



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

**STRATEGIC STUDIES PROGRAMME  
STRA 531: STRATEGIC STUDIES  
30 POINTS**

**TRIMESTER 1 2015**

**Important dates**

**Trimester dates:** 2 March to 1 July 2015

**Teaching dates:** 2 March to 5 June 2015

**Easter/Mid-trimester break:** 3–19 April 2015

**Last Assignment Due:** Open book test to take place on: 3 June 2015 from 4pm.

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds). If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

**Class times and locations**

Lectures/Seminars: Wednesdays 4:10pm-7:00pm

Venue: Murphy Building MY403

**Names and contact details**

Course Coordinator: Robert Ayson

Room No: 205, 16 Kelburn Parade (available by appointment only; please email or call to arrange a time)

Phone: 04 463 6445

Email: [robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz)

**Communication of additional information**

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the course Blackboard site.

## Prescription

This course covers strategic thinking from Clausewitz to the 21st century. Emphasis will be placed on the relationship between force and international politics including the role of strategy in limiting international competition and attempts to restrain the use of force.

## Course content

The dates and topics for the 11 sessions are as follows:

4 March 2015: Session 1: Strategy, Violence and War  
11 March 2015: Session 2: Power, Politics and Coercion  
18 March 2015: Session 3: Strategic Objectives: Security, Peace, Victory?  
25 March 2015: Session 4: Technology: Military Revolutions? Cyberwar?  
1 April 2015: Session 5: Justice, Law and Strategic Ethics

*3-19 April 2015: Mid-trimester break*

22 April 2015: Session 6: Making Strategy: Strategic Culture and Geopolitics  
29 April 2015: Session 7: New Wars, Counterinsurgency & the Strategic Narrative  
6 May 2015: Session 8: Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and Asymmetry  
13 May 2015: Session 9: State Collapse, Interventions and The Quest for Peace  
20 May 2015: Session 10: Old Armageddon? Proliferation and the Nuclear Age  
27 May 2015: Session 11: New Armageddon? Climate, Resources & Security

## Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. analyse the relationship between force and politics
2. analyse the mix of competition and cooperation in strategic relationships
3. evaluate major aspects of the evolution of strategic thought
4. apply strategic thinking to a range of international security problems.

## Teaching format

STRA 531 is a core 30-point course for students in the Strategic Studies programme and for students from related subject areas. It seeks to provide a comprehensive and systematic understanding of strategic studies in the context of leading problems in international security by first building an understanding of the conceptual apparatus of strategic studies before focusing on the application of strategic thinking to a number of these contemporary international issues. It is taught in 11 weekly teaching sessions to allow for step-by-step consideration of the curriculum. These weekly sessions are timed in the late afternoon/early evening to allow for part-time as well as full-time students to attend. Most sessions will consist of one or more presentations by the lead teacher (or the guest lecturer where applicable). Time will also be devoted to interactive class discussion which allows students to work with the ideas and issues being raised and for which students need to prepare by keeping up with the readings for each session.

## Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- submit the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work)
- attend all of the lectures and seminars conducted (permission must be gained in advance for any absences)
- complete the open-book test

## Workload

In accordance with University Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 300 hours to STRA 531 throughout the trimester. This includes weekly attendance at lectures/seminars, completion of all set weekly readings and research and writing for set assessment tasks. Please note it is an important part of your skills development in working out how much time you should allocate to each of these tasks. But here are some very rough guidelines on what to expect:

Preparation (including reading) and attendance at classes	120 hours
Research and Preparation of short essay	45 hours
Research and Preparation of long essay	90 hours
Study for & writing of open-book test	45 hours
Total	300 hours

## Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	2,500 word short written assignment	25%	1, 3	30 March at 5pm
2	5,000 word long essay	50%	1-4	15 May at 5pm
3	Open-book test	25%	1-4	3 June

There are three pieces of assessment for this course:

- 1. A first and shorter written assignment (25%) to be submitted to the Blackboard site for STRA 531.** Please write **2,500 words** on ONE of the following topics:
  - (a) Using a significant number of the required readings from the first three sessions of the course, explain to a reader new to the subject of strategic studies what its core assumptions appear to be and which of them is most precarious.
  - (b) Provide an explanation of a contemporary crisis or issue in strategic affairs through the lens of the required readings from the first three sessions of the course. (The crisis or issue might be the anti-ISIS coalition; Ukraine-Russia conflict, Boko Haram or some other current example).
- 2. A second and longer written assignment (50%) to be submitted to the Blackboard Site.** Please write **5,000 words** on ONE of the following topics:
  - (a) 'Contrary to Thomas Rid's claim, cyberwar can take place. In fact it already is taking place.' Evaluate this statement.
  - (b) 'The fact that ISIS violates commonly understood moral rules about the use of violence does not render the use of violence to degrade its activities ethical or just.' Evaluate this statement.
  - (c) If we compare China's and America's approaches to maritime conflict and capabilities in Asia do we find more evidence of similar than dissimilar strategic cultures?

- (d) 'The counterinsurgency era is not over.' Evaluate this claim.
- (e) 'Lone wolf terrorism is terrorism without a political agenda. That means it may not be terrorism at all, but simply an act of violence.' Evaluate this claim.
- (f) Why is there no consensus on whether intervention works?
- (g) If states seek nuclear weapons because they feel insecure, shouldn't we welcome nuclear proliferation as an answer to those insecurity problems?
- (h) A topic formulated in consultation with the course teacher. If you wish to choose this option, please consult Professor Ayson.

**3. Open Book Test (25%) to be sat, and submitted, VIA BLACKBOARD.** A list of questions, dealing with the entire course, will be put up on Blackboard at **4.00pm on the day of the test**. Students will be required to answer 3 essay-style questions from the list. Answers are to be submitted **VIA BLACKBOARD** by **7.30pm**.

**This is a three hour test and you have been given an extra 30 minutes to get yourself organised. It is therefore expected that everyone will sit the test at the same time.**

## Marking Criteria

Each of your pieces of written work will be assessed on the basis of whether you have:

- (a) answered the question directly
- (b) developed clear and well-substantiated arguments
- (c) linked your arguments together in a clear logic that flows through the assignment
- (d) reflected an awareness in your writing of the literature on the subject
- (e) written in a style that is easy to follow and communicates your points clearly and effectively
- (f) observed relevant scholarly conventions.

## Submission and return of work

The short and long written assignments will be submitted electronically by the student to the Blackboard site for STRA 531 using the cover page for the particular assignment which will also be provided on the Blackboard Site. Marked work will be returned in class, and the course instructor will aim to do this within two to three weeks of the official submission date. The open-book test will also be submitted by Blackboard.

## Extensions and penalties

### Extensions

You may request an extension in advance of the due date for a particular piece of assessment from the course instructor by sending an email and explaining the reason for the extension request and the length of extension requested to [robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz). Extensions are generally only granted in exceptional circumstances, eg illness of the student or a family member. They must be made before the original due date and time.

### Penalties

Students will be penalised for late submission of assignments – **a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days**. Work that is more than 10 weekdays late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but may not be marked. Deductions will apply as soon as the specified time and date is missed. An essay due in at 5pm on 1 March would be deducted 5% if it is submitted to Blackboard at 5:30pm that day.

Penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary.

## Readings

A list of readings for this course is attached.

## Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

## Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)