



GOVT 750 The Politics of National Security

Fall 2020

Mondays 7:20-10:00 on Zoom

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1. Course Description

This course provides an advanced introduction to the politics of defining, debating, doing, and judging the results of national security. Among the topics we will consider this semester are: the role of politics in shaping grand strategy, foreign policy, and national security policy; the role of politics in determining what national security is and is not; the role of the media and public opinion during war; the impact of national security issues on domestic politics; the foundation and evolution of public attitudes towards national security; and the connection between domestic politics and various dynamics in international relations such as war, peace, and trade.

2. Course Objectives

When students have completed this course, they will be able to:

- Explain and critically assess the major theories about the role of politics in shaping national security policy and the role of national security policy in shaping politics.
- Analyze the impact of politics on current American national security policy
- Assess the impact of national security on American politics
- Write more efficiently and effectively

3. Course Materials

All of the books are at the GMU bookstore as well as online stores. All other materials will be available on Blackboard.

Required Books

- Christian G. Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (Penguin 2016) ISBN-13: 978-0143128342
- Ronald R. Krebs, *Narrative and the Making of US National Security* (Cambridge University Press 2015) ISBN-13: 978-1107503991
- Russell Walter Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (Taylor and Francis 2002; Routledge 2009) ISBN-13 978-0375412301
- Andrew Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War*, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press 2013) ISBN-13: 978-0199931767

4. Course Format and Process

We will meet on Zoom at our appointed time on Monday evenings. We will not go 2.5 hours, however, and other course activities will make up for the additional time. I will record the sessions in case people's schedules for any reason make attendance impossible.

Each week, students will read the material, respond to the discussion board prompt on Blackboard, and attend class, where I will typically provide a short briefing but most of the time will be spent in discussion.

5. Course Requirements

Note: I *do not expect* students to have an extensive background in security studies, but I *do expect* everyone to read the material before class and to share their thoughts and insights with the class. I especially encourage those students who have professional experience with these subjects to share their knowledge.

Enthusiastic seminar participation (15%)

There will be roughly 20 students in our class, making live Zoom sessions a reasonable (if not optimal) proposition for discussion. These will be recorded for posterity and future viewing.

Weekly reading responses (15%)

Short essays responding to provocations posed on our Blackboard discussion board about the readings. Due before class each week in order to encourage everyone to do some processing

before we discuss the readings live. You are excused from writing this in the weeks you are turning in a critical response essay.

Critical response essays (25%)

Two short critical response essays, of approximately 3 double-spaced pages, on the week’s readings. Due before the class session in which the readings are discussed. Pick your weeks wisely. More information is available on Blackboard and we will discuss in class.

Research paper (30%)

An analytical research paper of 15+/- pages. For Master’s students your paper will follow either the Public Opinion or the “Politics Of” Case Study template. PhD students may propose alternate topics of their own. Due Dec 12. More information is available on Blackboard and we will discuss in class.

Peer review and weekly accountability groups (15%)

Students will be assigned to three-person writing groups to provide weekly accountability and peer review. Each student will submit a peer review of one research proposal and one rough draft. More information is available on Blackboard and we will discuss in class.

6. Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings & Lectures
Aug 24	Course introduction, historical context	Mead, <i>Special Providence</i> , (all)
Aug 31	Vietnam	Apy, <i>American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity</i> (all)
Sep 7	No class today	
Sep 14	Opinion formation and the sources of foreign policy attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zaller, Chs 1 and 2, from <i>The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion</i> • Wittkopf, “On the Foreign Policy Beliefs of the American People,” • Kertzer, et al, “Moral Support: How Moral Values Shape Foreign Policy Attitudes,”

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rathbun, et al, "Taking Foreign Policy Personally,"
Sep 21	Will they support the mission? War, presidents, casualties, and public opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jentleson and Britton, "Still Pretty Prudent," • Gelpi, Feaver, and Reifler, "Success Matters," • Berinsky, "Assuming the Costs of War," • Baum and Groeling, "Reality Asserts Itself,"
Sep 28	Narratives and national security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krebs, <i>Narratives and the Making of US National Security</i>, (all)
Oct 5	9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the GWOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacobson, "A Tale of Two Wars," • Mueller and Stewart, "The Terrorism Delusion," • Snyder, et al "Free Hand Abroad,"
Tues Oct 13	Congress vs. the Imperial President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD
Oct 19	The military in politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacevich, <i>The New American Militarism</i>, (all)
Oct 26	The media, the marketplace of ideas, and national security politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hallin, "The Media, the War in Vietnam," • Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," • Kaufman, "Selling the Iraq War," • Thrall, "A Bear in the Woods?"
Nov 2	Peace and antiwar movements since Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD

	Guest Speaker: Kate Kizer, Policy Director, Win Without War (@KateKizer)	
Nov 9	Flex day: class will vote topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD
Nov 16	Party politics and the struggle over the future of US foreign policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burns, "Polarized Politics Has Infected American Diplomacy," • Schultz, "The Perils of Polarization for U.S. Foreign Policy," • Dueck, "What Is Conservative Nationalism?" • Nexon, "Towards a Neo-Progressive Foreign Policy," • Biden, "Why America Must Lead Again,"
Nov 23	China, American decline, and the politics of retrenchment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brands, "The Chinese Century?" • Campbell and Sullivan, "Competition Without Catastrophe," • MacDonald and Parent, "Graceful Decline?"
Nov 30	Trump, COVID-19, and the evolution of American internationalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holsti and Rosenau, "Consensus Lost, Consensus Regained?" • Thrall and Goepner, "New Faces of Internationalism," • Brands, "Is American Internationalism Dead?"
Dec 7	Final paper due by midnight Saturday Dec 12	

Appendix: University Information

7. Blackboard

Access to [MyMason](#) and GMU email are required to participate successfully in this course. Please make sure to update your computer and prepare yourself to begin using the online format BEFORE the first day of class. Check [the IT Support Center](#) website. Navigate to [the Student Support page](#) for help and information about Blackboard. In the menu bar to the left you will find all the tools you need to become familiar with for this course. Take time to learn each tool. Make sure you run a system check a few days before class. Become familiar with the attributes of Blackboard and online learning.

To login in to the course:

1. Go to <http://mymason.gmu.edu>.
2. Login using your NETID and password.
3. Click on the 'Courses' tab.
4. Click on GOVT 745 (Fall 2015)

Technical Help

If you have difficulty with accessing Blackboard, please contact the ITU Support Center at 703.993.8870 or support@gmu.edu

If you have trouble with using the features in Blackboard, email courses@gmu.edu

8. University Policies & Information

Academic Integrity

Students must be responsible for their own work, and students and faculty must take on the responsibility of dealing explicitly with violations. The tenet must be a foundation of our university culture. [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/distance>].

Honor Code

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode>].

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

MasonLive/Email

Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to

students solely through their Mason email account. [See <https://thanatos.gmu.edu/masonlive/login>].

Patriot Pass

Once you sign up for your Patriot Pass, your passwords will be synchronized, and you will use your Patriot Pass username and password to log in to the following systems: Blackboard, University Libraries, MasonLive, myMason, Patriot Web, Virtual Computing Lab, and WEMS. [See <https://thanatos.gmu.edu/passwordchange/index.jsp>].

Responsible Use of Computing

Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu>].

University Libraries

University Libraries provides resources for distance students. [See <http://library.gmu.edu/distance>].

Writing Center

The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>]. You can now sign up for an Online Writing Lab (OWL) session just like you sign up for a face-to-face session in the Writing Center, which means YOU set the date and time of the appointment! Learn more about the [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#).

Counseling and Psychological Services

The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu>].

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the "Buckley Amendment," is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. [See <http://registrar.gmu.edu/privacy>].

Other Considerations

If there are any issues related to religious holidays, please inform the instructor the first week of class.