calm and based on facts and evidence rather than on emotion and personal narratives. I will at times seek to provoke discussion and play the role of devil’s advocate. My personal opinions are irrelevant, and I attempt to keep them out of my lectures as much as possible. I am happy to discuss any issue in depth in my office hours, but I attempt to avoid injecting my personal opinions into class discussion as it might squash debate.

**This is an in-person course only. There is no zoom option.** If you are ill, please see me to catch up and/or get notes from another student. Quizzes are on paper and in class. If you cannot be here for those, please make alternative arrangements with me in advance.

## Required Reading

Most of the course readings are available through the Smathers library on-line journals collection. The readings are also organized in weekly files on the Canvas course site.

There are some additional readings for weeks 3 and 4 available through the library ARES course reserve system (listed in bold)

In addition to the readings described above, students will write a 1000 word review memo on of **one** of the following books:

- Hal Brands and Michael Beckley, *Dangerzone: The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Norton, 2022).
- Kevin Rudd, *The Avoidable War: The Dangers of a Catastrophic Conflict between the US and Xi Jinping's China* (Public Affairs: New York, 2022).
- Mark Galeotti, *The Weaponization of Everything: A Field Guide to the New Way of War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022).

Imagine that you are preparing a member of Congress for a hearing in which the author will be a witness. Your job is to prepare that member to understand the major arguments of the book and offer an assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. You should focus on issues that they might want to question or ask for further information that were not clear in the book. Your job is to offer a coherent critical evaluation of the book in a brief, well-written format. As you read the book, keep track of things that you think are well done as well as points that are lacking. All of those books can be purchased at a major bookstore or from Amazon. **The review is due on March 28 but you are welcome to turn it in earlier.**

The rationale for this assignment is to give you some practice in writing short but useful memoranda. 1000 words would be a relatively long memo in business or government (anything much longer would have a short executive summary at the front). Many of you will find as you start your careers in the working world that a large part of your job is to save more highly-skilled people time by summarizing and evaluating documents to prepare them for meetings. Get good at doing this and you will be seen as a valuable asset to those who employ you.

There will be six quizzes on Fridays approximately every two weeks. The lowest scored quiz will be removed from your grade calculation. If you have an unexcused absence on the day of a quiz, that will be the one removed from your grade calculation. Make-ups will be arranged for excused absences.

**Quiz Dates: January 24, February 7, February 21, March 7, April 4, April 23 (last day of class and a Wednesday)**

The final essay will be cumulative assessment of how you have assimilated information from the course and are able to apply it. You will have approximately one week to complete this 1000 word essay. I am also considering a verbal option for this in which you would present your thoughts in a video recording or live.

## **Grading**

Quizzes: 50%

Book review: 20%:

Final essay: 20%:

Participation: 10%

## **Grading Scale**

93.5+	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
67-69	D+
64-66	D
60-63	D-
59 -	F

Information on the University of Florida's grading policy can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **Assignments**

Writing assignments for this course are intentionally short. This is not to make them easy; to the contrary, is often difficult to compact a good argument into a few pages that make every word count. There are also relatively few instances in a course of this nature when there is a right or a wrong answer. Essays will be evaluated on how well they marshal evidence to support the argument, the degree to which they take into account potential weaknesses of the argument, and the overall clarity of the writing.

**Students will also participate in a role-playing exercise on March 10-12** in which each student will take on the role of a cabinet member confronting a national security crisis. You will have to work together to craft a viable solution. Your participation and evaluation of the exercise will constitute a significant part of your class participation grade. **If you know that you will not be able to attend class on those days, please see me well in advance so we can arrange an alternate assignment.** This exercise will take approximately two class sessions to complete. The remainder of your class participation grade will be determined by your attendance and participation in class discussions. Participation means more than simply showing up. The readings are often intentionally contradictory and you should be prepared to discuss which arguments you find persuasive and why.

### **Key Dates**

Crisis simulation:      March 10-12

Book review due:      March 28

Final essay due:      April 30

### **Other Business**

Make-up exams and late paper submissions can be arranged with advanced notice. Make-up exams will be granted at my discretion with a valid excuse. In case of illness, a doctor's written excuse will be required. In the case of a known/planned absence please see me WELL IN ADVANCE.

Cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with severely. The use of plagiarized material will earn the student an F for that exam or paper. I never treat my students like fools, so please return the favor. If you have a question as to what constitutes plagiarism, please ask.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scer/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>)

specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

**I try to keep this course focused on current issues so I reserve the right to change some of the reading if I find better articles on some topics. I will always give you at least one week’s notice before changing an assigned reading.**

## **Course Outline**

### **Defense policy as a subset of foreign policy**

Key questions: What is consistent in US foreign policy since the end of the Cold War and what has changed? What is the range of grand strategic options? What are the historical antecedents?

#### **Jan. 13-17**

- Eliot Cohen, “The Historical Mind and Military Strategy” *Orbis*, Vol. 49, No.4 Fall 2005, pp. 575-588.
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- Walter Russell Mead, “American Grand Strategy in a World at Risk” *Orbis*, Vol. 49, No.4 Fall 2005, pp. 589-598.

- Walter Russell Mead, “The Return of Hamiltonian Statecraft,” *Foreign Affairs*, August 20, 2024. <https://www.hudson.org/foreign-policy/return-hamiltonian-statecraft-walter-russell-mead>
- Barry Posen and Andrew Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy” *International Security*, Vol 21, No.3, Winter 1996-97, pp. 5-53. (**Just skim this to get the 4 main options**)
- Eliot Cohen, “The Return of Statecraft: Back to Basics in the Post-American World,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2022.

### Jan. 22-24

- Hal Brands, *The Promise and Pitfalls of Grand Strategy*, Strategic Studies Institute 2012, pp. 1-15.
- Daniel Drezner et al, The End of Grand Strategy, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2020.
- Robert Kagan, “The Price of Hegemony: Can America learn to use its Power?” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2022.
- Francis Gavin, “I Was Wrong. Now What?” *Texas National Security Review*, Summer 2022. <https://tnsr.org/2022/07/i-was-wrong-now-what/>

### Russian invasion of Ukraine: What does it mean for the US?

Key questions: Why is this happening now? How does this affect US grand strategy? What does this mean for the US alliance system? How might this affect events outside the region?

### Jan. 27-31

Reading:

Listen to this podcast

<https://warontherocks.com/2024/12/where-do-we-go-from-here/>

Listen to the last 10 minutes (or the whole thing if you want, it’s interesting)

<https://www.aei.org/podcast/frederick-kagan-on-the-future-of-the-ukraine-war/>

- Council on Foreign Relations <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine>
- WOTR <https://warontherocks.com/2022/04/start-with-the-political-explaining-russias-bungled-invasion-of-ukraine/>
- *National Review* and *New Republic* articles in files section for this week.

## Terrorism

Key questions: Is there a firm distinction between the “old” and “new” forms of terrorism? What strategies have worked in the past to defeat terrorist organizations and what lessons can be applied in the current context? What is the appropriate balance between law enforcement, intelligence and military tools of counter-terrorism?

**Feb. 3-7**

**Martin Miller, “The Intellectual Origins of Modern Terrorism in Europe,” in Terrorism in Context (Martha Crenshaw, ed.) Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995.**

**Bruce Hoffman, Inside Terrorism, Chapter 1**

**Walter Laqueur, No End to War, Chapter 2**

**Feb. 17-19**

- Lisa Monaco, America’s Forgotten Wars: A Strategy for the War on Terrorism, *Foreign Affairs*, 2020
- Jared Cohen, “Digital Counterinsurgency,” *Foreign Affairs*, Nov/Dec 2015, pp. 52-58

- Carolyn Hoyle, et al, “Becoming Mulan: Female Western Migrants to ISIS” Institute for Strategic Dialogue, 2015 [http://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ISDJ2969\\_Becoming\\_Mulan\\_01.15\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ISDJ2969_Becoming_Mulan_01.15_WEB.pdf)
- National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism, June 2021. P. 1-14.
- Tom Wilson, *Terrorism in the West: An Age of Extremes*. Henry Jackson Foundation, 2018. P 7-13.

## **Proliferation, arms control, and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)**

Key questions: What regimes have worked to slow the spread of dangerous materials and weapons? Are Cold War regimes relevant to the current situation? What new regimes are being created to cope with non-state actors? What are the characteristics of different types of WMD and what is the range of appropriate responses to the threats they pose?

### **Feb 21-24**

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- Henry Sokolski. *Underestimated: Our Not So Peaceful Nuclear Future* (NPEC, 2017) Read Chapter 2 (pages 45-76)
- <http://www.npolicy.org/books/Underestimated/2edition.pdf>
- Sidney Drell and James Goodby, “The Reality: A goal of a world without nuclear weapons is essential,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Summer 2008, pp. 23-32.
- Fred Ikle, “Nuclear Abolition: A Reverie,” *The National Interest*, September/October 2009, pp. 4-7
- 2022 National Defense Strategy, pages 1-25

### **Feb. 26-28**

- Sarah Zhang, “How DNA Evidence Confirmed a Soviet Cover-Up of an Anthrax Accident,” *The Atlantic*, Nov. 22 2016. <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/11/sverdlovsk-russia-anthrax/508139/>
- William Broad and Judith Miller, “Soviet Defector Says China had Accident at Germ Plant,” *New York Times*, April 4, 1999. <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/05/world/soviet-defector-says-china-had-accident-at-a-germ-plant.html>



- Seth Carus, "A Short History of Biological Warfare" National Defense University Occasional Paper, August 2017. **Read pages 27-45**
- "Are We Prepared? Four WMD Crises that could transform US Security" National Defense University, June 2009 pp.93-120
- "Are We Prepared? Four WMD Crises that could transform US Security" National Defense University, June 2009, pp.71-92

## **CRISIS SIMULATION MARCH 10-12**

### **Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and Cyber-Security**

Key questions: What constitutes an RMA? What are the historical precedents? Is the current transformation a radical break with the past or a continuation of a trend? How has new technology changed military operations? Is there an over-reliance on technology that can be exploited by adversaries?

### **March 14-28**

- Andrew Krepinevich, "From Cavalry to Computer: The Pattern of Military Revolutions," *The National Interest*, Fall 1994
- Laura Rosenberger, "Making Cyberspace Safe for Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2020.
- Jacquelyn Schneider, "Cyber Attacks on Critical Infrastructure: Insights from War Gaming," <https://warontherocks.com/2017/07/cyber-attacks-on-critical-infrastructure-insights-from-war-gaming/>
- Michael Horowitz, et al, "A Force for the Future," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2022.
- Joseph Nye, "The End of Cyber-Anarchy?" *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2022.
- Jacquelyn Schneider, "A World without Trust," *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 2022.

- Kennis and Zabeirek
- <https://warontherocks.com/2022/06/building-a-regional-right-of-boom-cyber-defense-network/>
- Paul Scharre, AI's Inhuman Advantage <https://warontherocks.com/2023/04/ais-inhuman-advantage/>

## Alliances and international cooperation

Key questions: How has the relationship with allies changed since the end of the Cold War? What role does NATO play and is it an obsolete concept for current threats? How does the integration of Europe affect the alliance?

### March 31-April 4

- Elbridge Colby, "Allied Interests," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2021.
- Michael Lind, "The Age of Dealignment," *National Interest*, Nov/Dec. 2020.
- Jeremy Shapiro and Jena Puglierin, The Art of Vassalization <https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-art-of-vassalisation-how-russias-war-on-ukraine-has-transformed-transatlantic-relations/>
- Michael Beckley, "Enemies of my Enemy: How Fear of China is Forging a New World Order" *Foreign Affairs*, Mar/April 2022
- Lotje Boswinkel, Luis Simon et al. "Alliance networking in Europe and the Indo-Pacific" WOTR Dec. 17 2024 [https://warontherocks.com/2024/12/alliance-networking-in-europe-and-the-indo-pacific/?\\_s=16m1od19w4g2vjtqwnp](https://warontherocks.com/2024/12/alliance-networking-in-europe-and-the-indo-pacific/?_s=16m1od19w4g2vjtqwnp)
- Video <https://www.wsj.com/video/inside-the-us-militarys-strategy-to-make-australia-a-logistics-hub/0E3C6BC4-2751-4204-817C-3ED9FB9ED594>
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## Investing in Future Defense

What does the US spend on defense? What are the factors likely to drive budgets in the future? Where should it invest and how can it spend more wisely?

### April 7-11

- <https://warontherocks.com/2023/03/building-a-new-american-arsenal/>

- <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/06/09/america-weapons-china-00100373>
- Wall Street Journal articles in files

### **Thinking about the future**

Key questions: How can we gauge potential threats? Are there potential challengers to US hegemony and what is the range of potential responses?

### **Great Power Politics: Russia, China, and the Authoritarian Axis**

#### **April 14-16**

- Stephen Kotkin, “Russia’s Perpetual Geopolitics,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016, pp.2-9.
- Listen to this podcast:
- <https://www.fpri.org/multimedia/2024/07/an-axis-of-authoritarians/>
- Odd Westad, “Sleepwalking toward war,” *Foreign Affairs*, Jul/Aug. 2024.
- Matt Pottinger and Mike Gallagher, “No substitute for victory,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2024.
- Andrea Kendall-Taylor, et al, “The axis of upheaval,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2024.

#### **April 18-21**

### **Great Power Politics: China**

- Dorfman, “Tech Giants are Giving a Vital Edge in Espionage” *Foreign Policy*, Dec. 23, 2020.
- Hal Brands, “The Dangers of Decline,” *Foreign Policy*, Spring 2022.
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- Evan Medeiros, “The delusion of peak China,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2024.
- Michael Gordon, “The US is not ready for the era of great power conflict, *Wall Street Journal*, March 6, 2023.

- Niharika Mandhana, “How Beijing boxed America out of the South China Sea,” Wall Street Journal, March 11, 2023.

## **April 23**

### **Space: The Final Frontier**

- Robin Dickey, Why Norms Matter More than Ever For Space <https://warontherocks.com/2023/06/why-norms-matter-more-than-ever-for-space-deterrence-and-defense/>
- Ryan Graves, “We have a real UFO problem,” Politico, Feb. 28, 2023 <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/02/28/ufo-uap-navy-intelligence-00084537>

**Take Home Due April 30 at 5:00pm.**