International Security
GRS IR 703
Fall 2014
v1.00

Ivan Arreguín-Toft
156 Bay State Road, Room 305
imat@bu.edu

Mondays, 5-8 p.m., IRB102
Office hours: Tuesdays, 10-11:30 a.m., Wednesdays 9-10:30 a.m..

International Security

This course aims to explore the contemporary evolution of international security as an area of analytical interest and practical concern. The course interleaves historical examples of challenges to international security with the efforts of practitioners, philosophers, and theorists to understand and explain those challenges. The course is divided into roughly two halves. In the first half of the course we focus on war as a core issue of international security. World war, limited war, unconventional or small war, and nuclear war are all engaged with a combination of theoretical and historical material. In the second half of the course, we shift to focus on emerging threats to international security, often within states and from non-state actors. In particular, we explore challenges to international security posed by civil and ethnic conflict, terrorism, global environmental changes, transnational crime, the global environment, demographics, communicable disease, and cyber. Students will end the course with a firm grasp of the core security issues and challenges facing states, groups, and people in the contemporary world.

Course Requirements

There are four course requirements: (1) class participation (15%); (2) weekly readings memos (15%); an issue analysis paper (25%); and (4) a final research paper (45%).

Assigned readings for this course are heavy. Students are expected to have done the readings before attending seminar. Participation—which includes being seated on time—is a major component of any seminar experience. As a result, students should be prepared to advance the seminar’s core objectives by regular attendance, and by actively contributing to discussions.

In addition to participation, students will be required to submit weekly memos on course readings. The course also requires two papers. First, a six-page issue analysis paper in which participants analyze any one of three contemporary issues in international security and make a policy recommendation regarding that issue (topics will be provided by the instructor, papers will be due in seminar on 17 November). Second, each participant will submit a more in-depth fifteen-page research paper on a topic of concern in international security during the current semester. Topics will be chosen by participants, but must be approved by the instructor (students will be required to submit a one-page topic proposal in seminar on 10 November). Participants are therefore strongly encouraged

---

1 All paper assignments must be formatted double-spaced, with a twelve-point (or equivalent) font, and one-inch margins on all sides. Page limits are to be strictly observed. Title pages, bibliographies, and endnotes will not count against page limits. Double-sided printing encouraged but not required. Weekly readings memos may be single-spaced, but may never exceed one page in length.
to keep abreast of international affairs by subscribing to any of a number of reliable news services or publications (e.g. The New York Times, The Financial Times, The Economist, The Washington Post, The Christian Science Monitor, and so on), either online or in print. Final research papers are due **8 December.** Details on all written assignments will be posted on our course web site as needed.

**Readings**

**Books²**


---

² These are required, and may be purchased at the University bookstore or online.
Articles or Book Chapters


---

3 available on-line via course web site or BU e-journals


• Timothy Samuel Shaw and Monica Duffy Toft, “Why God is Winning,” *Foreign Policy*, (July–August 2006), pp. 38–43.


• Marc Sageman, “The Global Salafi Jihad,” Statement of Marc Sageman to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (July 9, 2003).

Sessions

8SEP Session 1: On War, Part I: A Nomenclature of Strategy and Organized Violence

Issues
• Key terms and concepts: strategy and war on land, sea, and air.
• What is the relationship between politics, the state, international security, and war?

Assigned Readings
1. Clausewitz, On War, Book I; Book II, chapters 1–4; Book III, chapters 1–5, 11, 14, 17; Book VI, chapters 1–8, 26; Book VII, chapters 1–8;
2. Gray, Modern Strategy, chapters 8–9;

Recommended

15SEP Session 2: On War, Part II: Major Conventional War: WWI in Europe and the Middle East

Issues
• Actors, interests, the fight, the outcome.
• The rise of the machine.
• Impact of WWI on international security.

Assigned Readings
1. Strachan, The First World War;
2. Howard, “Men Against Fire;”
3. Lawrence, Seven Pillars of Wisdom, chapter 33.

Recommended

22SEP Session 3: On War, Part II, Continued: WWII in Europe and the Pacific

Issues
• What caused WWII?
• Actors, interests, the fight, the outcome.

Assigned Reading
Coetzee and Shevin-Coetzee, A World in Flames.

29SEP Session 4: Barbarism

Issues
• Race and war.
• The laws of war: murder most fair?

Assigned Readings
1. Rhodes, Masters of Death, chapters 1–12; epilogue.
6OCT Session 5: On War III: Limited and Unconventional War

Issues
- The problem (?) of “limited” war.
- Obstacles to learning from past/others’ experience.
- The dynamics of asymmetric conflict.

Assigned Readings
1. Fall, Street Without Joy (excerpts);
3. Gray, Modern Strategy, chapter 10;
4. Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars;”
5. Shaw, “Policemen Versus Soldiers;”

13OCT [Columbus Day, class meets the 14th]

14OCT Session 6: On War IV: War in the Middle East

Issues
- A new state.
- Regional and international security.
- Grievance and war.
- Religion and war.

Assigned Readings
1. van Creveld, The Sword and the Olive, parts I and II;
2. Karsh, The Iran-Iraq War.

Recommended
Charles D. Smith, Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents, 7th Ed. (New York: St. Martin’s, 2010).

20OCT Session 7: Nuclear War

Issues
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 1945.
- The possibility of coercion through nuclear violence.
- Deterrence, nuclear and conventional.
- Is nuclear proliferation a good or a bad thing?

Assigned Readings
2. Schelling, Arms and Influence;

Recommended
27OCT Session 8: Extended Discussion: Security, War, Power, and Legitimacy

Issues
· Might makes right? might for right? might as right?
· What put the “cold” in Cold War?
· Should we continue to study major conventional war?

Assigned Readings
1. Walzer, Just and Unjust Wars;
2. Mueller, “The Obsolescence of Major War;”

3NOV Session 9: Civil War and International Security

Issues
· Why study civil wars?
· How does internal war differ from interstate war?
· When, if ever, should third parties be prepared to intervene in civil wars?

Assigned Readings
4. Toft, “Indivisible Territory, Geographic Concentration, and Ethic War;”
5. Collier and Hoeffler, “Greed and Grievance in Civil War;”
6. Fearon and Laitin, “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War;”

10NOV Session 10: Transnational Terrorism, Old and New

Issues
· What’s the same and what’s different about contemporary and pre-2001 terrorism?
· How, if at all, is terrorism a threat to international security?

Assigned Readings
1. Tuchman, The Proud Tower, chapter 2;
2. Kurth-Cronin, “Behind the Curve;”
3. Arreguín-Toft, “Tunnel at the End of the Light;”

17NOV Session 11: Intervention and Non-Intervention

Issues
· How does intervention challenge security and legitimacy?

Assigned Readings
1. Bowden, Black Hawk Down, excerpts;
2. Power, “Bystanders to Genocide;”
3. Falk, “Hard Choices and Tragic Dilemmas;”

Recommended
24NOV Session 12: Transnational Challenges to International Security

Issues
- What’s a bigger threat, resource corruption or resource consumption?
- How do solutions to global environmental challenges differ, if at all, from solutions to more traditional security challenges?
- How, if at all, are demographic shifts and pandemics challenges to international security?
- How do solutions to demographic and pandemic challenges differ, if at all, from solutions to more traditional security challenges?

Assigned Readings
1. Busby, et. al, “Climate Change and Insecurity;”
4. Hudson and Den Boer, “Sex Ratios;”

24NOV Session 13: Emerging Threats to [International] Security

Issues
- How, if at all, is transnational crime a threat to international security?
- How do solutions to transnational criminal activity differ, if at all, from solutions to more traditional security challenges?
- In what ways do you think organized religion might affect international security?

Assigned Readings
1. Thachuk, *Transnational Crime*, chapters 1-5, 14; choose any single chapter from 6-13;
2. Shaw and Toft, “Why God is Winning.”

1DEC [no class]

8DEC Session 14: Emergent [in]Security?

Issues
- What in your view is the most pressing set of challenges to international security?
- Which and whose “security” is most relevant now?
- How likely is this to change and what is most likely to be the basis of that change?

Assigned Readings
2. Garrett, “Biology’s Brave New World;”