Political Science 377
Nuclear Weapons and World Politics
Spring Semester 2014
MW 3:30-4:20
Ingraham 19

Contact Information

Instructor:
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Teachings Assistants:

Annie Anderson
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Course Overview

This course will introduce students to the politics of nuclear weapons. The course will cover the origins of nuclear weapons, the reasons states seek them, the strategies developed for their use, the consequences of their development, and efforts to control and reverse their spread. In addressing these issues, we will study a variety of countries, including Russia, China, North Korea, India, Pakistan, Iraq, and Iran.

The course will consist of two lectures and one discussion section each week. In discussion sections, you will review concepts from lecture and the readings and engage in debates. Discussion section attendance and participation will be part of your grade. Lectures will primarily be conducted in traditional lecture format, but you are encouraged to raise your hand with any questions. While lecture attendance is not recorded, attending the lectures is crucial for success in the class. Outlines of the PowerPoint slides used in lecture will be posted on Learn@UW in advance to assist with note-taking, but the outlines will not include everything in the lecture and are very poor substitutes for attendance.
Course Grade

Your course grade will be based on a midterm exam (20%), a final exam (35%), a research paper (25%), participation in a peer review activity for the research paper (5%), and discussion section attendance and participation (15%).

Exams (20% and 35%): The midterm exam will be held on March 12 during our regular class meeting. The final exam will be held on May 14, 10:05am-12:05pm in a room to be announced. Both exams will consist of short answer questions. More guidance on the exam format will be provided in a separate document. Please make sure that you are available to take the exams on these days. Make-up exams will only be allowed in cases of serious illness or another genuine emergency.

Research Paper (25%): The final research paper will be due at 8am on May 9 in the Learn@UW dropbox. The paper assignment is to take one of the theoretical debates we cover in class and argue which side is correct with respect to a specific case. As one example, the theoretical debate topic could be, “Is nuclear proliferation stabilizing or destabilizing?” applied to the case of India and Pakistan. As another example, the theoretical debate topic could be, “Does the security model, the domestic politics model, or the norms model best explain nuclear proliferation?” applied to the case of France. In building your argument, you should discuss the merits of arguments on each side of the theoretical debate and defend your own position with evidence. You are highly encouraged to consult with the instructor and/or your TA on your paper topic. The paper should be about 4,000 words long. More details on grading criteria for the final paper will be provided in a separate paper grading rubric. Penalties apply for lateness and exceeding the word limit.

Peer Review (5%): Peer review for research papers will proceed in two steps:

- All students must bring two printed copies of their draft paper to their discussion section between April 21 and April 24. The draft paper need not be quite as long as the final paper, but it must be at least 9 double-spaced pages, with standard font and margins. If the paper is late or too short, you will lose the opportunity to participate in peer review and receive a 0 for this grade component. During discussion section, the TA will verify that the drafts meet the minimum requirements and distribute each student’s paper to two reviewers.

- All students must review the two papers they receive by filling out the peer review form posted on Learn@UW and also marking up the papers if necessary. Students must bring the peer review forms and marked-up papers to their discussion section between April 28 and May 1. During discussion section, the TA will briefly evaluate these documents in order to ensure that the reviews are adequate and then distribute them to the authors of the papers. Students will receive the full 5 points for completing both reviews adequately and on time. Students who fail to complete one or both reviews will receive a 0. Slightly late or partially adequate reviews may be accepted for partial credit at the TA’s discretion.

Discussion Section (15%): You will receive a score between 0 and 10 for every discussion section. Generally, you can expect to receive 7 points for being present but silent, 8 points for making at least one relevant contribution, 9 points for making several contributions of reasonably high quality, and 10 points for making frequent contributions of high quality. Your lowest discussion section grade, which may be a 0 for an absence, will be dropped. Otherwise, no absences will be forgiven without documentation of a legitimate reason provided to your TA.
The grade cutoffs for your final grade will be as follows, using standard rounding:

93-100%: A
88-92%: AB
83-87%: B
78-82%: BC
70-77%: C
60-69%: D
0-59%: F

**McBurney Center**

Students utilizing the McBurney Disability Resource Center must present their Verified Individualized Service and Accommodation (VISA) plan to the instructor within the first two weeks of class.

**Readings**

The following book is required:

All other readings will be available online at the Learn@UW website for the course.

**Lecture Schedule**

Note: Required readings are listed for each lecture. Topics may sometimes spill over slightly between classes. Changes to this schedule are possible, but advance notification will be provided.

**Part 1: Introduction**

**January 22:** Course Overview

No required reading

**January 27:** Basic Science of Nuclear Weapons

No required reading

**Part 2: Causes of Proliferation**

**January 29:** Basic Models Explaining Proliferation

February 3: India and Pakistan Proliferation Causes


February 5: The Spiral Model and the Deterrence Model


February 10: North Korea


February 12: Unit-Level Perspectives


February 17: Argentina and Brazil


February 19: The Supply Side of Proliferation


February 24: Is Iran Pursuing Nuclear Weapons?

IAEA Board of Governors. 2013. “Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and Relevant Provisions of Security Council Resolutions in the Islamic Republic of Iran.” GOV/2013/56, 14 November. [I might replace this with a later report, if one is issued.]
Part 3: Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation

February 26: Do Arms Races Cause War?


March 3: Is Nuclear Proliferation Good or Bad?


March 5: Cuban Missile Crisis

No reading

March 5-10: Stability-Instability Paradox, India-Pakistan Proliferation Consequences, and Applications to Iran


March 12: MIDTERM EXAM

March 17 and 19: Spring Break

March 24: Introduction to Preemptive/Preventive War and China Case


March 26: Preventive War in Iraq


March 31: Nuclear Terrorism


Part 4: Nuclear Strategy

April 2: The First Use


April 7-9: Nuclear Strategy Concepts


April 14: National Missile Defense


April 16: The Nuclear Taboo


Part 5: Arms Control and Giving Up the Bomb

April 21-23: Arms Control Theory

April 23-28: Major Arms Control Treaties - SALT, INF, START, NPT, CTBT, etc


April 30: Giving Up Nuclear Weapons - FSU, South Africa, Libya


May 5: Worldwide Nuclear Abolition


May 7: Scenes from Dr. Strangelove

No required reading

Discussion Section Schedule

Note: The cycle of sections (i.e., which section receives each lesson first) shifts around Spring Break, but each section will meet an equal number of times and cover the same basic themes.

No section meetings before January 29

Wed, Jan 29 – Mon, Feb 3: Introductions, review nuclear science

Wed, Feb 5 – Mon, Feb 10: Review Sagan’s models, debate the causes of Indian and Pakistani proliferation

Wed, Feb 12 – Mon, Feb 17: Review spiral and deterrence models, debate the causes of North Korean proliferation

Wed, Feb 19 – Mon, Feb 24: Review unit-level explanations, debate the causes of Argentina’s and Brazil’s non-proliferation

Wed, Feb 26 – Mon, Mar 3: Review the supply side, debate whether Iran is seeking to acquire nuclear weapons
No section meeting on March 5.

**Thurs, Mar 6 – Wed, Mar 12:** Exam review

No section meetings on March 13 and during Spring Break.

**Mon, Mar 24 – Thurs, Mar 27:** Debate whether proliferation is good or bad

**Mon, Mar 31 – Thurs, Apr 3:** Return exams, debate the legitimacy of preemptive and preventive war and the causes of the Iraq War.

**Mon, Apr 7 – Thurs, Apr 10:** Debate the danger of nuclear terrorism and whether the use of nuclear weapons on Japan was effective

**Mon, Apr 14 – Thurs, Apr 17:** Review strategy concepts, debate whether the US should pursue a MAD or NUTS strategy

**Mon, Apr 21 – Thurs, Apr 24:** Debate whether the US should build NMD and whether a nuclear taboo does and should exist. ALSO, BRING DRAFT RESEARCH PAPERS FOR PEER REVIEW.

**Mon, Apr 28 – Thurs, May 1:** Review arms control theory, debate whether arms control is a good idea. ALSO, BRING PEER REVIEW DOCUMENTS TO RETURN TO AUTHOR.

**Mon, May 5 – Thurs, 8:** Debate the most effective strategies for getting countries to give up nuclear weapons and whether worldwide abolition is feasible, exam review.