



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAMME

STRA 535: Special Topic: Strategic Asia

30 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2015

Important dates

Trimester dates: 13 July to 15 November 2015

Teaching dates: 13 July to 16 October 2015

Mid-trimester break: 24 August to 6 September 2015

Last assessment item due: 13 October 2015 (In-class test)

Withdrawal dates: Refer to 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.

Class times and locations

Seminars: Tuesdays, 1610-1900hrs

Venue: Murphy 103

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator: Manjeet S. Pardesi

Room No: 201 (16 Kelburn Parade)

Phone: +64-4+463-5394

Email: manjeet.pardesi@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: Wednesdays, 1600-1700 hrs (and by appointment)

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

The threat and use of force have come to figure prominently in Asian international politics. This course explores the rationale, concepts, and military doctrines pertaining to the role of force as an instrument of state policy in postwar Asia in general, and the post-Cold War period in particular.

Course content

The dramatic economic rise of Asia over the past few decades along with the military modernization programs of the key countries in the region have made issues related to the threat and use of force very important for the future of the region. The aim of this course is to understand and analyse the region's current strategic environment. In particular, the course looks at following themes (in the context of military security): (1) major power relations (US, China, Japan, and India); (2) the interconnections between land and naval power; (3) the politics of nuclear weapons; (4) the links between economics and security; and (5) the security implications of climate change and the quest for natural resources.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. critically evaluate Asia's emerging strategic architecture
2. analyse major power relations in Asia as they relate to the use of force
3. assess strategy formulation of the major powers in the Asian region
4. evaluate strategic stability in Asia at the nuclear and conventional levels
5. appraise the links between economics and security
6. apply strategic thinking to analyse contemporary world problems.

Teaching format

This course is taught over 12 weeks via weekly 3-hour seminars. **This is a readings-intensive course.** Most sessions will begin with one or two students making presentations on the given week's readings and will be followed by the instructor's comments on the presentations and the readings to raise important questions, which will then be discussed in an interactive way with the students. Active student participation is mandatory given the seminar-style of the course. (Please note that while the instructor will talk about the readings and the issues that they raise, the teaching format is based on presentations and discussions as opposed to lectures).

Mandatory course requirements

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

1. submit the long and short research essays by the specified dates (subject to provisions for late work)
2. complete the end-trimester test
3. actively participate in the seminars through presentations and discussions.

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the MCRs because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

Workload

This course has been designed on the assumption that students will devote approximately 300 hours to it throughout the trimester. This includes weekly attendance at seminars, completion of all set weekly readings, and research and writing for set assessment tasks. Please note that 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 for (including reading) and attendance at seminars:	120 hours
Research and preparation for the short essay:	45 hours
Research and preparation for the long essay:	90 hours
Study for and writing of the end-trimester test:	45 hours
Total:	300 hours

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1 Class presentation (15 minutes per student)	10%	1	TBA*
2 Short research essay (2,500 words)	20%	2, 3, 4	23 August 2015
3 Long research essay (5,000 words)	50%	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	25 September 2015
4 End-trimester test	20%	2, 3, 4, 5	13 October 2015

* Students will be assigned individual dates during the first seminar of this course on 14 July 2015.

Class presentation (15 minutes)

The required readings for Weeks 2 through 11 will be assigned to individual students during the seminar on Week 1. (While the students will be given a choice to select the weeks when they would like to present, the instructor will ensure that all weeks are covered). Given the class size, about 2 students will be making their presentations every week. Each presentation should be about 15 minutes long and should cover the following:

- Summarise the readings
- Identify the salient points and gaps (if any)
- Assess how they help us understand the relevant security issue in Asia
- Raise pertinent questions for discussion

Short essay (2,500 words including footnotes)

23 August 2015

For the first essay, the student is allowed to choose any war **or** militarized dispute short of war in Asia. (While an event from the postwar period – post-1945 – is preferred, the student may choose to work on an historical case after consultation with the instructor).

This is a “**causes of war**” type analytical question. Your essay must address **why** war broke out during the case that you are analysing or **why/how** the parties managed to avoid it.

Examples of war in Asia – the 1950-53 Korean War, the 1962 Sino-Indian War

Examples of militarized crises short of war – the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, the 2001-02 India-Pakistan crisis.

To explain why war broke out or was avoided, students will need to analyse the decision-making process in the key country/countries. For example, in the case of the 1950-53 Korean War, the student can answer any one of the following questions –

- Why did North Korea attack South Korea in the first place?
- Why did the United States intervene?
- Why did the United States take the war into North Korea itself?
- Why did China enter the war?

Another example – in the case of the 1995-96 Taiwan Strait Crisis – why was war avoided? Was this crisis mere military posturing (and did both sides understand this) or was war avoided because deterrence prevailed? Was it conventional deterrence or was it nuclear deterrence?

It is best to adopt the “levels-of-analysis” approach in trying to answer such questions. For the classic statement of this approach, see Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954).

The aim of this exercise is for students to understand war/crisis decision-making (and the complex mix of factors that go into the making of such decisions). Students are not expected to research any primary sources for this essay. However, a familiarity with the secondary literature is essential to understand the decision-making process.

The exact question should be agreed upon in consultation with me as soon as possible (by the end of Week 3). This assignment is due at the end of Week 6 (or just before the trimester break).

Long Essay (5,000 words including footnotes)

25 September 2015

In this second assignment, you are asked to write a substantive research paper on a topic of your choice but with my approval. You are expected to confirm with me your preferred topic, through email, or, if you prefer, discuss it with me in-person before you start writing the paper. **You must choose your question and have it confirmed before the mid-trimester break.** Here are some general guidelines on choosing a topic:

- a) The topic has to be relevant to this course, i.e., it must analyse some aspect of Asian security
- b) You may choose to focus on a single country or look at issues through a bilateral lens (or perhaps even from a systemic perspective)
- c) You may work on some aspect of the regional institutional architecture
- d) You may choose to write on contemporary or historical issues

This assignment allows you to demonstrate your ability and analytical skills to conduct independent research on a relevant topic.

Examples include:

- What are the constraints that the United States is facing in its “pivot” to Asia?
- Is China’s “Silk Road” initiative a prelude to an alternative world order?
- Why did India recently upgrade its “Look East” policy to “Act East” policy? Is this a semantic change or a substantive one?

End-Trimester Test

13 October 2015

You will be asked to answer two questions (worth 10% each of the overall grade) out of a choice of five questions. These questions will be made available via Blackboard at 4:10pm on 13 October 2015. You will need to submit your answers via Blackboard by 7:00pm on 13 October 2015. (If there are issues with Blackboard then email me your answers immediately at manjeet.pardesi@vuw.ac.nz).

Marking Criteria

Each of your written pieces 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 strategic studies/IR literature on the subject
- e. Written in a style that is easy to follow and communicates your points clearly and effectively

Submission and return of work

Please submit all your written assignments through Blackboard by 7:00pm on the due date. (Send me an email at manjeet.pardesi@vuw.ac.nz if you have issues with Blackboard). I will try and return your marked assignments within two-to-three weeks. You will receive your marked assignments via email as well. (Refer above for the end-trimester test).

Assignments submitted after 7pm will be counted as “late” by one day.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

The course expects students to submit their assignments on time. Requests for extensions should be made with the lecturer in person with proper documentation before the due date. Extensions are normally given only to those with a medical certificate, or of other evidence of forces beyond your control.

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. 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. Extensions on deadlines for written work will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.

Set texts

There are no set “texts” for this course. There is a set of “required” readings that will be made available to students via Blackboard/electronic reserves.

Recommended reading

A set of recommended readings – mostly articles from important news/magazines – will be provided where appropriate. Every effort will be made to make these available via Blackboard. Students may be required to make use of the Library (and the online resources made available by the Library) to access some these readings.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep’s name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

This is the first time this special topic has been offered. Student feedback on University courses may be found at 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
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: 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
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz