COURSE DESCRIPTION
This is a course about the sub-discipline of International Relations known as (International) Security Studies. It has two main purposes. The first is to introduce advanced undergraduates to the sub-discipline, tracing both its historical evolution as an academic enterprise and the lines of theoretical debate that currently define it as a field of study. The second is to provide a context within which students can complete a substantive piece of independent scholarship on an international security topic of their choice. In this latter respect, the course is intended not only to help students deepen their understanding of an important issue related to international peace and security; it is also intended to strengthen their reading, research and writing skills in preparation for their capstone project.

Substantively, the seminar is organized into two parts. The first asks “what is security” and then proceeds to provide a number of theoretically grounded answers to that question. This section thus provides an overview of the major theoretical approaches to the study of international security, highlighting their respective conceptual, ontological, epistemological and political differences. The second section builds on this theoretical foundation by providing a framework within which students can identify an interesting and important question related to international security and then systematically develop a theoretically governed, empirically supported answer to that question.
COURSE EXPECTATIONS
All students are expected to attend all classes and complete all assigned readings. In addition, students will be required to deliver one in-class presentation in which they identify and provide critical commentary on the main arguments, key concepts, and theoretical underpinnings of the readings for their assigned week/session. Students will also be required to complete a major research paper (approx. 15-20pp) on a relevant topic. NO LATE DRAFTS OR FINAL PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

There will be no tests, quizzes or final exam in this course.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
Reflecting both the College’s core values and the PS Department’s teaching vision, the learning objectives of this course are to develop or deepen the a number of key Knowledge Competencies, Skill Competencies, and Attitudes:

Knowledge Competencies
At the end of this course you should have a clear understanding of:

• the (contested) meaning of “international security”;
• the principal theoretical approaches to the study of international security;
• the key international security issues arising out of the various theoretical approaches to international security.

Skill Competencies
At the end of this course you should be better able to:

• think rigorously, theoretically and critically about “international security”;
• identify at least one key security challenge facing the international community;
• explain the conversation/debate taking place between various schools of thought related to these issues and challenges;
• participate in this conversation by advocating a particular school of thought;
• develop a cogent and persuasive argument likely to resonate with a target audience;
• read an academic text in a close and focused manner;
• locate and synthesize needed information from a range of professional journals and other sources;
• write an analytical paper that suitable for publication in a foreign policy journal; and,
• develop and manage your own learning process in ways that will better equip you to take on the responsibilities of post-graduate professional life.
Attitudes
This course is intended to help you cultivate:

- A more mature political imagination. By this I mean a capacity to approach problems and issues as a political scientist. A mature political imagination includes an ability to envision what constitutes an important political question/issue; to understand the various ways in which a political scientist might address such a question/issue; to conduct social inquiry into that question/issue employing methodologies and techniques appropriate to a political scientist; to recognize the partiality of political science questions, explanations and forms of social inquiry and the importance of insights from other disciplines; and an ability to think critically and creatively about the political questions confronting humanity today;

- A well-developed theoretical sensibility premised on a sound understanding of the major theoretical trends, perspectives, concerns and debates that have shaped the evolution of the sub-discipline of International Security over the past several decades. Related to this is an ability to engage the world — whether as a political scholar or a political actor — with a certain degree of theoretical sophistication and confidence; and most importantly,

- a well-developed ability to think critically, synthetically, analytically and rigorously about the world of international politics. The PS faculty believe that the development of these higher-order cognitive skills is at the core of the Department's collective endeavors.

Simply put, this course is designed not only to deepen your understanding of the international security, but also to develop practical skills, attitudes and knowledge competencies that will be helpful to you in both your academic and post-graduate careers.

HOW THIS COURSE WILL HELP YOU MEET THESE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
It is my belief that the competencies described above are best developed in the context of challenging, rigorous and intellectually demanding/engaging curricular experiences involving active learning. Active learning is simply that — learning that takes place when students are vigorously engaged in some activity that requires them to search for, process (analyze, synthesize, apply, evaluate and critique), and reflect upon the nature and source of information and knowledge. Research suggests that active learning is superior to traditional passive learning (in which students merely acquire and absorb information in the form of 'surface learning') in several ways. First, it more effectively promotes comprehension of core knowledge (promotes knowledge competencies). Simply put, basic comprehension is improved dramatically when students need knowledge, when they are required to take an active role in seeking knowledge, when the knowledge they discover is applied in a meaningful context and when they are required to explain that knowledge to their peers. Second, active learning is better at promoting the development
of skill competencies. In this regard, the most important payoffs associated with this form of learning are the improved problem-solving and critical thinking skills that develop when students are required to actively engage in seeking, evaluating, synthesizing and applying knowledge to solve a problem or puzzle. Also important in this regard are the opportunities for students to develop a number of practical competencies (managing a self-directed learning process, leadership, initiative, team management skills, etc.) that are typically absent in more passive learning environments. Such skills are not only essential to effective citizenship in an increasingly complex and globalized world, but are also increasingly important in the world of work (whether in government, business or the not-for-profit sector). Third, active learning is better at cultivating a deeper awareness of the complexities and challenges of real-world problem-solving and the challenges faced by real-life diplomats and policy practitioners. And finally, active learning is intrinsically more motivating (engaging, fun, rewarding) than passive learning. As research shows that motivation and student involvement in the learning process – that is, students’ investment of physical and psychological energy in the academic experience – are perhaps the most important ingredients of deep learning and personal development, this suggests that active learning can be a powerful tool for promoting academic excellence.

As many of you may not be familiar with the practical classroom elements of active learning, I have taken the time to describe them below:

Problem-Based Learning
Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an active learning approach that requires students to take responsibility for their own learning by placing them in cooperative groups to address concrete, open-ended problems. These problems – which can be pitched to develop comprehension and/or higher order critical thinking cognitive skills – organize the learning environment, provide the point of entry into the subject and establish a context and motivation for student-centered, active learning. Needless to say, a PBL course differs from a traditional in many ways. Two differences are particularly important, however. First, PBL courses are assignment-centered. That is to say, the are not structured around texts and lectures (which are intended to provide ‘coverage’ of a body of literature), but around problem-solving tasks or projects (which are intended to develop skills and competencies). Coverage, of course, does not disappear in PBL courses: basic facts, concepts and theories are still learned. The difference is that in PBL courses, coverage tends to be achieved through incidental and contextual learning – that is, through discovery in the course of, completing the problem-solving assignment. Second, in PBL courses the information necessary to solve or address the problem is not provided to the students. Rather, the students themselves (with the support of the instructor) are responsible for identifying learning objectives; locating, evaluating and synthesizing the information they require to complete the task; and generating, evaluating and implementing practical solutions to the problem.

Research strongly suggests that students benefit enormously from participating in PBL courses. Among the more important payoffs (academic and professional) students can expect from this type of course are:
• a deeper understanding/comprehension of the topic;
• better developed critical thinking and higher-order cognitive skills;
• improved research and problem-solving skills;
• improved independent learning skills;
• better written and oral communication skills;
• improved self-management skills;
• higher levels of self-confidence; and
• better overall preparation for the world of professional work;

Intensive Writing
In addition to being organized on an active learning basis, this is also a writing intensive course. By this I mean that students spend considerable time planning, researching, drafting, reviewing, revising and polishing formal writing assignments. This emphasis on writing has two goals. First, writing promotes clear and critical thinking. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, writing is not just 'packaging' ideas; it is an act of thinking and creating. The logical corollary of this is that teaching rigorous, thesis-based argumentative writing means teaching the rigorous, critical thinking processes that underpin all scholarly inquiry. Second, written communication is a skill that is highly valued in both the academic and professional worlds. There are many types of professional writing. In this course, we will focus primarily (but not exclusively) on those writing skills appropriate to the diplomatic and foreign policy-making worlds.

Roles: Teachers and Learners
In the traditional classroom there are essentially two roles. The first is that of the 'sage on the stage' (the teacher) who typically lectures and otherwise conveys information to students. The second is that of the audience member (the student) who more of less passively accepts and processes this information. In an active learning classroom these roles do not exist. In their place are (a) self-directed students who have taken responsibility for their own learning, and (b) teachers-as-coaches who cultivate skills, focus effort, provide guidance, foster resourcefulness, and otherwise provide the leadership that self-directed students need in order to realize academic excellence.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT, GRADING AND RECOGNITION
Basic Principles of Feedback and Grading
Feedback and assessment (including, but not limited to, grading), if embedded in a course that sets high and clear expectations and then helps students to meet these expectations, can be a powerful tool for promoting academic excellence. Research and experience suggest that, in order to play such a constructive role in the learning process, feedback and assessment should conform to the following principles:

• the goal of feedback is not to point out every error in an assignment, but to prompt revision, facilitate improvement and promote student development;
• feedback should be delivered at 'teachable' moments (when it can be used to improve writing/thinking);
feedback should be timely and meaningful;
feedback should address higher order problems (related to the organization and quality of the ideas and argument) first, perhaps only flagging lower order problems and then encouraging students to seek and fix errors during revision;
when addressing lower order problems (spelling, diction, grammar, etc) feedback is most effective when it involves 'minimal marking' and the cultivation of student responsibility for editing (research suggests that students will improve more quickly if they are required to find and correct their own errors);
peer review/critique of drafts can be a very powerful tool for improving thinking/writing (providing students are given guidance as to how to conduct such a review);
study teams should be held collectively responsible for collective work;
individual students should be held personally accountable for their individual effort in group projects;
grading should be 'learner-centered' (i.e., focused on promoting and supporting learning rather than other purposes like reporting to outsiders);
grading should be understood by, and meaningful to, all students;
grades should be explicitly connected to assignments and learning objectives;
grading should be fair and consistent (even while recognizing that it can never be truly 'objective');
grades should reflect high standards and rigorous criteria (research suggests that academic excellence is a direct function of establishing 'high expectations' as reflected in assessment and feedback);
students should be recognized and rewarded for academic excellence.

My commitment to you is to ensure that you receive feedback on ongoing work and grades on final assignments that reflects these 'best practices'.

**Grading Practices Employed in this Course**
Some basic elements of the grading scheme in this course are:

**Point-based Grading:** Grades for the course will be calculated as follows:

- Presentation .......................................................... 20 points
- Major Research Paper ........................................... 60 points
- Attendance/participation ...................................... 20 points
The following point-based grade scheme will be used to calculate your final grade in this course:

95-100 points      A  
90-94   points      A- 
85-89   points      B+  
80-84   points      B   
75-79   points      B-  
70-74   points      C+  
65-69   points      C   
60-64   points      C-  
50-59   points      D   
0-49    points      F or NC

Appeals: Only well-argued written appeals (no more than one page in length) will be accepted.

ONGOING COURSE ASSESSMENT
At the end of every module, you will be required to complete an ongoing course assessment form. This will be used to fine-tune future assignments and otherwise ensure that students have the opportunity to evaluate the course design in a constructive and meaningful manner.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The only required text for this course is:

Alan Collins, Contemporary Security Studies, 2nd Edition

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
The following is a list of journals that should help you begin your research. Be advised that this is a suggestive and directive (rather than a comprehensive) list of the sources available – you are strongly encouraged to seek out appropriate websites, books and journals as the need arises.

- Millennium;
- Review of International Studies;
- Global Society;
- Security Studies;
- International Security;
- International Organization;
- European Journal of International Relations;
- Third World Quarterly;
- Washington Quarterly;
- World Politics;
- Orbis;
- Global Governance

There are also guides to further reading appended to each chapter in the textbook.
IV. SCHEDULE OF DISCUSSIONS

September 8, 2010  Introduction and Organization of Work

PART A: GETTING TO KNOW THE FIELD

MODULE 1: CONTEMPORARY SECURITY STUDIES – SCOPE AND APPROACHES

September 15, 2010  Presentations

Session A  What is Security Studies?
Reading: Contemporary Security Studies, Ch 1.
Presenter(s): Matt; Natalie

Session B  Realism
Reading: Contemporary Security Studies, Ch 2.
Presenter(s): Hannah; Vien

Session C  Liberalism
Reading: Contemporary Security Studies, Ch 3.
Presenter(s): Zachary
September 22, 2010  

**Presentations**

*Session A  Social Constructivism*

**Reading:** *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ch 4.

**Presenter(s):** Caitlin

*Session B  Peace Studies*

**Reading:** *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ch 5.

**Presenter(s):** Lewis; Paolo

*Session C  Critical Security Studies*

**Reading:** *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ch 6.

**Presenter(s):** Nathaniel; Robert

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September 29, 2010  

**Presentations**

*Session A  Gender and Security*

**Reading:** *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ch 7.

**Presenter(s):** Emma

*Session B  Human Security*

**Reading:** *Contemporary Security Studies*, Ch 8.

**Presenter(s):** Shaina
Session C  Securitization

Reading: Contemporary Security Studies, Ch 9.

Presenter(s): Katherine; Even

October 6, 2010  Presentations

Session A  Historical Materialism

Reading: Contemporary Security Studies, Ch 10.

Presenter(s): James; Abdul

Session B  The Past, Present and Future of Security Studies

Reading: Contemporary Security Studies, Ch 27.

Presenter(s): Nolin
PART B: WRITING IN THE FIELD

MODULE 2: PRE-WRITING -- FROM A TOPIC TO A LONG OUTLINE

Week 5    Developing a Focus Statement and Outline
Week 6

MODULE 3: DRAFTING THE PAPER

Week 7
Week 8
Week 9
Week 10

MODULE 5: REVISING THE PAPER

Week 11
Week 12
APPENDIX 1