POSC 236 National Security Policy

Preliminary Syllabus - Fall 2000

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Course Description & Objectives:

With the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet threat, there has been an ongoing debate concerning the future direction and priorities of US national security/defense policy. This course will join and examine this debate, focusing on national interests, national power, and the global security environment from the perspective of the United States. The course is organized along six broad topical areas: basic concepts of national security, the national security establishment, the national security process, the spectrum of types of security concerns, regional security concerns, and the future of US national security. At the end of the course, students should have a good understanding of the institutions and processes of national security policymaking, and be able to specify US national security interests around the world, determine actual and potential threats to those interests, and propose and analyze policy options for dealing with those threats.

Course Requirements, Policies, & Grading:

The first part of the course, covering sections one through three in the syllabus, will be dominated by class lectures and reading assignments. This part of the course will be completed with a midterm exam. The exam will be a take-home exam, and will consist of several short-essay-answer questions. The exam will seek to test your understanding of the fundamentals of national security affairs and the policymaking establishment and process.

The second part of the course, covering sections four through six in the syllabus, will be dominated by class discussions and debates. While learning from lectures and reading assignments will continue to remain important during this second half of the course, demonstrating an ability to reason through national security problems using theoretical referents, cost-benefit analysis, and historical analogy will be more important. This part of the course will include four group presentations/debates and an individual research project.

Note: Active participation in class discussions and debates and a good class attendance record are expected through the entire course.

For the four group presentations/debates, the class will be divided into four roughly equal groups, each tasked with analyzing policy options for dealing with a national security policy crisis from the diplomatic, military, economic, or political point of view. The details of the crisis complete with a list of potential policy options will be provided to the class a week in advance of the assignment date. On the day of the assignment, the groups must be prepared to engage the rest of the class (including myself as necessary) in a general discussion and debate on the best course of action for handling that crisis from each group's particular (diplomatic, military, economic, or political) point of view (use parts d, e and f from the format for the research project to guide your preparations). With four such assignments and four groups of students, every student will get to represent each of the four points of view. I expect every member of each group to be a full participant in presenting and defending the group's policy position. A lecture period has been set aside for a detailed discussion of the format for these group debates and for a short practice exercise.

The research project is meant to benefit from the skills and knowledge gained from the four group exercises as well as from the reading assignments and class lectures/discussions. In other words, you should view this project as a combination of "term paper" and "final exam." The project will consist of a policy paper (about 15 pages of text excluding endnotes and references; typed, double-spaced, 12pt font, 1" page margins; with within-text
citations, endnotes, and a comprehensive list of all references; generally following the standards established in commonly accepted style manuals) addressing policy options for dealing with some national security issue relevant to the US. The paper should cover all possible policy concerns: diplomatic, military, economic, and political.

All papers must follow this format:

1 Define the issue. Clearly state the issue and provide some contextual information about the current situation.

2 Analyze the issue. Analyze how this issue affects US national security. How does the issue affect US interests? What type of interests are these interests, and how (relatively) important are they to the US? Does this issue pose a threat to these US interests? If so, what kind of threat is it, how serious is the threat, and what are the consequences of this threat?

3 Develop policy options. Develop distinct, viable policy options to address this issue. As a general rule, there should be at least three and not more than five policy options. While doing nothing may in fact be a realistic course of action, do not use this option simply to fill out your list of policy options.

4 Analyze your stated policy options. Analyze each policy option across the diplomatic, military, economic, and political dimensions of analysis. Consider the specific advantages and disadvantages posed by each. What are the benefits, limitations, resource requirements, and constraints associated with each course of action? Each proposed course of action should be analyzed independently of all others. Make sure to numerically rate each course of action with respect to the diplomatic, military, economic, and political dimensions of analysis.

5 Recommend a course of action. Based upon your analysis, recommend a specific policy option for implementation.

6 Justify your recommendation. Justify why your recommended course of action should be implemented as part of US national security policy. Do not simply restate your analysis from part d. Instead, state and discuss how this specific course of action furthers US goals and objectives, both with respect to the particular issue being studied as well as in broader terms. Make sure to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of this course of action relative to the advantages and disadvantages of each of the other courses of action.

7 Conclusions. What are your conclusions about this issue, your recommended course of action, and current US national security policy with respect to this issue?

Note: All students must discuss their paper topics with me well ahead of the project due date.

Grades will be based on the following distribution scheme:

Midterm exam: 25 %
Group debate #1: 10 %
Group debate #2: 10 %
Group debate #3: 10 %
Group debate #4: 10 %
Research project: 35 %

98 -100 % A+
94 - 97 % A
91 - 93 % A-
88 - 90 % B+
83 - 87 % B
79 - 82 % B-
76 - 78 % C+
72 - 75 % C
All students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Any act of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Office of the Dean. For further information, see Carleton College's Academic Honesty in the Writing of Essays and Other Papers and the section on "academic honesty" in Academic Regulations and Procedures, 2000-01. Both are available in Laird 140.

Special needs: Students requiring access to learning tools or special schedules approved by Student Support Services should contact me at the beginning of the course.

Reading Assignments:

You are expected to keep up with the reading assignments as we go through the term, which means that you are supposed to read each assignment before the corresponding class period. The class lectures and discussions are meant to build upon the assigned reading material.

The following three required texts are available at the bookstore:


Section I: Basic Concepts of National Security

W 9/13 - Introduction to the study of national security: SCS 1; DMS 1 & 3; JTM 1 & 3.

F 9/15 - National power, national interests, and national security: DMS 2 & 7; JTM 2.

Section II: The US National Security Establishment

M 9/18 - The president, the presidency, and the "policy triad": SCS 4, 5, & 14; JTM 5.

W 9/20 - The US military establishment: SCS 6; JTM 8.

The US intelligence community: SCS 7; JTM 7.

F 9/22 - The US intelligence community (continued).

The geopolitical context: SCS 11.

Section III: The US National Security Policymaking Process

M 9/25 - The US political system and the policymaking process: SCS 3 & 8; DMS 5.

W 9/27 - Congress, the president, and the budgetary process: SCS 9; JTM 6 & 9.

F 9/29 - Bringing the pieces together and making the system work: SCS 10 & 13; JTM 10.

Section IV: The Spectrum of Types of National Security Concerns
M 10/2 - The end of the Cold War and a "new" world without much order:


   [Midterm exam to be handed out.]

W 10/4 - Old security concerns in the "new" world (Major Regional Conflicts):

   DMS 8:206-213; JTM 12.


F 10/6 - Insurgency and counterinsurgency (Low Intensity Conflicts):


   New internal wars and external intervention (Military Operations Other Than War): DMS 10; JTM 22.


   [Midterm exam due by 4 PM.]

M 10/9 - International terrorism-causes and responses:


W 10/11 - Weapons of mass destruction-proliferation and arms control:


https://acad.carleton.edu/curricular/POSC/classes/Posc236/F00/index.html


F 10/13 - [Lecture on the format for the group debates and a short practice exercise.]

[Midterm break.]


F 10/20 - [Group debate #1.]

[Midterm break.]

M 10/23 - Europe (Western Europe, Eastern Europe, the Balkans, and the Caucasus):


W 10/25 - Europe (continued).

F 10/27 - [Group debate #2.]

[Crisis sheet for group debate #3 to be handed out.]

M 10/30 - The expanded Middle East (Central Asia, Southwest Asia, and North Africa): JTM 18.


Emily Landau. 1998. "Change in Israeli Nuclear Policy?" *Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies Strategic Assessment* 1 (1).


W 11/1 - The expanded Middle East (continued).

F 11/3 - [Group debate #3.]

[Crisis sheet for group debate #4 to be handed out.]

M 11/6 - Asia (Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia):

DMS 6:157; JTM 17.


W 11/8 - Asia (continued).

**Section VI: The Future of US National Security**

F 11/10 - [Group debate #4.]


F 11/17 - [Research project policy paper due by 4 PM.]