

Degree programme	Type	Course
International Relations	OB	2

Contact lecturer

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Teaching staff

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Group languages

You can consult this information at the [end](#) of the document.

Prerequisites

Prerequisites

The course is taught in English, and all the instructions, exams, and documents related to the course's organization and development will be in English. Most of the readings are also in English. Therefore, students are expected to have a good knowledge of this language.

Although no formal prerequisites are mandatory, the program is designed for students with a general knowledge of contemporary international political history and a general background on the main theories and concepts of the academic discipline of International Relations. Also, students are expected to follow international news through quality sources actively.

Objectives

Course description

This course is designed to offer a general introduction to the meaning, key concepts, and relevant issues in contemporary international security studies. The course introduces students to different theoretical approaches which present different ways for theorizing security; and it assumes a broader perspective on security, not only of what security is and the means to achieve it, but also whose security should be guaranteed or promoted, what is to be secured, and how securing is performed.

Focusing on traditional and non-traditional security issues, the course seeks to provide students with the theoretical tools and empirical basis to have a better understanding of the complexity of contemporary security

issues. Traditional approaches to international security will be critically contrasted with new perspectives on security (including human security, global security, security governance, comprehensive security, among others).

The course is divided into five parts. After an introductory session, the first part, "Analytical framework", includes the following topics: Thinking about international security, Defining security, and Evolution of war, and different forms of interstate violence. Part II, "Theorizing international security: 'classical' approaches", reviews four key classic ways to approach and analyze international security matters: Realism, Liberalism, Structuralism, historical materialism, and Peace studies. In Part III, "Theorizing about international security: contemporary approaches", the students will be introduced to more recent ways for studying and analyzing international security issues, through: Social constructivism and securitization studies, Human security and development, and Critical and Feminist approaches to security. Part IV reviews the evolution of traditional and non-traditional international security challenges. Depending on the evolution of the course, some of the following topics will be examined in detail: the impact of international organized crime, climate change, the environment, international security, and the implications of scientific and technological developments. Also, there is a session on what is policy advice for peace and security. The fifth part of the program includes: students' presentations on key security issues in different regions of the world, and a closing session to highlight some of the key challenges for international security studies.

A typical class will involve a combination of lecturing, collective discussion of assigned texts, analysis of relevant international security events, and identifying the possible policy implications of the different conceptual approaches used to analyze international security issues.

Course objectives

The course is intended to help students to be able to:

- Discuss and appraise the various meanings ascribed to international security in the academic and policy worlds.
- Obtain a general understanding of the challenges of providing security both in theory and in the policy world.
- Apply key international security approaches and concepts to particular security events in international relations and demonstrate an understanding of both traditional and new sources of insecurity.
- Relate theoretical approaches to international peace and security, apply them to contemporary security problems, and address the "pros" and "cons" of various methods to achieve global security.
- Reflect critically on the key security issues arising in the contemporary world.
- Develop basic skills to critically analyze, evaluate, and write security policy.

Learning outcomes

1. Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.
2. Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
3. Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
4. Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
5. Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
6. Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.
7. Apply quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in research processes.
8. Produce and prepare the presentation of intervention reports and/or proposals.
9. Apply different theories and focuses to the analysis of the main problems related to security, foreign policy and armed conflict and the promotion of peace.

10. Make a reasoned application of different contemporary political theories to phenomena related to international security, international conflicts, foreign policies of the main states and the promotion of peace.
11. Analyse the behaviour of different actors in the main topics and problems related to international security, international conflicts and the promotion of peace.
12. Identify the main institutions with competences and working in international security, international conflicts and the promotion of peace and analyse the specific importance of these.
13. describe the evolution of international security.
14. Evaluate the conditions that lead to international peace and those which make it more difficult.
15. Identify and analyse some of the key challenges in international security and international conflicts from a multidimensional perspective.
16. null
17. Analyse public policies in specific countries, in particular foreign policies, and understand the traits of continuity and change in historical perspective.
18. Use tools for the analysis of foreign policies and apply them to real and simulated case studies.
19. Propose new experience-based methods or alternative solutions.
20. Weigh up the risks and opportunities of one's own ideas for improvement and proposals made by others.
21. Propose new ways to measure success or failure when implementing ground-breaking proposals or ideas.

Contents

Contents. Course structure

Introductory session. Brief presentation of the objectives, contents, and assessment of the course.

Part I. Analytical framework

1. Thinking about international security
2. Evolution of the academic field
3. Defining security
4. The evolution of war and different forms of interstate violence

Part II. Theorizing about international security: "classical" approaches

5. Realism
6. Liberalism
7. Structuralism and historical materialism
8. Peace studies and human security

Part III. Theorizing about international security: "Contemporary" approaches

9. Social constructivism and securitization studies
10. Critical and feminist approaches to security

Part IV. Traditional and non-traditional international security challenges

11. Depending on the evolution of the course, at least two cases will be reviewed in detail. For example:

- Competition among great powers: implications for international and regional peace and security
- The impact of transnational organized crime on global security
- Climate change, the environment, and international security

12. Policy advice for peace and security

Part V. Students' presentations and Conclusions

13. Students' presentations on key security issues in different regions of the world.

- Africa: Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa
- Europe: Western and Eastern Europe
- Asia: Central Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia
- Americas: North, Central, South, and the Caribbean
- Oceania: South and Central Pacific.

14. Conclusions: challenges for the future of international security studies

Learning activities and methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Directed activities in the classroom with the support of ICT	30	1.2	
Tutorships for the preparation of essays, exams and group projects	4	0.16	
Autonomous studying hours, preparation of essays, seminars, exams	90	3.6	
Seminars and practical sessions in small groups	7	0.28	

Activities and Methodology

The workload for the students of this course is divided into different types of activities, each with a specific number of working hours.

- Directed activities. These activities are done under the direction of the instructors and include: lectures (with the support of information and communications technologies) and debates during class, seminars, and practical sessions in small groups to discuss different case studies and the diverse empirical examples included in the program.
- Supervised activities. Each student carries out these activities outside the classroom and according to a work schedule designed, supervised, and evaluated by the instructors. These activities include tutorships to prepare

for essays, exams, and group projects.

- Autonomous activities. These are all the activities the students perform on their own and according to the requirements for successfully passing the course, such as autonomous studying hours, and preparation of essays, seminars, and exams.

Notice: Within the schedule set by the Centre or degree program, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

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Assessment

Continuous assessment activities

Title	Weight	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Individual essay	20%	5	0.2	1, 2, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18
Participation in debates and other activities	10%	4	0.16	2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 15, 19
Midterm exam (topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8)	35%	2	0.08	1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16
Group project	35%	8	0.32	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21

Assessment

The evaluation includes the following four parts:

1. Participation in class and other activities (10% of the grade).
2. Individual exercise (20% of the grade).
3. Group project (30% of the grade: 20% written paper, and 10% oral presentation of preliminary findings).
4. Midterm Exam including topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 (40% of the grade). Important: there is no final exam for this course.

Group Project

The group project will consist of a paper and an oral presentation of the preliminary findings. The objective is to provide a deeper understanding of key contemporary security issues. This paper will include some of the analytical tools learned during the course. The draft versions of the papers will be presented orally to the whole group at the end of the semester.

Depending on the total number of students registered for the course, the groups will be formed by 4-6 students.

Further instructions will be provided during the first part of the course.

Important considerations

To pass the course, obtaining a grade of at least 5,0/10 in the midterm exam will be necessary, but not sufficient. Once this minimum grade of 5,0 is attained, the course's final grade will result from adding the grades obtained in the other activities.

Once the course's final grade is equal to or above 5,0, the student will receive a passing grade.

If the student completes more than 50% of the activities to be evaluated, this cancels the possibility of receiving a "NOT EVALUABLE" grade.

The date of all evaluable activities will be announced with enough time in advance. This will allow students to prepare and complete all the assigned tasks.

The students who do not pass the midterm exam on the first opportunity will have the chance to re-take it at the end of the semester, on the day specified by the Faculty for the compensatory evaluation. The individual exercise, the final group project, and other in-class activities cannot be re-taken or resubmitted on a different date from the one established by the lecturers. Extraordinary circumstances, such as significant health problems or other unforeseen personal situations, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Comprehensive evaluation

The procedure and the period for requesting the "Comprehensive Evaluation" for the whole course will be indicated by the Academic Office of the Faculty. The Comprehensive Evaluation will take place at the end of the term, on the day the Faculty sets for the course's final exam.

The Comprehensive Evaluation of the course will consist of a written exam (60% of the grade) and two practical activities (20% each). Important: To pass the course, a minimum grade of 5/10 must be obtained in the written exam part of the Comprehensive Evaluation. However, in the event of failing the written exam, you will have the chance to retake this test on the date set by the Faculty for the compensatory evaluation of the course. Please note that the practical activities of the Comprehensive Evaluation cannot be resubmitted.

The content to be evaluated in the written exam will include topics 1 to 7 of the course's Teaching Guide (Syllabus) and the mandatory texts for each subject. The required texts will be those assigned for the 2025-26 academic year.

If the student completes more than 60% of the activities to be evaluated, this cancels the possibility of receiving a grade of "NOT EVALUABLE".

The revision of the grades will follow the same procedure as for the continuous evaluation.

AI Policy for the International Security course

To ensure that written assignments are genuinely representative of students' own work, and to ensure that students develop their analytical and writing skills through the completion of assignments, both of which are essential for work in international relations, the International Security course has the following Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy.

AI tools may be used only for limited support tasks: identifying possible sources, locating reports or datasets, aggregating data, organizing information in tables or graphs when appropriate, and translating text. All sources cited in an assignment must be read, evaluated, and understood by students before being included in their assignments. Students are fully responsible for the accuracy, quality, and relevance of all information, data, and sources included in their assignments.

The following examples illustrate what is allowed and what is not allowed:

Permitted uses of AI

- Asking: "What are recent reports on international security in Latin America?"
- Asking: "What are the main debates on regional security in Latin America in the last decade?"
- Asking: "Can you help me identify academic journals or research centres that publish on transnational

organized crime in Latin America?"

- Asking: "Can you organize this data that I collected into a table?"
- Using AI to help identify possible databases, reports, official documents, or academic sources, provided that the student then verifies, reads, and evaluates those sources independently.

Not allowed uses of AI

- Asking: "Give me possible arguments and conclusions for my paper on transnational crime in Latin America."
- Asking AI to write, draft, rewrite, or substantially improve paragraphs, sections, policy recommendations, introductions, conclusions, or executive summaries.
- Asking AI to develop the thesis, main argument, analytical framework, or conclusions of an assignment.
- Asking AI to produce an outline that already determines the argument or structure of the assignment.
- Asking AI to summarize sources instead of reading them.
- Asking AI to edit the assignment in a way that changes the argument, improves the analysis, restructures the text, or rewrites the student's own work.

Writing is an inherently analytical activity, and it is not possible to fully separate drafting from analysis. For this reason, AI may not be used at any stage of drafting, argument development, thesis development, analysis, or conclusion writing. Students will not be penalized for spelling or minor grammatical errors. Microsoft Word and similar standard word-processing tools are also effective at identifying many spelling and grammatical errors without relying on AI.

Translation is permitted, but students remain fully responsible for the translated text. Translation tools may not be used to rewrite, improve, expand, or strengthen the analysis. If translation tools are used, this must be disclosed.

Students must submit an AI disclosure with each written assignment. This disclosure must explain whether AI was used, which tool or tools were used, for what purpose, and in which parts of the research or preparation process. The disclosure must also identify any sources found with the help of AI and confirm that these sources were independently located, read, verified, and evaluated by the student before being cited. For any source found with the help of AI, students must provide the actual source link, DOI, or full bibliographic reference. Students may not cite sources that they have not independently located, read, and verified.

To check compliance with this policy, lecturers may ask students to explain their research and writing process in class or in an individual meeting. Students must be ready to show evidence of their work process, such as notes, drafts, source lists, reading notes, data files, outlines, reasoning steps, or other materials that demonstrate how the assignment was developed.

Failure to disclose the use of AI, citing sources that have not been verified and read, or using AI for prohibited purposes may be considered a breach of academic integrity and may result in a penalty for the assignment or other academic consequences in accordance with university regulations.

Plagiarism and cheating

Plagiarism and cheating are very serious offenses. These could result in a failing grade for the assigned task/exercise.

Please review the "Guia sobre Com Citar i Com Evitar el Plagi"(in Catalan), prepared by the Facultat de Ciències Polítiques i de Sociologia: <https://www.uab.cat/doc/GuiaCitesiPlagiEstudiants>

Also check the guides prepared by the Libraries Service of the UAB (Servei de Biblioteques):

- "How to cite and create your bibliography", available at:
<https://www.uab.cat/en/libraries/rcc/how-to-cite-prepare-bibliography>

- "Com citar i elaborar la bibliografia", available at: <https://www.uab.cat/ca/biblioteques/ccr/citacions-bibliografia>
- "Cómo citar y elaborar la bibliografía", available at: <https://www.uab.cat/es/bibliotecas/ccr/citaciones-bibliografia>

Academic integrity and assessment irregularities

Any irregularity committed in an assessment activity (including academic fraud, plagiarism, or the improper use of AI - unless such use is expressly authorized in the course syllabus) that may lead to a significant variation in the grade will result in that assessment activity being awarded a mark of zero. If the course syllabus establishes that, in order to pass the course, students must obtain a minimum mark in that assessment activity, or if several irregularities occur in the assessment activities of the course, the final grade for the course will be zero. Furthermore, disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who commits any of these irregularities. The teaching staff reserves the right to conduct oral interviews, or to set an alternative assessment, in order to verify the effective acquisition of knowledge and competences and, therefore, the validity of the assessment work completed by students.

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Hough, P., Malik, S., Moran, A., Pilbeam, B., & Stokes, W. (2021). *International security studies. Theory and practice*. 2nd edition. Taylor & Francis. Alternatively, other editions can be consulted.

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Williams, Paul D. (2018). *Security Studies: An Introduction*. Routledge. 3rd edition. Alternatively, other editions can be consulted.

Other highly recommended readings are:

Baylis, John, Wirtz, James, & Gray, Colin (Eds.). (2016). *Strategy in the contemporary world*. 6th edition Oxford University Press. Alternatively, other editions can be used.

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Dannreuther, Roland (2013). *International Security: The Contemporary Agenda*. Polity press. 2nd edition. Alternatively, other editions can be consulted.

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Recommended academic journals on international security and international relations

- American Political Science Review
- Anuario Internacional CIDOB
- British Journal of Political Science
- British Journal of Politics & International Relations
- Bulletin of Latin American Research
- China Quarterly
- Chinese Journal of International Politics
- Conflict Management and Peace Science
- Cooperation and Conflict
- Colombia Internacional
- European Journal of International Relations
- European Journal of Political Research
- European Political Science Review
- Foreign Affairs
- Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica
- Foreign Policy Analysis
- Geopolitics
- Global Society
- International Affairs
- International Feminist Journal of Politics
- International Organization
- International Political Science Review
- International Security
- International Studies Quarterly
- International Studies Review
- Journal of Conflict Resolution
- Journal of International Relations and Development

- Journal of Modern African Studies
- Journal of Peace Research
- Journal of Strategic Studies
- Latin American Politics and Society
- Mediterranean Politics
- Nueva Sociedad
- Pacific Review
- Política Exterior
- Review of International Studies
- Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional
- Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals
- Revista Electrónica de Estudios Internacionales
- *Revista Española de Derecho Internacional*
- Security Dialogue
- Security Studies
- Terrorism and Political Violence
- The Political Quarterly
- World Policy Journal
- World Politics

Software

Students are expected to have the basic knowledge of the most common computer programs for the elaboration of texts, tables, and charts as well as for the search of specialized information on the Internet.

Course groups and languages

The information provided is provisional until November 30. After this date, you will be able to consult the language of each group through this [link](#). To access the information, you will need to enter the course CODE

Type of teaching	Group	Language	Semester	Shift
(TE) Theory	51	English	first semester	afternoon
(SEM) Seminars	51	English	first semester	afternoon