

POLS 489
Special Topics in Nuclear Politics
Term: Spring 2021

Class Meeting Room and Time
MW, 4:15pm – 5:30pm
Location: Zoom (link provided below)

Dr. Matthew Fuhrmann
Office: 306 LASB
E-Mail: mfuhrmann@tamu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday, 3:30pm-4:30pm and by appointment
Link for Office Hours: <https://tamu.zoom.us/j/2894427961>

Course Delivery

This course will be delivered synchronously online. Our course meetings will take place during the scheduled class time over Zoom. The link to join our class meetings is: <https://tamu.zoom.us/j/92073968311?pwd=ZGg3RG41M3pNTW9qU1FpUStSTVdXZz09>
The passcode is: 457232.

Learning Management System

Course materials and grades will be posted on Canvas.

Catalog Course Description

Examination of nuclear weapons in world politics: nuclear nonproliferation; deterrence and strategic stability; arms control and disarmament; decision-making in nuclear crises; contemporary nonproliferation challenges.

Course Overview

Some of the most important global challenges over the last 75 years stem from nuclear weapons – the most destructive military technology ever invented. US Presidents from Harry S. Truman to Donald J. Trump have sought to use American nuclear forces to enhance the country's security, while attempting to limit the spread of nuclear technology internationally. Observers sometimes paint nuclear weapons as relics of the Cold War, when the United States and the Soviet Union possessed massive nuclear arsenals aimed at one another's territory. It is true that nuclear weapons were central to the Cold War. However, issues related to nuclear security remain critical even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Significant international crises and events in recent memory can be traced back to nuclear weapons. This includes but is not limited to: the 1990-91 Persian Gulf War, the 1993-94 crisis with North Korea, Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests in 1998, the 2003 Iraq War, Israel's surprise attack against Syria in 2007, Iran's quest for nuclear technology and (possibly) a bomb, and the ongoing crisis over North Korea's long-range missiles and nuclear forces. Understanding nuclear politics, therefore, remains critical.

Student Learning Outcomes

The broad objectives of the class are to disseminate knowledge on a central issue in international security – the spread of nuclear weapons – and to facilitate interest in this

important topic. More specifically, by the end of the course, students will:

- Identify and analyze the technical dimensions of nuclear proliferation, including how nuclear bombs are made.
- Understand how nuclear weapons influence international peace and stability.
- Describe why some countries build nuclear weapons but others do not.
- Analyze the policy tools that governments and international organizations have in place to limit the diffusion of nuclear weapons.
- Critically assess the most significant contemporary nuclear challenges, including (but not limited to) the crises in Iran and North Korea.
- Recall the nuclear policies of strategically important countries.
- Understand the basics of evaluating arguments using social science tools.

Readings

You will read from several books and articles throughout the semester. The readings can be accessed in one of three ways: (1) online through a publicly available link, (2) online through the TAMU library (<https://library.tamu.edu>), or (3) on Canvas. I will provide a link if the reading is publicly available. The list below will also designate those readings that are available on Canvas. If there is not a link or a Canvas designation, the reading is available online through the university's library. I expect that students will have completed the reading prior to the start of class period to which it is assigned.

Course Grades

Students will take three exams and complete one policy paper during the course of the semester. The exams will be taken during our normally scheduled class time remotely via Canvas. You are permitted to use *your* class notes during the exams. The exams will be timed. Grades will be determined based on the following distribution:

Exam 1 (22%). This exam will cover material from Parts I and II of the course.

Exam 2 (22%). This exam will cover material from Part III of the course.

Exam 3 (30%). This exam will cover all of the material from the course and will take place during the scheduled final exam period for the course.

Paper (25%). The paper will be 5-pages in length (double-spaced, 12-pt Times New Roman Font, and standard margins). The paper is due by 4:30pm on April 28. It will address one of the following questions:

1. Would the world be safer if no country possessed nuclear weapons?
2. How would the world change if Iran built nuclear weapons?
3. What is the best way for the United States to delay another country's ability to build nuclear weapons?

The paper will be graded based on the following criteria (100 points total):

- Persuasiveness of the argument (40 points)
- Quality and depth of the evidence cited (25 points)
- Depth of research conducted (25 points)
- Quality of writing and organization (10 points)

Surveys (1%). Each student will take a pre- and post-class survey. Simply completing the survey is sufficient to earn full credit.

Detailed Course Schedule and Readings

Note: Deviations from this course schedule may be necessary if unforeseen events arise.

Part I: Overview

1. Introduction (1/20)
Reading: None
2. The Nuclear Landscape (1/25 and 1/27)
Reading: Charles D. Ferguson, *Nuclear Energy: What Everyone Needs to Know* (2011), Chapters 1 and 4. Available on Canvas.

Part II: Political Effects of Nuclear Weapons

3. Nuclear Deterrence and Mutually Assured Destruction (2/1 and 2/3)
Reading: Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), chapter 1. Available on Canvas.
4. Brinkmanship and the Manipulation of Risk (2/8)
Reading: Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), chapter 3. Available on Canvas.
5. Foreign Policy Aggression (2/10)
Reading: Mark S. Bell, "Beyond Emboldenment: How Acquiring Nuclear Weapons Can Change Foreign Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Summer 2015), pp. 87–11.
6. Compellence and Coercive Diplomacy (2/15 and 2/17)
Reading: Todd Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann, *Nuclear Weapons and Coercive Diplomacy* (New York: Cambridge University Press), chapters 1 and 2. Available on Canvas.
7. The Nuclear Taboo (2/22)
Reading: Nina Tannenwald, "How Strong is the Nuclear Taboo Today?" *The Washington Quarterly* Vol. 41 (2018). Available at:
<https://twq.elliott.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2121/f/downloads/41-3%20Tannenwald.pdf>.
8. Accidents and Vulnerability (2/24)
Reading: Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: Norton, 2002), chapter 2. Available on Canvas.
9. Nuclear Strategy (3/1)

Reading: Vipin Narang, “Posturing for Peace? Pakistan’s Nuclear Postures and South Asian Stability,” *International Security* Vol. 34, No. 3 (Winter 2009/10), pp. 38–78. Available at:
<https://www.belfercenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/files/Narang.pdf>.

10. Command and Control (3/3)

Reading: “Defense Primer: Command and Control of Nuclear Forces,” *Congressional Research Service*, December 3, 2020. Available at:
<https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IF10521.pdf>

11. Debating Nuclear Superiority (3/8)

Reading: Matthew Kroenig, *The Logic of American Nuclear Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), Chapter 1. Available on Canvas.

Exam 1: 3/10

Part III: International Spread of Nuclear Weapons

12. Security-Based Drivers of Nuclear Proliferation (3/15)

Reading: Scott D. Sagan, “Why Do Countries Build Nuclear Weapons: Three Models in Search of a Bomb,” *International Security* (1996/97), pp. 54-63.

13. Preventive War (3/17)

Reading: Sarah E. Kreps and Matthew Fuhrmann. 2011. “Attacking the Atom: Does Bombing Nuclear Facilities Affect Proliferation,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 34(2): 161-187.

14. Prestige (3/22)

Reading: Sagan, “Why Do Countries Build Nuclear Weapons,” pp. 73-85.

15. Leaders (3/24)

Reading: Jacques Hymans, *The Psychology of Nuclear Proliferation* (New York: Cambridge University Press), Chapters 1 and 2. Available in Canvas.

16. Technology (3/29)

Reading: Matthew Fuhrmann, “Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreements,” *International Security* Vol. 34, No. 1 (2009), pp. 7-41.

17. Domestic Politics (3/31)

Reading: Etel Solingen, *Nuclear Logics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), Chapters 1 and 2.

18. Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) (4/5)

Reading: Maria Rost Rublee, *Taking Stock of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Regime: Using Social Psychology to Understand Regime*

Effectiveness, *International Studies Review*, Volume 10, Issue 3, September 2008, pp. 420–450.

19. Economic Sanctions and Inducements (4/7)

Reading: Rupal Mehta, *Delaying Doomsday: The Politics of Nuclear Reversal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), Chapter 2. Available on Canvas.

20. Trade and Illicit Networks (4/12)

Reading: Catherine Collins and Douglas Frantz, “The Long Shadow of A.Q. Khan,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 31, 2018.

Exam 2: 4/14

Part IV: Contemporary Challenges

21. Arms Control (4/19)

Reading: John Maurer, “The Purposes of Arms Control,” *Texas National Security Review*, Vol 2, No. 1 (2018). Available at: <https://tnsr.org/2018/11/the-purposes-of-arms-control/>

22. Nuclear Disarmament (4/21)

Reading: Catherine Kelleher, *Getting to Zero: The Path to Nuclear Disarmament* (Stanford University Press, 2011), Introduction. Available on Canvas.

23. New Nuclear Powers (4/26)

Reading: Nicholas Miller, “North Korea and the Problem of Managing Emerging Nuclear Powers,” *Lawfare*, March 25, 2018. Available at: <https://www.lawfareblog.com/north-korea-and-problem-managing-emerging-nuclear-powers>.

24. Nuclear Terrorism (4/28)

Reading: Caitlin Talmadge, “Deterring a Nuclear 9/11” *The Washington Quarterly* Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 21-34. Available at: http://www.caitlinaltmadge.com/uploads/8/5/4/1/85419560/deterring_nuclear_9_11.pdf.

Final Exam: 5/6, 5pm

University Policies

This section of the syllabus articulates university-wide policies. The language in this section was established by the TAMU Faculty Senate and taken directly from the minimum syllabus requirements provided by the university.

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or

chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University’s [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student’s academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Students who need someone to talk to can call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Department of Political Science Diversity Statement

The Department of Political Science supports the Texas A&M University commitment to diversity, and welcomes individuals from any racial, ethnic, religious, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, and nationality. (See <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>). In the spirit of this vital commitment, in this course each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute to all discussions. Everyone is expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by fellow students and the instructors, and to engage in reasoned discussion that refrains from derogatory comments about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints.

COVID-19 Addendum

The university has adopted additional minimum syllabus requirements pertaining to COVID-19. That information is included here.

Campus Safety Measures

To promote public safety and protect students, faculty, and staff during the coronavirus pandemic, Texas A&M University has adopted policies and practices for the Spring 2021 academic term to limit virus transmission. Students must observe the following practices while participating in face-to-face courses and course-related activities (office hours, help sessions, transitioning to and between classes, study spaces, academic services, etc.):

- Self-monitoring—Students should follow CDC recommendations for self-monitoring. **Students who have a fever or exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should participate in class remotely if that option is available, and should not participate in face-to-face instruction.**
- Face Coverings—[Face coverings](#) (cloth face covering, surgical mask, etc.) must be properly worn in all non-private spaces including classrooms, teaching laboratories, common spaces such as lobbies and hallways, public study spaces, libraries, academic resource and support offices, and outdoor spaces where 6 feet of physical distancing is difficult to reliably maintain. Description of face coverings and additional guidance are provided in the [Face Covering policy](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) available on the [Provost website](#).
- Physical Distancing—Physical distancing must be maintained between students, instructors, and others in course and course-related activities.
- Classroom Ingress/Egress—Students must follow marked pathways for entering and exiting classrooms and other teaching spaces. Leave classrooms promptly after course activities have concluded. Do not congregate in hallways and maintain 6-foot physical distancing when waiting to enter classrooms and other instructional spaces.
- To attend a face-to-face class, students must properly wear an approved face covering. If a student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor should ask the student to leave and join the class remotely. If the student does not leave the class, the faculty member should report that student to the [Student Conduct office](#) for

sanctions. Additionally, the faculty member may choose to teach that day's class remotely for all students, or dismiss the class in the case of a traditional face to face lecture.

Personal Illness and Quarantine

Students required to quarantine must participate in courses and course-related activities remotely, if that option is available, and **must not attend face-to-face course activities**. Students should notify their instructors of the quarantine requirement. Students under quarantine are expected to participate in courses and complete graded work unless they have symptoms that are too severe to participate in course activities.

Students experiencing personal injury or illness that is too severe for the student to attend class qualify for an excused absence (See [Student Rule 7, Section 7.2.2.](#)) To receive an excused absence, students must comply with the documentation and notification guidelines outlined in Student Rule 7.