

POLI 4040-02 | SPECIAL TOPICS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: NUCLEAR POLITICS AND SECURITY FALL 2019

Instructor: Michael Reed

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Classroom: Himes 253

Lectures: Monday, Wednesday, & Friday (12:30 – 1:20)

Office: Stubbs 318

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday (9:30 – 11:30) or by appointment

Course Description

The moment the first nuclear weapon was detonated in July 1945, over the sands of Jornada del Muerto Desert, New Mexico, international politics changed forever. America's nuclear monopoly would be short-lived, as the Soviet Union would successfully test its first bomb in 1949. The traditional balance of power upon which international order had relied was replaced by a precarious balance of terror. Secretary of War Henry Stimson told his contemporaries that the bomb shouldn't be thought of "as a new weapon merely but as a revolutionary change in the relations of man to the universe," and warned it could be "a Frankenstein which would eat us up." Indeed, the United States has gone to great lengths to limit nuclear proliferation, as the JCPOA (Iran nuclear agreement) and recent summits with North Korea's Kim Jong-un attest.

This course will conduct a thorough assessment of the politics surrounding nuclear weapons, the strategy guiding their deployment, and the security policies states have implemented to limit their use. We will discuss the science and history of nuclear weapons development, strategy, non-proliferation policy, command and control of nuclear weapons, nuclear terrorism, and arms control agreements. Among other things, we will ask: Does the proliferation of nuclear weapons make war more or less likely? Under which circumstances would deterrence be likely to fail? How do states use nuclear weapons as instruments of coercive diplomacy? Why do states pursue nuclear weapons programs, and why do they end them? What are the different nuclear strategies states have adopted, and why do they choose them?

Required Books

Sagan, Scott D., and Kenneth N. Waltz. 2013. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. ISBN: 9780393920109

Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. ISBN: 0333972392

Class Assignments

Examinations (60%): Students will take 2 exams, each constituting 30% of the final grade. The midterm exam will occur on *Wednesday, 16 October 2019, at 12:30pm*. The final exam will occur on *Thursday, 12 December 2019, at 7:30am*. The final exam will be cumulative, but with more weight given to material covered during the second half of the course. Students must present their student ID to be admitted on exam day.

Final Paper (30%): Students will choose from one of the books listed below and write a final paper tying the book's themes into the course. The paper will be due on the final class, *Friday, 6 December 2019*. More information will be given in class about fulfilling this course requirement.

Mueller, John. 2010. *Atomic Obsession: Nuclear Alarmism from Hiroshima to Al-Qaeda*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199837090

Sagan, Scott D. 1995. *The Limits of Safety: Organizations, Accidents, and Nuclear Weapons*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9780691021010

Richelson, Jeffrey. 2007. *Spying on the Bomb: American Nuclear Intelligence from Nazi Germany to Iran and North Korea*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. ISBN: 9780393329827

Narang, Vipin. 2014. *Nuclear Strategy in the Modern Era: Regional Powers and International Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9780691159836

Attendance (10%): It is imperative that students attend all lectures. Lectures will always introduce new material related, but not identical, to the readings for each respective week. For full credit, students must submit a short summary of the reading for each day. Students are allowed 3 unexcused absences; each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a 1 point penalty applied to the final grade, up to a maximum of 10 points.

Grading Scale

A+: 97-100	A: 93-96	A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89	B: 83-86	B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79	C: 73-76	C-: 70-72
D+: 67-69	D: 63-66	D-: 60-62
F: 59 or below		

The letter grade A, including A+ and A-, denotes *distinguished mastery* of the course material.

The letter grade B, including B+ and B-, denotes *good mastery* of the course material.

The letter grade C, including C+ and C-, denotes *acceptable mastery* of the course material.

The letter grade D, including D+ and D-, denotes *minimally acceptable achievement*.

F denotes *failure*.

Class Schedule

Week 1: Introduction – Do Nuclear Weapons Matter?

“The atomic bomb is shit. This is a weapon which has no military significance. It will make a big bang—a very big bang—but it is not a weapon which is useful in war.” –Robert Oppenheimer

- **8/26** – Course Introduction
- **8/28** – Mueller, John. 2018. “Nuclear Weapons Don’t Matter, But Nuclear Hysteria Does.” *Foreign Affairs* 97 (6): 10-15
- **8/30** – Tannenwald, Nina. 2018. “The Vanishing Nuclear Taboo? How Disarmament Fell Apart.” *Foreign Affairs* 97 (6): 16-24.

Week 2: History and Effects of the Bomb

“I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.” –Robert Oppenheimer, on the first detonation of a nuclear weapon

“First of all let me say that I have no hope of clearing my conscience. The things we are working on are so terrible that no amount of protesting or fiddling with politics will save our souls...But I am not really convinced of your objections. I do not feel that there is any chance to outlaw any one weapon. If we have a slim chance of survival, it lies in the possibility to get rid of wars...Our only hope is in getting the facts of our results before the people. This might help to convince everybody that the next war would be fatal. For this purpose, actual combat-use might even be the best thing.” –Edward Teller’s response to Leo Szilard’s protest against using the atomic bomb.

- **9/2** – NO CLASS
- **9/4** – Rhodes, Richard. 1986. “Trinity.” *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. P. 617-678.
- **9/6** – Rhodes, Richard. 1986. “Tongues of Fire.” *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. P. 679-711.

Week 3: History and Effects of the Bomb, cont.

“I don’t think we ought to use this thing unless we absolutely have to. It is a terrible thing to order the use of something that is so terribly destructive beyond anything we have ever had. You have got to understand that this isn’t a military weapon. It is used to wipe out women, children, and unarmed people, and not for military use. So we have to treat this differently from rifles and cannon and ordinary things like that.” –President Harry Truman

- **9/9** – Rhodes, Richard. 1986. “Tongues of Fire.” *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. P. 712-747.
- **9/11** – Stimson, Henry L. 1947. “The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb.” *Harper’s Magazine* 194 (1161): 97-107.
- **9/13** – Sagan, Scott D. and Benjamin A. Valentino. 2017. “Revisiting Hiroshima in Iran: What Americans Really Think about Using Nuclear Weapons and Killing Noncombatants.” *International Security* 42 (1): 41-79.

Week 4: Nuclear Strategy and Statecraft

“Are we to rely upon weapons of mass destruction as an integral and vitally important component of our military strength, which we would expect to employ deliberately, immediately, and unhesitatingly in the event that we become involved in a military conflict with the Soviet Union? Or are we to retain such weapons in our national arsenal only as a deterrent to the use of similar weapons against ourselves and as a possible means of retaliation in case they are used?” –George Kennan

“The first and most vital step in the American security program for the age of atomic bombs is to take measures to guarantee ourselves in case of attack the possibility of retaliation in kind. Thus far the chief purpose of a military establishment has been to win wars. From now on its chief purpose must be to avert them. It can have no other useful purpose.” –Bernard Brodie

- **9/16** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “Strategy for an Atomic Monopoly” and “Strategy for an Atomic Stalemate.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 45-71.
- **9/18** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “Offence and Defence” and “Aggression and Retaliation.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 21-42.
- **9/20** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “Massive Retaliation.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 72-85.

Week 5: Nuclear Strategy and Statecraft, cont.

“[After a nuclear war] the victor will be in a position to issue orders to the loser and the loser will have to obey them or face complete chaos or extinction. The victor will then go on to organize what remains of the world as best he can. Certainly he will try to see to it that there is never again a possibility that the loser possesses nuclear weapons.” –Paul Nitze

- **9/23** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “Limited Objectives” and “Limited Means.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 89-113.
- **9/25** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “The Importance of Being First” and “Sputniks and the Soviet Threat.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 117-145.
- **9/27** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “The Technological Arms Race.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 146-161.

Week 6: Nuclear Strategy and Statecraft, cont.

“Almost every analyst is now in agreed that the first use of nuclear weapons—even if against military targets—is likely to be less for the purpose of destroying the other’s military forces or handicapping its operations, than for redress, warning, bargaining, punitive, fining, or deterrence purposes.” –Herman Kahn

“It hardly seems necessary to tell the Russians that we should fight them if they attack us. But we go to great lengths to tell the Russians that they will have America to contend with if they or their satellites attack countries associated with us. Saying so, unfortunately, does not make it true; and if it is true, saying so does not always make it believed. We evidently do not want war and would only fight if we had to. The problem is to demonstrate that we would have to.” –Thomas Schelling

- **9/30** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “The Formal Strategists,” “Arms Control,” and “Bargaining and Escalation.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 165-211.
- **10/2** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “City-Avoidance” and “Assured Destruction.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 215-242.
- **10/4** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “The Soviet Approach to Deterrence” and “The Chinese Connection.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 243-267.

Week 7: Nuclear Strategy and Statecraft, cont.

“Nuclear weapons make a unique contribution in rendering the risks of any aggression incalculable and unacceptable. Thus, they remain essential to preserve peace. The fundamental purpose of the nuclear forces of the Allies is political: to preserve peace and prevent coercion and any kind of war. They will continue to fulfill an essential role by ensuring uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies’ response to military aggression. They demonstrate that aggression of any kind is not a rational option.” –NATO’s 1991 Strategic Concept

- **10/7** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “Military-Industrial Complexities,” “The Consensus Undermined,” and “Parity.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 317-354.
- **10/9** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “Selective Options” and “The Reagan Administration and the Great Nuclear Debate.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 355-406.
- **10/11** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “The Threat Evaporates” and “The Second Nuclear Age.” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 407-457.

Week 8: Nuclear Strategy and Statecraft, cont.

“U.S. nuclear capabilities cannot prevent all conflict, and should not be expected to do so. But, they contribute uniquely to the deterrence of both nuclear and non-nuclear aggression. They are essential for these purposes and will be so for the foreseeable future...The highest U.S. nuclear policy and strategy priority is to deter potential adversaries from nuclear attack of any scale...Given the range of potential adversaries, their capabilities and strategic objectives, this review calls for a flexible, tailored nuclear deterrent strategy.” –Department of Defense 2018 Nuclear Posture Review

- **10/14** – Freedman, Lawrence. 2003. “Can There Be a Nuclear Strategy?” *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan. P. 458-464.
- **10/16** – MIDTERM EXAM
- **10/18** – NO CLASS

Week 9: Nuclear Proliferation

“The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” –Albert Einstein

- **10/21** – Waltz, Kenneth N. 2013. “More May Be Better” in *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company: 3-40.
- **10/23** – Sagan, Scott D. 2013. “More Will Be Worse” in *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company: 41-81
- **10/25** – Waltz, Kenneth N. 2013. “Waltz Responds to Sagan” in *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company: 82-111.

Week 10: Nuclear Proliferation, cont.

“It may well be that we shall by a process of sublime irony have reached a stage in this story where safety will be the sturdy child of terror, and survival the twin brother of annihilation.” –Winston Churchill

- **10/28** – Sagan, Scott D. 2013. “Sagan Responds to Waltz” in *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company: 112-134.
- **10/30** – Sagan, Scott D. 1996. “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb.” *International Security* 21 (3): 54-86.
- **11/1** – Narang, Vipin. 2017. “Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation.” *International Security* 41 (3): 110-150.

Week 11: Nuclear Proliferation, cont.

“The objective of nuclear weapons policy should not be solely to decrease the number of weapons in the world, but to make the world safer—which is not necessarily the same thing.” –Herman Kahn

- **11/4** – Solingen, Eitel. 1994. “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint.” *International Security* 19 (2): 126-169.
- **11/6** – Gerzhoy, Gene. 2015. “Alliance Coercion and Nuclear Restraint: How the United States Thwarted West Germany’s Nuclear Ambitions.” *International Security* 39 (4): 91-129.
- **11/8** – Levite, Ariel E. 2002. “Never Say Never Again: Nuclear Reversal Revisited.” *International Security* 27 (3): 59-88.

Week 12: Iran, the JCPOA, and Next Steps

“But how can we in good conscience justify war before we’ve tested a diplomatic agreement that achieves our objectives; that has been agreed to by Iran; that is supported by the rest of the world; and that preserves our options if the deal falls short? How could we justify that to our troops? How could we justify that to the world or to future generations? In the end, that should be a lesson that we’ve learned from over a decade of war. On the front end, ask tough questions. Subject our own assumptions to evidence and analysis. Resist the conventional wisdom and the drumbeat of war. Worry less about being labeled weak; worry more about getting it right.” –President Barack Obama, 2015

- **11/11** – Kerr, Paul K. and Kenneth Katzman. 2018. “Iran Nuclear Agreement and U.S. Exit.” *Congressional Research Service*. URL: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/R43333.pdf>
- **11/13** – Kroenig, Matthew. 2012. “Time to Attack Iran: Why a Strike is the Least Bad Option.” *Foreign Affairs* 91 (1): 76-86.
Kahl, Colin H. 2012. “Not Time to Attack Iran: Why War Should be a Last Resort.” *Foreign Affairs* 91 (2): 166-173.
Kroenig, Matthew. 2014. “Still Time to Attack Iran: The Illusion of a Comprehensive Nuclear Deal.” *Foreign Affairs*. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-01-07/still-time-attack-iran>
Kahl, Colin H. 2014. “Still Not Time to Attack Iran: Why the U.S. Shouldn’t Play Chicken with Tehran.” *Foreign Affairs*. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2014-01-07/still-not-time-attack-iran>
- **11/15** – Cassidy, John. 2013. “Iran Nuke Deal: Do Economic Sanctions Work After All?” *The New Yorker*. URL: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/iran-nuke-deal-do-economic-sanctions-work-after-all>

Week 13: North Korea

“North Korea best not make any more threats to the United States. They will be met with fire and fury like the world has never seen. He has been very threatening beyond a normal state. They will be met with fire, fury, and frankly power the likes of which this world has never seen before...North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un just stated that the ‘Nuclear Button is on his desk at all times.’ Will someone from his depleted and food starved regime please inform him that I too have a Nuclear Button, but it is a much bigger & more powerful one than his, and my Button works!” –President Donald Trump, 2017, 2018

- **11/18** – Panda, Ankit and Vipin Narang. 2018. “North Korea’s Nuclear Program Isn’t Going Anywhere.” *Foreign Affairs*. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-08-13/north-koreas-nuclear-program-isnt-going-anywhere>
Shifrinson, Joshua. 2018. “Learning to Love Kim’s Bomb: The Upside of a Nuclear-Armed North Korea.” *Foreign Affairs*. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-10-03/learning-love-kims-bomb>

- **11/20** – Sagan, Scott D. 2018. “The Korean Missile Crisis: Why Deterrence is Still the Best Option.” *Foreign Affairs*. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2017-09-10/korean-missile-crisis>
Jeffrey, James. 2018. “What if H. R. McMaster is Right about North Korea?” *The Atlantic*. URL: <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/01/hr-mcmaster-might-be-right-about-north-korea/550799/>
- **11/22** – Cha, Victor and Katrin Fraser Katz. 2018. “The Right Way to Coerce North Korea: Ending the Threat without Going to War.” *Foreign Affairs*. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/north-korea/2018-04-01/right-way-coerce-north-korea>
Mastro, Oriana Skylar. 2018. “Why China Won’t Rescue North Korea: What to Expect if Things Fall Apart.” *Foreign Affairs*. URL: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2017-12-12/why-china-wont-rescue-north-korea>

Week 14: Modern Problems

- **11/25** – Acton, James M. 2018. “Escalation through Entanglement: How the Vulnerability of Command-and-Control Systems Raises the Risks of an Inadvertent Nuclear War.” *International Security* 43 (1): 56-99.
- **11/27** – NO CLASS
- **11/29** – NO CLASS

Week 15: Modern Problems cont.

- **12/2** – Sagan, Scott D. 2000. “The Commitment Trap: Why the United States Should Not Use Nuclear Threats to Deter Biological and Chemical Weapons Attacks.” *International Security* 24 (4): 85-115.
- **12/4** – Narang, Neil and Rupal N. Mehta. 2019. “The Unforeseen Consequences of Extended Deterrence: Moral Hazard in a Nuclear Client State.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 63 (1): 218-250.
- **12/6** – Course Wrap-up

Academic Misconduct Statement

Integrity, not industry or ingenuity, is the highest academic virtue. Lying, cheating, and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

According to section 10.1 of the LSU Code of Student Conduct, “A student may be charged with Academic Misconduct” for a variety of offenses, including the following: unauthorized copying, collusion, or collaboration; “falsifying” data or citations; “assisting someone in the commission or attempted commission of an offense”; and plagiarism, which is defined in section 10.1.H as a “lack of appropriate citation, or the unacknowledged inclusion of someone else’s words, structure, ideas, or data; failure to identify a source, or the submission of essentially the same work for two assignments without permission of the instructor(s).”

Disability Services Statement

According to the General Catalog, “The *Office of Disability Services* assists students in identifying and developing accommodations and services to help overcome barriers to the achievement of personal and academic goals. Services are provided for students with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accommodations and services are based on the individual student's disability-based need.” Students seeking accommodations must provide current documentation of their disabilities to the course instructor. Students should contact the office early so that necessary accommodations can be arranged.

Humanities and Social Sciences Competency Statement

LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.