

Theory and Practice of Security (SEST 500-6)

Security Studies Program

Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service

Georgetown University

Fall 2019

Office Hours: 3:45 – 4:45pm Mondays
and by appointment

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Description

Students in the Security Studies Program (SSP) are required to take this course in their first semester of the program. The course is designed by the SSP core faculty to provide a conceptual and substantive foundation for the M.A. curriculum.

Theory and Practice of Security has three main objectives. First, the course seeks to provide students with a basic understanding of the major theories and concepts used in security studies. We survey theories of war and peace – and the related dynamics of deterrence, coercion, cooperation, and intervention – in order to give students general frameworks for analyzing international security issues in any era. Second, the course examines the origins of the major interstate conflicts of the past century – including World War I, World War II, and the Cold War – in order to give students both historical grounding and an appreciation of the applicability of theory to evidence. Third, the course aims to introduce some of the key security challenges of the post-Cold War era and the 21st century, in order to give students a foundation for exploring contemporary security problems in greater depth in subsequent SSP courses.

Instructional Methodology

The predominant method of instruction in this course is a combination of lecture and seminar-style discussion. Students are expected to ask questions and engage in discussion about the course material. The course also includes a decision-making exercise on a contemporary strategic challenge in order to develop a better appreciation of the strategic concepts, instruments of power, and policy options available to national security leaders.

Course Requirements and Means of Assessment

This course provides an overview of a wide-ranging and complex field; consequently, there is a heavy reading load. Students must complete each week's required readings *before* coming to class, and must be prepared to discuss these readings and the assigned topics during the class period. Students will be called on to discuss specific topics and readings.

Midterm Paper: Students are required to write a 1,500-word midterm paper. The midterm paper assignment will be based on material covered in the course and will not require additional research. The midterm paper is open book / source / notes. However, students may not collaborate with each other in writing their papers. The midterm paper assignment will be distributed in class in Week 7 (October 22), and due at the beginning of class in Week 8 (October 29).

Final Examination: Students are required to complete a two-hour at-home final examination. The final exam will be based on material covered in the course and will not require additional research. The final

exam is *closed book / source / notes*. You may *not* consult your course notes, course readings, or your classmates during the period that you are working on the final exam. The final exam will be distributed electronically at 10:00am on Saturday, **December 14**, and will be due the same day by 12:00pm (noon).

Final grades in the course are determined as follows:

- Midterm Paper 40%
- Final Examination 40%
- Class Participation 20%

SCHEDULE

Part I: Theoretical Frameworks

3 September	Class 1	Introduction to Security Studies
10 September	Class 2	Realism and the Role of Power
17 September	Class 3	Liberalism and the Role of Institutions
24 September	Class 4	Constructivism and the Role of Ideas
1 October	Class 5	Role of Domestic Politics, Organizations, and the Individual
8 October	Class 6	World War I

Part II: Causes of War and Peace

22 October	Class 7	World War II (<i>Midterm paper assignment distributed</i>)
29 October	Class 8	The Cold War (<i>Midterm paper due</i>)
5 November	Class 9	Strategic Use of Military Force

Part III: Contemporary Security Challenges

12 November	Class 10	Alternative Instruments of Influence
19 November	Class 11	Internal Conflict and Humanitarian Intervention
26 November	Class 12	Ethics
3 December	Class 13	Grand Strategy
14 December	Final Exam	<i>Distributed at 10:00am / due by 12:00pm (noon)</i>