

**Security Studies: Theories and Concepts  
PSCI / IS 3104**

**Department of Political Science  
Virginia Tech  
Fall 2024**

**Paul Avey**

**Course Information**

Course Time: T/Th 9:30am – 10:45am  
Course Room: Torgersen 1010

**Contact Information**

Office: 513 Major Williams Hall  
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Office Hours: T/Th 2:00pm – 3:15pm and by appointment.

**Graduate Teaching Assistant**

Name: Removed

**Course Description**

This course provides an overview of security studies as a field of study. Part One introduces key methods and approaches used to understand international security issues. In Part Two the class explores major historical conflicts with a focus on the role played by factors such as the international system, regimes, and individuals. Part Three considers prominent issues in security studies. In Part Four we apply insights developed throughout the course to explore several contemporary security environments. Having completed the course, students will be more capable of assessing and contributing to discussions on international security as well as utilizing social science tools to evaluate complex phenomena.

**Course Outline**

**Part 1: Concepts and Approaches**

August 27 (T)	Class 1	Introduction
August 29 (Th)	Class 2	Theory
September 3 (T)	Class 3	Anarchy and Force
September 5 (Th)	No Class	No Class
September 10 (T)	Class 4	Realism
September 12 (Th)	Class 5	Liberalism
September 17 (T)	Class 6	Workshop
September 19 (Th)	Class 7	Constructivism
September 24 (T)	Class 8	Critical Studies

September 26 (Th)    Class 9            Discussion

### **Part 2: Hot and Cold Wars**

October 1 (T)            Class 10            World War I  
October 3 (Th)          Class 11            World War II  
October 8 (T)            Class 12            Cold War  
October 10 (Th)        Class 13            Iraq  
October 15 (T)          Class 14            Discussion  
October 17 (Th)        Exam                Midterm Exam

### **Part 3: Issues**

October 22 (T)          Class 15            Economics  
October 24 (Th)        Class 16            Environment  
October 29 (T)          Class 17            WMD  
October 31 (Th)        Class 18            Terrorism  
November 5 (T)        No Class            No Class (US Elections)  
November 7 (Th)        Class 19            Health  
November 12 (T)        Class 20            Cyber  
November 14 (Th)      Class 21            Discussion

### **Part 4: Contemporary Environments**

November 19 (T)        Class 22            Asia  
November 21 (Th)      Class 23            Europe  
November 26 – 28      No Class            No Class (Thanksgiving Break)  
December 3 (T)        Class 24            Middle East  
December 5 (Th)        Class 25            A Liberal Order?  
December 10 (T)        Class 26            Discussion  
  
December 16 (M)        Final Exam        Final Exam (7:45am – 9:45am)

A detailed schedule with readings and assignment due dates below.

### **Grading**

There are 200 total points in the class. Grades are based on attendance, four quizzes, three group memos, a midterm exam, and a final exam. Any late assignment will automatically lose 10% of the grade for each day it is late. After five days past the due date you can turn in an assignment for 50% credit up to the final class day. No late assignments will be accepted after the last class day (December 10). Missed quizzes cannot be made up. If you are not able to turn in an assignment the day it is due for any reason that you know of in advance, including excused absences for athletics, religious holidays, military orders, etc., you must complete the assignment and turn it in prior to the due date. There are no extensions for any assignment except in the case of documented health or family emergencies. All such cases must be documented by a Class

Absence Verification through the Dean of Students: <https://dos.vt.edu/>. Information and a request form are available on their website.

For assignments that you need to upload to Canvas, submit the assignment as a Word document. If you do not have Word, contact the professor to make alternative arrangements. When uploading your assignment be certain to check that it has loaded properly and that you can access and read it. Files that do not appear or cannot be opened will be marked late even if you completed the assignment by the due date. If you have trouble uploading the file to Canvas you must notify the professor and email an electronic copy before the assignment is due.

The grade you receive at the end of the semester is final and will not be rounded up or down. The only exceptions are if there is a calculation error in your point total. If you believe there are any errors or omissions with your grade immediately contact the professor.

**Additional information on grading and university and course policies removed from public version.**

### **Required Reading**

The following two books are required and are available for purchase at the university bookstore or through online distributors. Be sure to get the correct edition (6<sup>th</sup>) of the Collins textbook.

- 1) Alan Collins, *Contemporary Security Studies*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022)
- 2) Frank McDonough, *The Origins of the First and Second World Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Readings with an AC are from the Collins textbook. Other readings have a link or are available in the Files folder in Canvas. Readings with a URL can be accessed by clicking on the link in the Canvas syllabus or entering the URL manually. Note that the links may not work if you are not on campus or logged in to Virginia Tech. If you are not able to access a reading, first check that you're logged in properly. If you still having difficulty accessing a reading, contact the professor.

## Course Reading and Assignment Schedule

### **Part 1: Concepts and Approaches**

#### **August 27 (T) Class 1. Introduction**

- No reading

#### **August 29 (R) Class 2. Theory**

- Carl Zimmer, “In Science, It’s Never ‘Just a Theory,’” *The New York Times*, April 8, 2016, pages 1-4. Reading available on Canvas in Files -> Readings.
- Tom Nichols, “How America Lost Faith in Expertise,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 96, No. 2 (March/April 2017), pages 60-73,  
<https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora96&i=290>

#### **September 3 (T) Class 3. Anarchy and Force**

- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, pages 400-408 (sections 84-116). Reading available on Canvas in Files -> Readings.
- Tami Davis Biddle, “Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners,” *Texas National Security Review*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring 2020), pages 95-109,  
<https://tnsr.org/2020/02/coercion-theory-a-basic-introduction-for-practitioners>

*First Group Memo assignment available on Canvas at 9:30am.*

#### **September 5 (Th) No Class.**

- No reading
- Work on First Group Memo

#### **September 10 (T) Class 4. Realism**

- AC, Charles L. Glaser, “Realism,” pages 13-29 (Chapter 2)

#### **September 12 (Th) Class 5. Liberalism**

- AC, Patrick Morgan and Allan Collins, “Liberalism and Liberal Internationalism,” pages 30-46 (Chapter 3)

*First Group Memo assignment due via Canvas by 9:30am. One group member can upload assignment with all group member names.*

#### **September 17 (T) Class 6. Workshop**

- No reading
- Be sure to bring a pen or pencil to class.

#### **September 19 (Th) Class 7. Constructivism**

- AC, Christine Agius, “Social Constructivism,” pages 73-89 (Chapter 6)

### **September 24 (T) Class 8. Critical Studies**

- AC, David Mutimer with Derek Verbakel, “Critical Security Studies: A Schematic History,” pages 90-110 (Chapter 7)

### **September 26 (Th) Class 9. Discussion**

- No reading

*Quiz 1 due by beginning of class. The quiz will be available on Canvas beginning at 9:30am on Wednesday, September 25. Once you begin the quiz you will have 20 minutes to complete it.*

*Second Group Memo assignment available on Canvas at 9:30am.*

### **Part 2: Hot and Cold Wars**

### **October 1 (T) Class 10. World War I**

- McDonough, *The Origins of the First and Second World Wars*, pages 3-18

### **October 3 (Th) Class 11. World War II**

- McDonough, *The Origins of the First and Second World Wars*, pages 43-64, 69-82
- “What is Fascism?” *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 14, 2023, <https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/what-fascism>

*Second Group Memo assignment due via Canvas by 9:30am. One group member can upload assignment with all group member names.*

### **October 8 (T) Class 12. Cold War**

- John Lewis Gaddis, “The Long Peace: Elements of Stability in the Postwar International System,” *International Security*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1986), pages 99-142, <https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/stable/2538951>
- “What Are the Origins of Communism?” *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 15, 2023, <https://education.cfr.org/learn/reading/what-are-origins-communism>

### **October 10 (Th) Class 13. Iraq**

- Hal Brands, “The Dangers of Being Grand: George W. Bush and the Post-9/11 Era,” pages 144-189, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt5hh0bc.9>.

### **October 15 (T) Class 14. Discussion**

- No Reading

*Quiz 2 due by beginning of class. The quiz will be available on Canvas beginning at 9:30am on Monday, October 14. Once you begin the quiz you will have 20 minutes to complete it.*

### **October 17 (Th) Midterm Exam.**

- No reading.

*Midterm exam in-class. Bring a pen (blue or black ink) or pencil and 1-2 blue books.*

### **Part 3: Issues**

#### **October 22 (T) Class 15. Economics**

- AC, Gary M. Shiffman, “Economic Security,” pages 263-277 (Chapter 18)

#### **October 24 (Th) Class 16. Environment**

- AC, Geoff Dabelko, “Environmental Security,” pages 235-252 (Chapter 16)

#### **October 29 (T) Class 17. WMD**

- AC, James J. Wirtz, “Weapons of Mass Destruction,” pages 312-328 (Chapter 21)

#### **October 31 (Th) Class 18. Terrorism**

- AC, Brenda Lutz and James Lutz, “Terrorism,” pages 329-345 (Chapter 22)

#### **November 5 (T) No Class. US Elections.**

- If you are eligible – Vote!

#### **November 7 (Th) Class 19. Health**

- AC, Stefan Elbe and Eva Hilberg, “Health and Security,” pages 390-403 (Chapter 25)

#### **November 12 (T) Class 20. Cyber**

- AC, Myriam Dunn Cavelty, “Cyber-Security” pages 422-436 (Chapter 28)

#### **November 14 (Th) Class 21. Discussion**

- No Reading

*Quiz 3 due by beginning of class. The quiz will be available on Canvas beginning at 9:30am on Wednesday, November 13. Once you begin the quiz you will have 20 minutes to complete it.*

*Third Group Memo assignment available on Canvas at 9:30am.*

### **Part 4: Contemporary Environments**

#### **November 19 (T) Class 22. Asia**

- Ian Johnson, “Xi’s Age of Stagnation: The Great Walling-Off of China” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 102, No. 5 (September/October 2023), pages 102-117, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora102&i=968>
- Odd Arne Westad, “Sleepwalking Toward War: Will America and China Heed the Warnings of Twentieth-Century Catastrophe?” *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 103, No. 4 (July/August 2024), pages 78-89, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora103&i=716>

### **November 21 (Th) Class 23. Europe**

- Stephen Kotkin, “The Five Futures of Russia: And How America Can Prepare for Whatever Comes Next,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (May/June 2024), pages 64-83, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora103&i=488>
- Mary E. Sarotte, “Containment Beyond the Cold War: How Washington Lost the Post-Soviet Peace,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 6 (Nov/Dec 2021), pages 22-35, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora100&i=1156>

*Third Group Memo assignment due via Canvas by 9:30am. One group member can upload assignment with all group member names.*

### **December 3 (T) Class 24. Middle East**

- Marc Lynch, “The Arab Uprisings Never Ended: The Enduring Struggle to Remake the Middle East,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 1 (Jan/Feb 2021), 111-122, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora100&i=113>
- Suzanne Maloney, “Iran’s Order of Chaos: How the Islamic Republic is Remaking the Middle East,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (May/June 2024), pages 97-109, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora103&i=521>
- Tom Segev, “Israel’s Forever War: The Long History of Managing—Rather Than Solving—the Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 3 (May/June 2024), pages 110-124, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora103&i=534>

### **December 5 (Th) Class 25. A Liberal Order?**

- G. John Ikenberry, “Why American Power Endures: The U.S.-Led Order Isn’t in Decline,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 101, No. 6 (November/December 2022), <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora101&i=1196>
- Andrea Kendall-Taylor and Richard Fontaine, “The Axis of Upheaval: How America’s Adversaries Are Uniting to Overturn the Global Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 3, (May/June 2024), pages 50-63, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora103&i=474>
- Fareed Zakaria, “The Self-Doubting Superpower: America Shouldn’t Give Up on the World It Made,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 103, No. 1 (January/February 2024), pages 38-55, <https://heinonline.org/HOL/P?h=hein.journals/fora103&i=40>

### **December 10 (T) Class 26. Discussion**

- No Reading

*Quiz 4 due by beginning of class. The quiz will be available on Canvas beginning at 9:30am on Monday, December 9. Once you begin the quiz you will have 20 minutes to complete it.*

### **December 16 (M). Final Exam: 7:45am – 9:35am**

- *Bring a pen (blue or black ink) or pencil and 2-3 blue books.*