Module Description

Traditionally, security policy has focused on war, strategy, deterrence, arms control, and alliances. However, modern phenomena, such as terrorism, the migrant ‘crisis’, climate change, disinformation, and movements like #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter pose new security challenges that require novel policy solutions.

Delving into the critical security studies literature, this module invites students to consider security beyond warfare to question who or what is being secured for and by whom. The broad theoretical component of this course is enriched by a close examination of practical case studies and contemporary security dilemmas, challenging students to apply critical theories of international security to contemporary political events that affect their daily lives. Overall, students will recognize the various ways in which the ‘critical turn’ is different from mainstream security studies, outline and criticize critical theories of security, and apply critical theories of international security to political events and practical issues.

1Several sections of this document build on James P Cross and Stefan Müller’s syllabi and their excellent advice. I copied many sentences verbatim. I thank James and Stefan for allowing me to reuse and adjust their advice.
Course Programme

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Learning Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding
Following this course students will develop a range of important transferable skills.

Substantive Knowledge
By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Gain knowledge of the different theoretical approaches in security studies.
- Understand the differences between the critical approach to security and the traditional readings.
- Outline and criticize critical theories of security, identifying distinct assumptions and claims and comparing and contrasting among them.
- Understand various ways of empirically examining critical security questions and policy solutions.
- Apply critical theories of international security to political events and practical dilemmas.
- Identify real-life examples and applications of critical theories of security.
Skills (Intellectual and Transferable)

The course will encourage you to:

- Listen carefully and critically to orally-presented arguments.
- Ability to understand the scientific literature, and in particular to identify research puzzles and knowledge gaps.
- Make links between material presented at different times, on different issues.
- Construct persuasive written, and oral arguments supported by evidence, orally and in writing, about security issues from a critical perspective.
- Read critically and with a clearly defined purpose.
- Apply your theoretical knowledge to the real world.
- Prepare, articulate and defend answers to set questions.
- Formulate and ask your own questions about course material.

The written work in the course will require you to:

- Select relevant material from lectures, literature, news sources, and the web.
- Understand, analyse and assess that material.
- Produce a sustained, structured and informed answer.
- Write in a concise and cogent style.

Assessment

Grade Component Breakdown

- Continuous assessment - 20%
  - Group seminar presentation - 15%
  - Group seminar discussion - 5%
- Final essay - 80%
  - 1x essay question answered @ 80%
Group Seminar Presentation - 15%

In addition to the theory readings, there are weekly readings focused on particular case studies. The seminars will focus on discussing the practical case studies (listed on the syllabus) and linking them to the theoretical framework being discussed. Students can find study questions on the syllabus that will guide them in their analysis of the case studies. During the seminars, students will take turns in making group presentations, analysing and explaining the weekly case study assigned. Students are invited to research the case studies beyond the readings listed in the syllabus, but both the key and further readings should be consulted to prepare the presentations. Group presentations will last 15/20 minutes. Before the seminar, each group will be asked to submit their PowerPoint presentation and a short summary (2 to 3 pages long) of their presentation. Both documents will be shared with the class and published on OLAT.

Each student will be required to present at least once in the term. Students will be asked to sign up to a weekly presentation at the beginning of the term. Each group can hold a maximum of 2/3 students, and topics will be assigned on a first come first served basis.

Group Seminar Discussion - 5%

The seminars will focus on in-class discussions. For that purpose, student participation will be graded by asking students to work in groups (maintaining the same groups assigned for the presentation) and propose two questions in reaction to their peers’ seminar presentation. The questions should demonstrate thorough familiarity with the readings, provide thoughtful comments on the presentation, offer a critical discussion of the material, and aid the class discussion.

Groups will be asked to submit their questions at the end of each seminar. Questions will be graded at the end of the term based on their quality and improvement throughout the term.

End of Term Essay - 80%

This examination will constitute 80% of your final mark and will take the form of an essay. Students will be allowed 20 days after receiving the exam instructions to submit their answers using OLAT.

There will be 6 essay questions and you have to answer 1 of them.

Plagiarism

Although this should be obvious, plagiarism – copying someone else’s text without acknowledgement or beyond ‘fair use’ quantities – is not allowed. Plagiarism is an issue we take very serious here in UZH.

Please familiarize yourself with the definition of plagiarism on UZH’s website and make sure not to engage in it.

Late Submission Policy

All written work must be submitted on or before the due dates.
When an extension is necessary, the student will need to contact our Prüfungsdelegierte Naome Czisch (pruefungen@ipz.uzh.ch) to apply for extenuating circumstances.

Grades
I am very happy to schedule 1:1 meetings to provide students with further feedback when required. However, students should be advised that grades will not be modified after they are released.

Essay Grading Rubric
The following guidelines should be adhered to when writing your final essay:

• Statement of Purpose/ Focus and Organisation - 40%
  – The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:
    * Claims are clearly stated, focused, and strongly maintained
    * Claims are introduced and communicated appropriately for the purpose, audience, and task
    * Alternate or opposing claims are clearly addressed
  – The response has a clear and effective organisational structure creating unity and completeness:
    * A variety of transitional strategies is consistently used to effectively clarify the relationships between and among ideas
    * The progression of ideas from beginning to end is logical
    * The introduction and conclusion are effective for audience and purpose
    * Appropriate sentence structure variety produce strong connection between ideas

Evidence/Elaboration - 40%
  – The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the writer’s claim that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response achieves substantial depth that is specific and relevant:
    * Claims are supported with relevant evidence from credible sources and clear reasoning
    * Use of evidence from sources is smoothly integrated, cited, comprehensive, and concrete
    * A variety of effective argumentative techniques is used
  – The response demonstrates strategic use of language to produce clear communication:
    * Precise language clearly and effectively expresses ideas
    * The use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose

Editing Conventions - 20%

The response displays adequate command of all grade level and preceding level conventions of writing:

* Some errors in usage and sentence formation may be present, but no systematic pattern of errors is displayed
* The use of punctuation, capitalisation, and spelling is adequate

**OLAT**

Please make sure you have access to the module in OLAT as soon as possible. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that they are signed up to the module correctly and they know how to submit coursework through the appropriate OLAT assignment tab. If you have any issues with OLAT contact the IT Helpdesk to resolve the issue.

Furthermore, module materials such as this syllabus and announcements made outside lectures shall be on OLAT. As such, OLAT is an important communication tool for the module.

**Emails**

I will seek to reply to emails within the following 48 hours. However, this might not always be the case. Additionally, I will not reply to emails during the weekend or after working hours.

**Additional Covid-19 Guidelines**

Covid-19 continues to pose a threat to our well-being and health. We all need to follow UZH’s guidelines. If you are not feeling well, stay home! I will try to make all relevant materials available to everyone using OLAT: I will share the slides after each session and upload all seminar materials.

**Course Reading**

**Required Readings:**

The following texts shall be used extensively throughout the course, so it is recommended that they are purchased:

Recommended Readings

The following books provide a general overview of the topics that will be covered in this module.


In addition to these readings, students should keep up to date on current international security affairs by reading daily newspapers, or one of the many websites and podcasts devoted to international relations. This reading is essential as it will allow you to keep up to date with current affairs and identify potential encounter topics. These websites include the following:

- [http://www.foreignaffairs.com](http://www.foreignaffairs.com)
- [https://internationalsecurityjournal.com/](https://internationalsecurityjournal.com/)
- [https://globalsecurityreview.com/](https://globalsecurityreview.com/)
- [https://wiisglobal.org/blog/](https://wiisglobal.org/blog/)
- [http://blogs.lse.ac.uk](http://blogs.lse.ac.uk)
- [https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2021-12](https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2021-12)
- IS: Off the Page podcast - [https://open.spotify.com/show/07jbtc4ZQP1W9MTJ4FKg1k](https://open.spotify.com/show/07jbtc4ZQP1W9MTJ4FKg1k)
- Whiskey & International Relations Theory podcast - [https://open.spotify.com/show/0RQnVzCiLWeZ49GC6I8N1d](https://open.spotify.com/show/0RQnVzCiLWeZ49GC6I8N1d)
**Detailed Course Programme**

**20 September**

**Introduction and history of Security Studies**

Study questions

- What comprehends Security Studies?
- How can we define security?
- How has the Security Studies field developed over time? And how can we distinguish between traditional and non-traditional approaches?

**Key readings**


**Further reading**


**27 September**

**Realist Theories and the Rise of China**

Study questions

- What are the different types of realist theories?
- What are their shared assumptions?
- How can we distinguish between the different realist approaches?
- How is power defined?
- What constitutes the security dilemma?
- What does the realist view say about China and it’s role in the world order?

Key readings


Further reading

- Kennan, G. F. (1960). The Sources of Soviet Conduct by "X" (pp. 244-261). Columbia University Press.
4 October

Liberalism, Institutions, and the European Union

Study questions

- What are the main characteristics of the liberalist orientation?
- Why are NGOs important?
- Why is liberalism optimistic about the possibilities for cooperation?
- How does liberalism explain the formation of the European Union?
- How has the liberalist reading developed over time?

Key readings


Further reading


Constructivism and Environmental Security

Study questions

• How can we distinguish constructivism from more traditional readings of security?
• What is the difference between conventional and critical constructivism?
• How does constructivism explain environmental security?
• Has the environment always been part of the security agenda? Why?

Key readings


Further reading

18 October

Securitization Theory and the Migrant 'Crisis'

Study questions

- How can securitization be defined?
- Is there only one way securitization can be achieved?
- How can we distinguish between different readings of securitization?
- How does securitization explain the migrant "crisis"?
- Is there a "crisis"? Why?

Key readings


Further reading


25 October

Post-Structuralist Approaches and the Muhammad Cartoon Crisis

Study questions

- In what was are traditional readings of security limited?
- What are the different aspects that post-structuralism brings to the study of security?
- What is the relation between discourse and practice in producing security?
- Can security be produced through non-discursive practices?
- Why is the Muhammad Cartoon crisis a good example of post-structuralism?
- How do Post-Structural approaches explain the Muhammad Cartoon crisis?

Key Readings


Further reading


1 November

Human Security and COVID-19

Study questions

• How can human security be defined and how is it different from other security issues?
• What is the relationship between health and human security?
• What lessons can be learnt from the securitization of health?
• What are the ethical shortcomings of securitizing health issues?
• What lessons can be learnt from the securitization of HIV/AIDS? Can they be applied to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Key readings


Further readings


8 November

Academic Writing

Key readings


15 November

Terrorism and the Women of ISIS

Study questions

• Why are there so many different definitions of terrorism?

• What problems can this cause?

• Who decides what is radical/extreme?
• Do preventative measures work? Do they go too far?
• Why would women join a group that is violent against women?
• How are women in ISIS framed?
• What does this tell us about how women, particularly Muslim women, are viewed?
• Are women as capable of being violent as men?

Key readings


Further reading

• Chatterjee, D. (2016) Gendering ISIS and Mapping the Role of Women. Contemporary Review of the Middle East. 3(2) 201-218.


22 November

Feminist Security Studies and NiUnaMenos

Study questions

• What does a gender approach mean for the referent object of security? How is it affected?

• Is there only one feminist approach to security? How do they differ?

• How did the NiUnaMenos movement position women as a novel referent object? Was it successful?

• Which feminist approach better explains the development of the NiUnaMenos movement?

Key readings


Further reading


29 November

Hashtag Activism and #BlackLivesMatter

Study questions

• What does hashtag activism entail?

• Within which Security Studies school can we locate hashtag activism?

• How does hashtag activism construct the referent object and audience?

• Who can engage in hashtag activism? Is it restricted only to celebrities?

• How is a narrative constructed? Are there more than one frames at play?
• How was social media employed to include race in the security agenda in the case of #BlackLivesMatter?

• Why do we say that Twitter is a public sphere? Why is this important for Security Studies and discourse formation?

Key readings


Further reading


6 December

Climate Crisis and #FridaysForFuture

Study questions

• Is #FridaysForFuture an exceptional case of hashtag activism?

• How is it different from other movements such as #MeToo or #BlackLivesMatter?

• In what ways has it been successful?

• What are its limitations?

• Has it achieved the political change that it strives for? To what extent?

Key readings


Further reading


13 December

Disinformation and @realDonaldTrump

Study questions

• How is disinformation defined?

• Through which Critical Security Studies schools can we analyse disinformation?

• What is the link between disinformation and international security?

• Is disinformation a novel threat?

• Should Security Studies be further deepened and widened to include disinformation as an object of analysis? Why?

• What role does social media play in the spread of disinformation?

• Many people are worried about "fake news". What do we mean by fake news? What role does "fake news" play?

• Why has Trump been placed at the center of modern disinformation analysis? What is his role in the spread of disinformation?

Key readings


Further readings


20 December

Information War and the Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Study questions

• Are information wars a new kind of threat?
• How does social media contribute to this type of warfare?
• Who are the actors involved? Is it just the state?
• What role does the media play?
• What does the case of Ukraine tell us about the threats posed by mis/disinformation?

Key readings


Further readings

• Aliaksandru, A. (2014). Brave new war: The information war between Russia and Ukraine. Index on censorship, 43(4), 54-60.