Introduction:

This course introduces students to some of the main themes of contemporary security studies. It especially encourages students to think about the politics of security; that is, about how and why certain problems are defined as matters of international security (thereby requiring military responses) as well as who is authorized to determine what counts as a problem of security. The course also draws upon historical analyses to provide various perspectives on the degree to which forms and practices of security and insecurity are changing as a consequence of new threats, innovative technologies and other challenges to the state and interstate system.

Assessments and exam:

Students will be required to write two essays, each 2000 - 2500 words long. I will distribute a list of topics around two weeks before the essays are due. The first essay (worth 30% of the final grade) will be due on October 1st. The second essay (30%) will be due on November 8th.

Final Exam (40%): Students will need to answer 3 out of 7 questions in two hours.

Readings:

Students are expected to read the assigned textbook, The Future of War: A History, by Lawrence Freedman. This will provide much of the historical knowledge and the main contemporary insecurity themes that prevail in war studies.

The other readings for this course can be found online in CourseSpaces or will be available through the Library and its website. In addition to these required readings there will be a list of recommended readings that will serve as a guide for students wanting to explore themes of interest to them in greater detail. I have also included some influential texts in contemporary security studies, as well as some texts that offer a deeper understanding of how people in different parts of the world experience violence and insecurity in their daily lives. I would be happy to recommend more advanced and specialised readings that might be of interest to students throughout the course.
Course Schedule and Readings:

PART I – THE BASICS

1. **Introduction**  
   September 4th

2. **The Legitimacy of War**  
   September 6th, 10th, 11th, 13th and 17th

Most contemporary debates about security refer to long traditions of analysis that focus on questions about the conditions under which violence is considered to be not only prevalent but also legitimate. Security is thus linked to other fundamental principles such as the survival of the state, or national self-determination, the demands of human progress, or principles of liberty, equality and democracy. We will briefly consider five exemplary positions that continue to shape security policies but which are also widely considered to be inadequate to contemporary conditions. Among other things, such traditions allow us to consider different accounts of the causes of war and the conflict between the security of the citizens of particular states and the security of humanity as a whole. We will return to these accounts in subsequent classes.

**Readings:**


Sept: 11th: Immanuel Kant (1795). *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. (Online/library)

Sept 13th: No readings. We will address the work of Carl von Clausewitz.


**Recommended Readings:**


3. **Methodologies of War Studies**  
   September 18th

Today we will think about the tensions in the way we think about war. Approaches to studies of war can range from scientific to historical and there are important political implications to what kind of approach is used to study warfare. This theme, like the one above, will be recurring throughout the course.

**Reading:**

Recommended Reading:

4. **The History of Modern Warfare**  
   September 20th, 24th, 25th and 27th

Much recent analysis of security practices hinges on questions of change. To appreciate what kind of changes are underway and how significant they might be, some historical perspective is necessary. We will thus consider some of the conventional understanding of the evolution of modern warfare and discuss some patterns of continuity as well as claims about contemporary transformation and their potential political implications.

Readings:
Sept 20th and 24th: No readings.

Recommended Reading:

**PART II – THE STATE AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AS SOURCES OF (IN)SECURITY**

5. **Violence and the State**  
   October 1st

Many accounts of security are preoccupied with the (nation-) state as both the provider of security and as the primary agent of war. Here we will address Charles Tilly’s thesis of how war and state formation are co-productive. We will return to the question of the state at the end of Part II.

Reading:

   October 2nd

Other accounts of security focus on the determining structures of the international system, most of them in relation to claims about “anarchy” and a “balance of power.” We will review some of these accounts as well as their limitations. We will pay particular attention to the transformation of the notion of balance of power from an historically situated concept to one that is treated ahistorically, as if universally applicable, and the political implications of this change.
Readings:

No readings. This will be a review of a concept which should be familiar to students.

Recommended Readings:


7. Balance of Terror
   October 4th and 8th

Nuclear weapons and their impact on conventional accounts of a balance of power have been a central problem for security studies since the Second War. This week we will examine nuclear weapons and perhaps other weapons of mass destruction and the different interpretations of their effect on war and politics, strategy and rationality, and security and ethics.

Readings:


Recommended Reading:


Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/)

8. The Internalisation of War?
   October 9th, 11th and 15th

We return to thinking about the state here and will consider claim that the time of interstate wars is largely over, having been displaced by civil wars and other forms of more localized violence. We will begin with some historical analysis of the proxy wars of the Cold War era as well as wars of decolonisation before moving on to more recent claims about failed states and the broader significance of violence in Syria and elsewhere. Among other things, we will consider whether it is now possible to distinguish civil wars from inter-state wars.
Readings:


Recommended Reading:


PART III – TECHNOLOGIES, TERROR AND DAILY LIFE

9. **Terrorism, Old and New**
   October 16th, 18th, 22nd, 23rd and 25th

Terrorism is a term referring to many different forms of violence, which need to be distinguished. Here we will discuss several different forms and cases.

Readings:


Recommended Reading:


10. **Spatiotemporal Transformation of War: Drones**
   October 29th, 30th and November 1st
Some scholars have argued that the most important factor in shaping new insecurities and consequent attempts to provide security is technological innovation. We will focus more specifically on the technological transformations of air warfare, from airplanes to the use of drones. Consequently, we will also discuss changes from (national) war efforts to tactics of surgical intervention.

Readings:


Recommended Reading:


11. **Art, Pop Culture and the Mundane**

November 5th and 6th

Whereas most conventional security analysis has been preoccupied with the supposedly “high politics” of statecraft and geopolitics, recent literatures have started to engage with practices of everyday life and cultural representation. Here we will consider three recent examples.

Readings:


Recommended Reading:


**PART IV – SECURITY FOR WHOM AND FROM WHAT?**

12. **Economic Security**

November 8th
The obviously important relation between economics and security is too extensive for a course of this kind, so we will focus on just one increasingly significant theme: the relation between inequality and international security and its relation to the securitization of migration.

Reading:

Recommended Reading:

13. Liberty/Security
November 15th, 19th and 20th

The inherent tension between liberty and security in modern societies is at the core of recent critical studies of international security. This problem has generated considerable political dispute and we will discuss this tension and its implications for contemporary trends.

Readings:


14. Ecological Security
November 22nd

Many authors regard ecological problems such as water scarcity, global warming, rising sea levels and so on as problems of security, which might even need a military response. Others refuse the claim that security relates to problems of the environment which ought to be treated in other terms.

Readings:

Recommended Reading:


15. Citizenship and Humanity
   November 26th, 27th, 29th and December 3rd

Perhaps the central tension expressed in analyses of security concerns the relationship between “national security,” which privileges the citizens of particular states, and “human security,” which privileges the security of humanity as such. It is expressed, for example, in claims about non-intervention and in counter claims about the need for “humanitarian intervention.”

Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Responsibility to Protect Report (http://responsibilitytoprotect.org/ICISS%20Report.pdf)


16. Conclusions
   December 4th
Questions Surrounding the Course:

Many important questions will be raised at one point or another during the course, in various contexts. By the end of the course students should have developed resources to be able to understand how such questions have arisen in the past and how they might be relevant today. I anticipate that some of these questions will be at the heart of discussions in class as well as outside the classroom environment.

1. What have been the main historical changes in our conceptions of security?
2. What have been the major forces shaping these changes?
3. Who and what can be made to be the subject of security? What is the relationship between claims to security and the subject of security?
4. When is war legitimate? When is war just?
5. When is war rational? When is irrationality rational?
6. Under what specific conditions does security become a political problem?
7. How does security come to be assigned the status of primacy under certain conditions? How does it become an overriding value?
8. What is the relationship between practices of securitization and claims about the legitimacy of violence?
9. Is war the continuation of politics by other means or is politics the continuation of war by other means?
10. How have wars been productive as well as destructive?
11. What is the relationship between national self-determination and humanitarian intervention?
12. What is the relationship between collective security and humanitarian intervention?
13. What is the relationship between civil wars and inter-state wars?
14. What is the relationship between warfare and technological innovation?
15. Which agencies – military, police, intelligence, social, public, private – claim to have authority to act in the name of security under what conditions?
16. What do you consider to be the most significant sources of contemporary insecurities?
17. In what ways can poverty and inequality be understood as a security problem?
18. What are we to make about contemporary claims about terrorism?
19. How have refugee crises been understood as security problems historically?
20. How has the tension between mercantilist and free-trade economic policies shaped our understanding of security and insecurity?
21. What is the relationship of the depiction of violence in popular culture and the legitimation of security practices?
22. To what extent has the gendering of political life shaped our understanding of security?
23. What are the most significant contemporary international security institutions?

Further Reading:

Classics:

Sun Tzu (5th century B.C.) – The Art of War
Thucydides (431 B.C.) – *History of the Peloponnesian War.*

Vegetius (circa 383-450 A.D.) – *De Re Militari* (Concerning Military Matters)

**Some important journals:**

*International Security*

*Security Dialogue*

*International Political Sociology*

*Critical Studies on Security*

**Literary texts:**


Erich Maria Remarque (1929). *All Quiet in the Western Front* (New York: Random House)

Philip Gourevitch, (1998). *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador)


**PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or as a member of a group. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

**The responsibility of the institution** - Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

**The responsibility of the student** - Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student’s transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University’s policy on academic integrity, which can be found on pages 32-34 of the undergraduate calendar.

Please see the (revised) academic integrity policy: [http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html](http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2017-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html)
# PERCENTAGE GRADING SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90 – 100</td>
<td>Exceptional, outstanding and excellent performance. Normally achieved by a minority of students. These grades indicate a student who is self-initiating, exceeds expectation and has an insightful grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85 – 89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>80 – 84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
<td>Very good, good and solid performance. Normally achieved by the largest number of students. These grades indicate a good grasp of the subject matter or excellent grasp in one area balanced with satisfactory grasp in the other area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73 – 76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>65 – 69</td>
<td>Satisfactory, or minimally satisfactory. These grades indicate a satisfactory performance and knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60 – 64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Marginal Performance. A student receiving this grade demonstrated a superficial grasp of the subject matter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Failing Grades</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0 – 49</td>
<td>Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The percentage grading scale applies to all Faculties at the University of Victoria.
2. The percentage grades should be associated with a letter grading schema.
3. A percentage grade for an N grade should be assigned in the following manner:
   - **N GRADE**: If a student has not completed the exam, or has not completed the course requirements, but has submitted course requirements that total more than 49% of the total grade for a course, an instructor will assign a percentage grade of 49%.

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**COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)**

I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.