

# Introduction to international security

## MOISL, 2023

Olivier Schmitt  
Professor mso  
[schmitt@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:schmitt@sam.sdu.dk)

### Practical information

**Time and location:** Classes will take place on Mondays, from 14.00 to 17.00, in room U91.

**Objective:** This course will provide students with the foundational concepts to understand and analyze the contemporary security environment. While news cycle are replete with information on the North Korean nuclear programme, the Russian challenge to European security or the development of new military technologies, there is a need to better understand the dynamics underpinning those issues.

As indicated in its title, this is an *introduction* to international security: we will not be covering every topic, and we will also not examine in-depth every issue discussed in class. Yet, the objective is to equip students with the foundational concepts they need to analyze contemporary security issues, as well as give them a large view of contemporary challenges. All the topics we will discuss would certainly deserve a dedicated course to dig deep into the issues, but the point of the broad exposure is to catch your interest, allowing you to figure out for yourself where you would like to focus your efforts later. Hence, we go for breadth more than depth, since you will have the opportunity to dig deeper into specific issues during the rest of your master program, either through other classes or through your master thesis. But the knowledge you will acquire in this class is foundational for the rest of your studies (and hopefully, you'll also discover that it is useful intellectual discipline in your future employment).

Moreover, the course includes several in-class exercises which are designed to help you acquire skills that will be necessary for your future careers. Those skills include, but are not limited to: critical reading, synthesis, analysis, research, oral presentation, written presentation, group-work, debating, negotiation. Every activity we conduct in class, including the exams, is connected to training one of those skills.

The course is divided into three parts. The first part, “concepts”, provides you with fundamental intellectual tools to understand security issues. The second part, “context”, examines the evolutions of the security environment. The third part, “issues”, discusses in more depth some key items on the security agenda.

**Course structure:** You have been randomly assigned to one of ten possible working groups (WGs). The WGs will last for the semester, since you will have to prepare two exercises in WG format (the newsroom and the critical reader). Moreover, we will regularly conduct group exercises in class (such as oxford debates, or small wargames), and already knowing your WG will help us save time.

A typical class will start with the *newsroom*, for 5 to 10 minutes. It will be followed by the second exercise, *the critical reader*, for 10 to 15 minutes. I will then lecture about the weekly topic for about one hour. After a break, we will usually conduct a practical activity related to the weekly topic and designed to train your practical skills.

The *newsroom* is an exercise in which the assigned WG will pick an international event that happened during the previous week, present it to the class and highlight how it is illustrative a broader security dynamics/concepts/issues: it is about contextualizing events and decoding how they can be analyzed through the concepts we will discover in class.

The *critical reader* is an exercise in which the WG will present the weekly mandatory reading, summarize the key arguments, and discuss both their merits and their limits. It is designed to train your critical reading skills.

For both the newsroom and the critical reader, WGs are entirely free to decide how they want to present: it can be one presenter on behalf of the entire WG or a group presentation; it can use visual help (such as powerpoints) or not, etc. Creativity is absolutely encouraged.

The schedule for WG presentations is as follows.

	Newsroom	Critical reader
Class 2	X	7
Class 3	5	10
Class 4	7	4
Class 5	3	1
Class 6	6	9
Class 7	8	2
Class 8	9	6
Class 9	1	3
Class 10	10	8
Class 11	4	5
Class 12	2	X

**Your responsibilities:** Of course, your basic responsibility is to **come to class prepared and having read the weekly mandatory texts**. By “reading”, I mean “critically engaging” with the texts. Browsing them over breakfast or in the tram is not enough: your texts should be highlighted and annotated, which are signs of deep engagement. Reading academic texts can be intimidating. If this is the case for you, I highly recommend Raul Pacheco-Vega’s website, which provides excellent advice on how to develop reading strategies (available [here](#)). Again, this is about developing skills that will be helpful in your future career (you may not have to read academic papers, but you will certainly have to read policy documents and critically engage with them in order to provide advice and analyses to your employers).

*Second, this class assumes a knowledge of international history since 1870.* This is not a history class, and we do not teach international history. But you *cannot* (emphasis on *cannot*) understand international security issues without a working knowledge of international history. If I mention in class the Franco-Prussian War, the origins of World War 1, the Sudete crisis, the “New Deal”, the League of Nations, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the creation of the United Nations, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, the decolonization, the “Great Leap Forward”, the Euromissile crisis, the *Perestroika*, or 9/11, you *need* to know what I am talking about. If you are unsure (or don’t know any of the terms mentioned above), I strongly recommend that you invest in the following book: Antony Best, Jussi Hanhimäki, Joe Maiolo and Kirsten Schultze, *International History of the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), Routledge, 2015.

Make it your favorite bedtime book, read it from cover to cover, and refer to it as often as necessary: not only will you become very good at pub quizzes and make an impression during family reunions, but you will have the required context to meaningfully understand 21<sup>st</sup> century security issues.

*Third, you need to closely follow national and international political news.* You are students in a master of international security and law, it is expected of you that you read at least one good Danish and one good international news outlet *every day*. Excellent sources abound, so you can easily choose: for example *Politiken*, *Ræson*, *Information* or *Jyllands-Posten* in Denmark; *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Financial Times* or *The Economist* for international outlets.

*Fourth, your interest in international security and law is not confined to the classroom.* The classes are designed to give you the intellectual tools and skills required for a successful

career in the field. One of the skills you need to acquire is knowing how to identify good analysis, which goes beyond following the news. Through the master program, you will develop academic skills, notably the ability to select a relevant theory or concept and apply it to empirical data through a proper methodology. These skills are important, because we all have implicit theories and assumptions about how the world works: the point of an academic training in the social sciences is to make those theories and assumptions explicit, compare them with alternative theories (which implies knowing about these theories), and see how they fare when used to analyze empirical events and data. Transparency and rigor are the bedrocks of quality analysis, but not every written format is an academic paper. There are excellent quality analyses which do not follow an academic writing template (although they still follow the key steps of explaining background assumptions and testing these assumptions against empirical data), and regularly reading such analyses will help you hone your critical analysis skills.

I particularly recommend reading the following websites, which offer high-quality (and free) discussions of contemporary security issues: [War on the Rocks](#), [Lawfare](#), the CFR's [blog](#) and [E-International Relations](#).

It is also a good idea to regularly follow the websites of the main international think-tanks on security issues, for updates and analyses. Think-tank reports are an intermediate form of writing: they typically involve less theoretical and methodological discussions than an academic paper, but they will usually follow a rigorous research process implicitly informed by academic standards. They also have policy recommendations, which are more elaborate (and usually established through a more rigorous process) than an opinion piece in a newspaper. The key US think-tanks relevant for this class would be the [Rand corporation](#), the [CSIS](#), the [CSBA](#) and the [CNAS](#). In the UK, the key players in the security field are the [IISS](#) and the [RUSI](#). In Denmark, you should follow the [DIIS](#) and the [CMS](#). At the European level, the [ECFR](#) is an excellent source.

You can also listen to podcasts related to international affairs and international security. Most of the institutions mentioned above host their own podcasts, and you will have to shop around a little to establish your tastes (in terms of topics covered, flows of the conversation, setting of the podcast, etc.), but I personally appreciate the War on the Rocks [podcast](#), the Lawfare [podcast](#), the [Asia Chessboard](#), [New Books in National Security](#), and the [Arms Control Wonk](#). Remember that the more you read, and the more you inform yourself, the easier your classes will be and the more proficient you will be at your future jobs. Use extra-classroom learning opportunities as much as you can: becoming a life-long learner starts now.

**Examination:** There are two forms of examination in this class: a pass/fail mid-term assignment, in which you will be asked to summarize a policy document, as if you were a desk officer in a ministry writing an analysis for their boss. We will learn in class how to structure and write such a document.

The final exam will be a take-home conceptual and empirical analysis of an international security issue. This is where you get to start exploring in more details a topic you are interested in: I will give you the freedom to choose the issue you want to analyze (either from those we will cover in class, or other topics), and you will research the relevant academic and empirical literature on the topic. Take it as an early step towards the process of identifying a research topic for your master thesis, and maybe a potential early career specialization. Here again, we will go in class through the format I am expecting for the exam.

In terms of presentation, the exams should be submitted in Times New Roman, font 12, with a 1,5 spacing for the paragraphs. They should have page numbers, a consistent citation style and a standard cover mentioning the number of strokes.

The mid-term should have a maximum of 3 pages, each with 2,400 strokes. Spacing and notes included, but table of content, appendixes and bibliography excluded.

The final exam will have a maximum 8 pages, each with 2,400 strokes. Spacing and notes included, but table of content, appendixes and bibliography excluded.

And now, in order for me to get to know you better (and to make sure that you have made it this far into the syllabus), **please send me an email** at [schmitt@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:schmitt@sam.sdu.dk), mentioning in a couple of paragraphs: your name; your background (where are you from, what did you study before?); your motivation for taking the MOISL degree and your preferred career afterwards (knowing that this can change of course); and your favorite movie.

And move on to the next page to discover the reading list for the class...

## Mandatory readings

## Concepts

### **Class 1: Introduction. What is security? What is strategy?**

(4 September)

David Baldwin, "The Concept of Security", *Review of International Studies*, 23/1, 1997, pp. 5-26.

Jonna Nyman, "Securitization Theory", in Laura J. Shepherd (ed.), *Critical Approaches to Security. An Introduction to Theory and Methods*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2013, pp. 51-62.

Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?", *International Security*, 26/2, 2001, pp. 87-102.

Lawrence Freedman, "Strategy, The History of an Idea", in Hal Brands (ed.), *The New Makers of Strategy. From the Ancient World to the Digital Age*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2023, pp. 17-40.

### **Class 2: War and its causes**

(11 September)

Ann Hironaka, *Tokens of Power. Rethinking War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017. Read chapter 4, "Great Power Competition and the Causes of War", pp. 101-133.

Charles L. Glaser, "The Security Dilemma Revisited", *World Politics*, 50/1, 1997, pp. 171-201.

Lauren Wilcox, "Gendering the Cult of the Offensive", *Security Studies*, 18/2, 2009, pp. 214-240.

Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, "Bad World: The Negativity Bias in World Politics", *International Security*, 43/3, 2018/2019, pp. 96-140.

### **Class 3: Statecraft (I). Diplomacy and cooperation**

(18 September)

Stacie E. Goddard, Paul K. MacDonald and Daniel H. Nexon, "Repertoires of Statecraft: Instruments and Logics of Power Politics", *International Relations*, 33/2, 2019, pp. 304-321.

Ian Hurd, "The Permissive Power of the Ban on War", *European Journal of International Security*, 2/1, 2017, pp. 1-18.

Vincent Pouliot, "Hierarchy in Practice: Multilateral Diplomacy and the Governance of International Security", *European Journal of International Security*, 1/1, 2016, pp. 5-26.

Olivier Schmitt, "How to Challenge an International Order. Russian Diplomatic Practices in Multilateral Security Organizations", *European Journal of International Relations*, 26/3, 2020, pp. 922-946.

## **Class 4: Statecraft (II). Coercion, subversion and covert action**

(25 September)

Robert J. Art and Kelly M. Greenhill, "Coercion, An Analytical Overview", in Kelly M. Greenhill and Peter Krause (eds.), *Coercion. The Power to Hurt in International Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 3-32.

Dima Adamsky, "From Moscow with Coercion: Russian Deterrence Theory and Strategic Culture", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 41/1-2, 2018, pp. 33-60.

Lennart Maschmeyer, "The Subversive Trilemma. Why Cyber Operations Fall Short of Expectations", *International Security*, 46/2, 2021, pp. 51-90.

Austin Carson, "Facing Off and Saving Face: Covert Intervention and Escalation Management in the Korean War", *International Organization*, 70/1, 2016, pp. 103-131.

### **Context**

## **Class 5: A Changing World Order? The new balance of power and norms**

(2 October)

Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon, *Exit from Hegemony. The Unraveling of the American Global Order*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020.

Read chapter 2: "The American Hegemonic System in Theoretical and Historical Perspective", pp. 18-53.

David A. Lake, Lisa L. Martin and Thomas Risse, "Challenges to the Liberal Order", *International Organization*, 75/2, 2021, pp. 225-257.

Roland Paris, "The Right to Dominate: How Old Ideas about Sovereignty Pose New Challenges for World Order", *International Organization*, 74/3, pp. 453-489.

Atul Mishra, "The World Delhi Wants: Official Indian Conceptions of International Order, c. 1998-2023", *International Affairs*, 99/4, 2023, pp. 1401-1419.

## **Class 6: Climate change and international security**

(9 October)

Joshua W. Busby, *States and Nature. The Effects of Climate Change on Security*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Read chapter 2 "Conceptualizing Climate and Security", pp. 19-36, and chapter 3 "The argument, method and mechanisms", pp. 37-70.

Matt McDonald, "Immovable Objects? Impediments to a UN Security Council Resolution on Climate Change", *International Affairs*, 99/4, 2023, pp. 1635-1651.

Duncan Depledge, "Low-Carbon Warfare: Climate Change, Net Zero, and Military Operations", *International Affairs*, 99/2, 2023, pp. 667-685.

## **Class 7: Geo-economics and economic security**

(23 October)

Robert D. Blackwill et Jennifer M. Harris, *War by Other Means. Geoeconomics and Statecraft*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

Read chapter 1, "What is Geoeconomics?", pp. 19-32 and chapter 3, "Today's Leading Geoeconomic Instruments", pp. 49-92.

Henry Farrell and Abraham J. Newman, "Weaponized Interdependence. How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion", *International Security*, 44/1, 2019, pp. 42-79.

Daniel W. Drezner, "How Not to Sanction", *International Affairs*, 98/5, 2022, pp. 1533-1552.

## **Class 8: Alliances and security institutions**

(30 October)

Sten Rynning and Olivier Schmitt, "Alliances", in Alexandra Gheciu and William C. Wohlforth (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Security*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 653-667.

Stephanie C. Hofmann and Andrew Yeo, "Business as Usual: The Role of Norms in Alliance Management", *European Journal of International Relations*, 21/2, 2015, pp. 377-401.

Luis Simón, Alexander Lanoszka and Hugo Meijer, "Nodal Defence: The Changing Structure of U.S. Alliance Systems in Europe and Asia", *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 44/3, 2021, pp. 360-388.

James Goldgeier and Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrinson, "Evaluating NATO Enlargement: Scholarly Debates, Policy Implications, and Roads not Taken", *International Politics*, 57/3, 2020, pp. 291-321.

## **Issues**

## **Class 9: Nuclear weapons and international security**

(6 November)

Michael C. Horowitz, "Nuclear Weapons", in Dan Reiter (ed.), *Understanding War and Peace*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 339-370.



Caitlin Talmadge, “Multipolar Deterrence in the Emerging Nuclear Era”, in Vipin Narang and Scott Sagan (eds.), *The Fragile Balance of Terror. Deterrence in the New Nuclear Age*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2023, pp. 13-38.

Andrew Futter and Benjamin Zala, “Strategic Non-Nuclear Weapons and the Onset of a Third Nuclear Age”, *European Journal of International Security*, 6/3, 2021, pp. 257-277.

Caitlin Talmadge and Joshua Rovner, “The Meaning of China’s Nuclear Modernization”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2023.

## **Class 10: Soft power, propaganda and disinformation**

(13 November)

James J. Forest, *Digital Influence Mercenaries. Profits and Power through Information Warfare*, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 2022.

Read chapter 1, “The diverse landscape of digital influence mercenaries” and chapter 2, “Digital Influence Methods”.

Paul Charon and Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, *Chinese Influence Operations. A Machiavellian Moment*, Paris, Irsem, 2021.

Read the executive summary, and the first part “Concepts”.

Olivier Schmitt, “When are Strategic Narratives Effective? The shaping of political discourse through the interaction between political myths and strategic narratives”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, 39/4, 2018, pp. 487-511.

## **Class 11: Emerging technologies and the future of warfare**

(20 November)

Michael C. Horowitz, “Do Emerging Military Technologies Matter for International Politics?”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 23, 2020, pp. 385-400.

Olivier Schmitt, “Wartime Paradigms and the Future of Western Military Power”, *International Affairs*, 96/2, 2020, pp. 401-418.

Jacquelyn Schneider and Julia MacDonald, “Looking Back to Look Forward: Autonomous Systems, Military Revolutions, and the Importance of Cost”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2023.

Cameron Hunter & Bleddyn E. Bowen, “We’ll Never Have a Model of an AI Major-General: Artificial Intelligence, Command Decisions, and Kitsch Visions of War”, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 2023.

## **Class 12: Conclusion/career workshop**

(27 November)

*No readings*