Defending our Nation against its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the Federal Government. Today, that task has changed dramatically. Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank.


**Course Description:** This course examines the changing meaning of international security—with a special focus on the United States—and is divided into three sections: (1) the traditional security concerns of great power war and nuclear deterrence; (2) these traditional security concerns applied today, such as the effect of American primacy on great power politics and the proliferation of nuclear weapons; and (3) the broadening of the understanding of national security to incorporate “new” threats, such as terrorism, humanitarian crises, the spread of disease, and global climate change.

**Required Reading:** You may purchase the following book from the William and Mary bookstore or try to find less expensive or used copies on the internet.


* Readings on the syllabus marked (BB) and all course documents are available on Blackboard (http://blackboard.wm.edu).

* You are expected to read a major newspaper on a daily basis. You are also encouraged to read other relevant periodicals, such as the *Economist, The National Interest, The Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, Survival, Orbis*, etc.

**Course Requirements:** You are expected to attend class regularly, complete the readings before the class for which they were assigned, and participate in class discussions. Graded assignments include: two exams and a 10-12 page final policy paper. Each exam will include a take-home essay and an in-class exam and will test your ability to think creatively and critically about course material. The take-home essay question will be distributed one week before each exam. Take-home essays will be due at the start of the class during which the in-class portion of the exam will be given. A description of the paper assignment is appended to the syllabus and is also available on Blackboard. **No student can pass the course without completing all assignments.**
Grading: Your participation in class discussions and performance on the reviews and research paper will determine your final grade. They are weighted as follows:

- Participation: 5%
- Midterm: 30%
- Final Exam: 30%
- Final policy paper: 35%

Numeric grades translate into letter grades in the following manner:

- 100-94: A
- 93-90: A-
- 89-87: B+
- 86-84: B
- 83-80: B-, etc.

Late Assignments: You are expected to take the exams at the times indicated. Failure to take an exam at the scheduled time will result in a zero for that exam. Rescheduling an exam or receiving a paper extension because of an absence requires notice from the Health Center or the Dean of Students. Late take-home exam essays will be penalized one letter grade for each day they are late. Late final papers will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late (i.e., the grade for a paper that is one day late will be lowered, for example, from an A- to a B+).

Academic Honesty: You are expected to adhere to the tenets of the Honor Code when completing course assignments; they will be strictly enforced. If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism (e.g., the rules for properly attributing cited material or how to paraphrase), please ask for clarification from me before handing in your work.
Part I: Theoretical and Conceptual Tools

August 25: Introduction


**Question:** * How has the concept of security changed over time?

August 30: Theories of international relations: a review

**Readings:** * Stephen Walt, “International Relations: One World, Many Theories,” *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1998). (BB)

**Question:** * What are the consequences of anarchy for state behavior according to realists, liberals, and constructivists?

September 1 and 6: What is security?

  * Arnold Wolfers, “‘National Security’ as an Ambiguous Symbol,” *Political Science Quarterly* (December 1952). (BB)

**Questions:** * What is security? How do decision makers determine the national interest? Is the national interest a useful guide for making security policy? Should the concept of “human security” replace “national security”?

Part II: Traditional Challenges to International Security

September 8: Great power politics: sources of conflict and war, part I


**Questions:** * What causes interstate war, according to offensive realists like Mearsheimer? What is the offense-defense balance and how does it increase the probability of war?
September 13: Great power politics: sources of conflict and war, part II


Questions:  * What is the logic of commercial pacifism? Why does Kenneth Waltz argue that economic interdependence produces conflict among states? Instead of asking whether economic ties cause peace or war, should the question be: *when* does interdependence cause war/peace?

September 15: Managing great power relations: realist prescriptions


Questions:  * What is the balance of power? Do states balance against each other? If so, why and when? Does balancing prevent war? How does Jervis, a realist, explain the emergence of concert systems?

September 20: Managing great power relations: liberal prescriptions


Questions:  * What is collective security? Why is it attractive and why is it problematic? Would a concert of democracies make a better basis for the creation of a collective security organization than, say, the United Nations?

September 22 and 27: The nuclear revolution and deterrence

* Alexander George, “Coercive Diplomacy,” in *The Use of Force*.
* Kenneth Waltz, “Nuclear Myths and Political Realities,” in *The Use of Force*.

Questions:  * What is deterrence and how is it different from defense? What has been the effect of nuclear weapons on international politics?
Part III: Traditional Security Concerns Today

September 29: Great power politics today: the problem of American primacy?


Questions: * Why did states fail to balance against the United States after the end of the Cold War? Are they balancing the United States now?

October 4: Great power politics today: the rise of China?

Readings: * “Clash of the Titans,” *Foreign Policy* (January/February 2005). (BB)

Questions: * Will the rise of China destabilize the international system? Why? How should the United States respond to rising great powers?

October 6: Great power politics today: the future of major war


Questions: * Is war obsolete? Why do states rarely “die”?

October 8-11: Fall break (no classes)

October 13: The problem of nuclear proliferation


Questions: * Does nuclear proliferation produce stability or instability in the international system? Are you more convinced by Waltz’s deterrence model or Sagan’s bureaucratic politics model?

October 18: Midterm exam (take-home essay due)
October 20: Preventing nuclear proliferation


Questions: * Should we try to eliminate nuclear weapons or control their spread? What would be the best strategy to prevent nuclear proliferation?

October 25: Managing rogue states: containment, preventive war, and assassination


Questions: * What is a rogue state? Can rogue states be deterred? Are preventive war and assassination better strategies for dealing with rogue regimes than deterrence?

October 27: Managing rogue states: the case of Iran

* James Lindsay and Ray Takeyh, “After Iran Gets the Bomb,” *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2010). (BB)

Questions: * Why is Iran developing nuclear technology? What are the arguments for and against attacking Iran to prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability?

Part IV: New International Security Challenges

November 1: International terrorism

Questions: * What does Pape see as the strategic logic behind terrorism? Is international terrorism a threat to international security? How vulnerable is the United States?

**November 3: Counterterrorism**


Questions: * What are the critical factors in defeating a terrorist movement? Can terrorists be deterred?

**November 8: Ethnic conflict and civil war**


Question: * What challenges do intrastate conflict pose for the international community?

**November 10: Humanitarian intervention: creating a stable peace**

* Barry Posen, “Military Responses to Refugee Disasters,” in *The Use of Force*.
* Barbara Walter, “The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement,” in *The Use of Force*.

Question: * What are the most effective international responses to civil wars?

**November 15: Asymmetric war and counterinsurgency**


Questions: * Why do powerful states lose against weaker opponents? What are the challenges posed by counterinsurgencies?

**November 17: The U.S. counterinsurgency campaign in Afghanistan**

* Dominic Tierney, *How We Fight: Crusades, Quagmires, and the American Way of War* (Little Brown, 2010), excerpts. (BB)

**Questions:** * Does the United States tend to fail at nation-building and counterinsurgency? What are the implications of the crusade and quagmire traditions for U.S. security policy? For international security?

**November 22: The environment and AIDS: are they threats to international security?**


**Questions:** * Is the environment an international security issue? What is the relationship between disease and security?

**November 23-27: Thanksgiving break (no classes)**

**November 29 and December 1: U.S. national security policy (final paper due on December 1)**

**Readings:** * Christopher Layne, “From Preponderance to Offshore Balancing,” in *The Use of Force*. 
* G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition,” in *The Use of Force*. 

**Questions:** * What is grand strategy? Does President Obama have a grand strategy? If not, do you think he should have a grand strategy? Given the range of threats to international security and the strategies available for managing them, what grand strategy should the United States pursue?

**Final exam:**

* 329.01 – Exam is scheduled for 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 14 (take-home essay due)

* 329.02 – Exam is scheduled for 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. on Monday, December 13 (take-home essay due)

* COURSE SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR*
Assignment

Write a paper that examines a policy challenge in contemporary international security, offering specific advice either for the U.S. president, the U.N. Secretary General, or a foreign policy decision maker in another country. Your paper should do the following (though not necessarily in this order): (1) outline the nature of the international security problem; (2) explain/defend its importance; (3) set out the positions of the different domestic and international actors on the issue; and (4) integrate relevant academic literature. Having set out the terrain of the debate in terms of the political environment and current IR scholarship, you should identify at least three alternative policy responses and provide a case for why one course of action is preferable.

Examples of possible policy problems on which to write policy papers include: (1) Will existing or future great powers balance against the United States? How should the United Nations manage future great power relations? (2) When should the United States/NATO leave Afghanistan? (3) How should Israel manage the threat posed by a nuclear Iran? (4) In what ways are AIDS or the environment a threat to international security or U.S. national security? Etc.

You might find it useful to look through past issues of *International Security*, *Security Studies*, *The American Interest*, *The National Interest*, and *Foreign Affairs* for possible paper ideas or useful sources.

Deadline:

* Research Paper due on December 1 (at the start of class)

Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late (i.e., the grade for a paper that is one day late will be lowered, for example, from an A- to a B+).

Evaluation:

Evaluation of the paper will be based on:

* Thoroughness of research

You should draw on and cite a wide range of the best and most reliable sources. Be sure to begin your research early. Relying exclusively on JSTOR to locate articles is a mistake, as it usually identifies only a fraction of the available sources. Excellent research requires no small amount of detective work to find the most appropriate and up-to-date sources. If you find one particularly useful article, use its bibliography to track down other sources. There are many potentially useful sources of information: books, chapters in edited books, academic (peer-reviewed) journals, policy journals (e.g. *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *National Interest*); reports from international and non-governmental organizations (e.g.,
IMF, UN, World Bank), and news and magazine periodicals. If relevant, you are also encouraged to use primary sources. The staff at the library will help you locate these sources (e.g., Lexus-Nexus, JSTOR, Web of Science, etc.).

* Quality of Analysis

Your paper should not be merely descriptive but rather should engage in thoughtful and critical analysis of your chosen topic, integrating relevant theories and concepts when applicable. A simple summary of another scholar’s arguments and findings is unacceptable. Similarly, this is not a think piece or an extended editorial. You are being asked to identify an interesting and important policy challenge and to use facts to support your conclusions.

* Quality of Writing and Organization

Write with clarity: be concise and avoid jargon. Pay particular attention to organization. Your paper should be organized logically, so that ideas and arguments flow from one to the next. Proofread for misspellings, grammatical errors, awkward sentences, and so on. Remember that an excellent paper is usually the product of several redrafts. Even the most skilled writers need to polish their prose.

Length, format:

Papers should be 10-12 pages in length (not including the bibliography). They should be typed, double-spaced, and a standard 12 point font. Please number your pages and be certain that your paper is stapled before you hand it in. No electronic copies will be accepted.

Citations:

You must cite any information or ideas borrowed from someone else’s work (when in doubt, cite). Any social science citation style is acceptable as long as it is used correctly and consistently. Include a complete bibliography at the end of the paper. You will be able to find a number of guides in the reference section of the library, describing how to correctly format footnotes and the bibliography. Although I prefer full-citation footnotes to parenthetical notation, you may use the citation style with which you are the most familiar. If you have any questions about whether or how to properly cite material, please ask me for guidance.