

POLS 387: International Security

Dr. Ches Thurber

Fall 2022

E-mail: cthurber@niu.edu

Office Hours: Th/F 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Office: <https://calendly.com/chesthurber/officehours>

Web: www.chesthurber.com

Class Hours: Online

Class Room: Online

Teaching Assistant

Titik Firawati - z1803993@students.niu.edu

Course Description

Why did Russia invade Ukraine? Can Iran be stopped from building a nuclear weapon? What responsibility do we have to try to stop mass atrocities around the world? This course offers a broad overview of security challenges facing policymakers and citizens in the 21st century. We will begin with a “traditional” approach to security studies, examining questions surrounding the causes of war, the art of strategy, and the logic of deterrence. We will then move on to address the complex threats posed to security in the 21st century: from nuclear proliferation to environmental conflict, from terrorism to pandemics, and from cyberwarfare to peacekeeping missions. By the end of the course, students are expected to demonstrate not only a deep understanding of each of these concepts, but also an ability to place contemporary challenges in their broader historical contexts and to evaluate the costs and benefits of potential policy responses.

Learning Objectives

- To develop an understanding of major security challenges facing the global community
- To use theory and history as tools to help evaluate policy responses
- To learn to write short, clear, argumentative memos, in line with the type of writing skills expected in the fields of business, public policy, law, and criminal justice

Mode of Delivery

This will be a fully online asynchronous class. Content for each week will be made available on Blackboard over the weekend and assignments will generally be due the following Friday at 5pm. You ***MUST*** stay up to date with the class. It will not be possible either to work ahead or to catch-up later.

A Note on Learning Amidst Pandemic

Things are getting better, but these are still crazy times. We will be proceeding with this class the best we can and to some degree I hope the process of reading, writing, and talking about topics we are all passionate about helps provide you with some sense of normalcy. But sometimes that can feel like absurdity. Please know that you are not alone in feeling it and that we are all in this together. I will be as accommodating as I can this semester in light of these circumstances and I hope that we can all agree to engage each other in a spirit of mutual patience, empathy, and understanding. If you or somebody you know is struggling with anxiety or other issues, do not hesitate to reach out. Resources available include the DRC, Student Counseling Services or call 815-306-2777.

Office Hours

I will be holding office hours on Tuesdays from 2-3:30 p.m. and Wednesdays from 10:00-11:30 a.m. Office hours appointments are available either in-person in my office or online. I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this. Sign up for an appointment at [this link](#). The system will send you a Zoom link that we can use for our meeting. Or you can just show up at my office at that time.

Course Materials

There are no textbooks for this course!!! :) All readings will be made available on Blackboard. However, students will be asked to sign up for the online service Packback (\$42). I am working with Packback and the bookstore to ensure that eligible students can get the cost covered by financial aid. In addition, Packback offers a limited number of fee assistance options for students who need it.

Packback Discussion Boards

We will be using an online suite of learning services called "Packback." We will primarily be using Packback in two ways: 1) As a discussion board with weekly posting requirements, and 2) as a mechanism for submitting (and if you wish, writing) your papers. The advantage of Packback is that it provides greater opportunities for engagement and feedback, especially in the context of an online asynchronous class. The disadvantage of Packback is that it will cost you money. I take this drawback seriously and am assigning Packback this year only after getting very positive reviews from students who used it with me in in classes over the past three semesters.

By 5pm every Friday, you will be required to post *THREE* times on the Packback discussion board. In one post you will pose a question for your classmates. In the other two you will respond to questions your classmates or I have posed.

If the cost of Packback (\$42) creates hardship for you or your family, you may also contact them to request a fee waiver. You may choose to include me in your communication with Packback about this or not, depending on what you are comfortable with (i.e. I will go to bat for you to get you a waiver, but you are also welcome to keep this private.)

Packback “Deep Dives”

We will also be using Packback as the mechanism for submitting the four papers you will be writing over the semester. This is a new Packback feature, which they are calling “Deep Dives.” Think of it like an advanced version of Grammarly for college writing. You write your paper directly in Packback, or you can copy and paste your paper from another word processor if you prefer. Packback will help you spot grammatical issues, make stylistic suggestions, and assist you with citations. My goal is that by Packback assisting with these elements, 1) you will be able to make grammatical and citation corrections before you submit your paper, thus earning a higher grade; 2) I will be able to focus my feedback on the substance of what you have written. As a reward for being a “guinea pig” in the trial of this new feature, you will receive 20 points (out of 100) simply for submitting your assignment.

Model UN Option

Students in the class are encouraged to consider participating in NIU’s Model UN club, for which I am the advisor. We meet one day a week during the semester, and then travel to Chicago the weekend before Thanksgiving where we will be representing the country of Nepal at a mock UN conference. Students who choose to participate in Model UN may use preparatory materials for that conference in lieu of the final two paper assignments for this class.

Evaluation

Packback Discussion Board Posts (25%): For each week of the course, students are expected to contribute three posts to Packback: one question and two responses. The posts must meet minimum criteria for length and depth of engagement. Doing so will result in full credit (100%) for that week. Posts are due by 5pm on Friday.

Reading Quizzes (15%): For each week of the course, there will be an online multiple choice quiz on the readings and video lectures. Students will be able to re-take the quiz one time. Quizzes must be complete by Friday at 5pm.

Writing Assignments: (4 x 15%) You will complete four short writing assignments over the course of the semester. Each assignment should be between 800 and 1,000 words in length. Specific prompts will be provided at the time of the assignment. Assignments will be submitted through Packback Deep Dives and are due at... you guessed it, Friday at 5pm. There will be no other work during weeks when written assignments are due.

Course Policies

- If you think you need to delay submitting a written assignment, please talk to me in advance and I will try to be accommodating. Any missed exam or written assignment submitted after the deadline without prior authorization will incur a penalty. (Seriously, in all cases please reach out and let me know an assignment is going to be late. And do not feel obligated to go into details of your personal life. In these times it’s totally fine to write to me saying “Some stuff’s come up, is there any way I can have an extension?”)

- All students are expected to adhere to the highest levels of academic integrity. Violations of university, departmental, and disciplinary standards will not be tolerated and will lead to an F for the assignment and automatic reporting through institutional procedures. Information on University-wide definitions and policies regarding academic integrity can be found [here](#). (Again, seriously! There is NO circumstance in which you are better off plagiarizing than submitting a paper late.)
- If you need an accommodation for this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The DRC coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. It is located on the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 or drc@niu.edu. Also, please contact me privately as soon as possible so we can discuss your accommodations. Please note that you will not be required to disclose your disability, only your accommodations. The sooner you let me know your needs, the sooner I can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.
- I ask that my undergraduate students refer to me as either Dr. or Professor Thurber. I'm just old-school that way. Please let me know how you prefer to be addressed, both in name and pronoun, especially if it differs from what is in the college directory. I will make every effort to address you in the way you wish to be addressed. Please try and do the same for your fellow classmates, as well as for other faculty in the department.
- I am committed to your success in this class – if you feel that you are not performing to your expectations, please come and see me. (Seriously!) I am available to answer any questions you may have about course assignments, requirements or content. I generally answer e-mails within 24 hrs on weekdays, and would be happy to schedule an appointment to meet with you if you are unavailable during my posted office hours.
- You may have noticed like a dozen “Seriously!s” in the points above. Especially in these times, you are all going through lots of adversity. I put the points above on my syllabus because in my experience they make the biggest different in terms of students’ ability to get through my classes successfully, even when facing a lot of external life pressures.

Letter Grade Distribution

You will receive a percentage score for each assignment above that can be translated into a letter grade according to the scale below:

Percentage	Letter Grade
> 93.00	A
90.00 - 92.99	A-
87.00-89.99	B+
83.00 - 86.99	B
80.00 - 82.99	B-
77.00-79.99	C+
70.00 - 76.99	C
60.00 - 69.99	D
< 60.00	F

Class Schedule

Each week, students are expected to read the following readings, watch lecture videos posted on Blackboard, complete the online quiz on Blackboard, and make three posts to the Packback discussion board (also linked via Blackboard). In addition, there are four papers due over the course of the semester.

All deliverables are due at 5PM on FRIDAY of each week.

Week 1: Conceptualizing Security (Monday 08/22 - Friday 08/26)

- Read Syllabus and watch Syllabus Video
- Watch Packback Video
- Read James Mattis on Reading
- Read Reveron and Mahoney-Norris, *Human Security in a Borderless World*, Ch. 1
- Cohn, "Gender and National Security"
- Take Quiz
- Post 1 Question and 2 Replies on Packback

Week 2: Approaches to the Study of Security (Monday 08/29 - Friday 09/02)

- Mingst and McKibben, *Essentials of International Relations*, Chs. 1 and 3
- Snyder, "One World, Rival Theories"
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 3: The International System (Monday 09/05 - Friday 09/09)

- Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, Ch. 1
- Douthat, "They Predicted the Ukraine War. But Did They Still Get It Wrong?"
- Frieden et al, "Why are there wars?"
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 4: Foreign Policy and Statecraft (Monday 09/12 - Friday 09/16)

- Frieden et al, "Domestic Politics and War"
- Saunders, "What a President Trump Means for Foreign Policy"
- Santiago, "There Still Aren't Enough Women Working in National Security"
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 5: Paper #1 (Monday 09/19 - Friday 09/23)

- Paper Due Friday at 5pm
- No Packback or Reading Quiz

Week 6: Nuclear Weapons (Monday 09/26 - Friday 09/30)

- NPR, “Hiroshima Survivor Remembers” (DC)
- CFR, World 101, “Nuclear Proliferation”
- Waltz, “Nuclear Myths and Political Realities”
- Broad and Pecanha, “The Iran Nuclear Deal: A Simple Guide”
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 7: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency (Monday 10/03 - Friday 10/07)

- HSR, “Why the Dramatic Decline in Armed Conflict?”
- Nagdy and Roser, “Civil Wars”
- Laub, “Syria’s Civil War”
- Walter, “Four Things We Know About How Civil Wars End”
- Staniland, “Counterinsurgency is a Bloody Costly Business”
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 8: Intervention and Peacekeeping (Monday 10/10 - Friday 10/14)

- Luttwak, “Give War a Chance”
- UNSC, “UN Peacekeeping: An Introduction”
- Walter, Howard, and Fortna, “The Extraordinary Relationship Between Peacekeeping and Peace”
- Rohde, “The UN Still Can’t Stop Civilian Slaughter”
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 9: Paper #2 (Monday 10/17 - Friday 10/21)

- Paper Due Friday at 5pm
- No Packback or Reading Quiz

Week 10: Terrorism (Monday 10/24 - Friday 10/28)

- CFR, World 101, “Terrorism”
- Chenoweth and Moore, *The Politics of Terror*, Ch. 1
- Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants”
- Peterson, Rankine, and Walsh, “Inside the White Nationalist Terrorist Movement in America”
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 11: Technology (Monday 10/31 - Friday 11/04)

- Greenberg, “The Untold Story of NotPetya, the Most Devastating Cyberattack in History”
- Zetter, “An Unprecedented Look at Stuxnet, the World’s First Digital Weapon”
- Fryer-Biggs, “Coming Soon to a Battlefield: Robots that Can Kill”
- Scharre and Horowitz, “An Introduction to Autonomy in Weapons Systems”
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 12: Paper #3 (Monday 11/07 - Friday 11/11)

- Paper Due Friday at 5pm
- No Packback or Reading Quiz

Week 13: Ecosystems (Monday 11/14 - Friday 11/18)

- Busby, "Warming World"
- Hendrix and O'Laughlin, "Searching for Consensus on Conflict-Climate Connections"
- Christy, "How Killing Elephants Finances Terror in Africa"
- CFR, World 101, "Global Health"
- Brundtland, "Global Health and International Security"
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week 14: Thanksgiving (Monday 11/21 - Friday 11/25)

- No classwork! Give thanks and eat turkey... or tofu.

Week 15: Consequences of Conflict (Monday 11/28 - Friday 12/02)

- CFR, "No Refuge"
- Boehler and Pecanha, "The Global Refugee Crisis: Region by Region"
- New York Times, "How the Rohingya Escaped" (DC)
- IIS, "Conflict-Related Sexual Violence" (DC)
- Packback and Reading Quiz Due Friday at 5pm

Week Exam : Paper #4 Due *Friday 12/16* at 5pm