Instructor: Aditya Ranganath  
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Office Hours: Monday: 9:00-11:00 or by appointment

**Course Description:** This course will survey the politics of national security in the United States. We will begin with an overview of American grand strategy, before turning to a study of central actors (i.e. the president, congress, the bureaucracy, the military, the media, and the public) in the national security policy process. The final section of the course will survey and analyze important national security challenges currently facing the United States.

**Prerequisites:** None, but a previous course in international relations could be helpful.

**Course Requirements:** Your grade will be based on the following requirements.

*Participation (20%):* The course will be taught as a seminar, which means that lecturing will be kept to a minimum. The class will be driven by student discussion and debate, which means that your active participation is essential to the success of the course. You are expected to attend every class. Attendance will be taken regularly, and your participation grade will be reduced by 10% for every unexcused absence. In addition, I expect you to actively read the assigned readings before class, and come to class ready to discuss the issues they raise.

*Quizzes (10%):* To ensure that you are keeping up with the reading, I will administer several reading quizzes over the course of the quarter. These will not necessarily be every class, but you should read and prepare for the class with the expectation that there will be a quiz. You are permitted to use a 3x5 notecard when taking a reading quiz. I will drop your lowest quiz grade when determining final grades.

*Current Events Assignment (10%):* Before class, please email me a copy of a news article from a reputable source that is related to the reading assigned for that class. Please also include a short paragraph (2-4 sentences) about how the article is relevant for that class’s topic, and the issues you think it raises. The purpose of this assignment is to help you think actively about the readings, keep abreast of current affairs, and raise issues for discussion in class. To that end, you should be prepared to offer a brief and informal presentation on your news article and its relevance to the class. The deadline for submitting your news article is noon on the day of class. You must send in a minimum of four articles/short discussion paragraphs over the course of the term. If you send in more, I will give you extra credit.

*Policy Memo (60%):* The policy memo requires you to analyze an important national security challenge (of your choice) facing the United States. Details of the assignment will be provided in a separate document. The final draft will be due on August 3rd at 5:00 PM, sent to me as an email attachment. However, you are also responsible for turning in a “preliminary report” at the start of class on July 18. In
the preliminary report, you will tell me what national security challenge you will address, along with a rough draft of your (one paragraph) executive summary and bibliographic information for 6-10 sources that you will use in developing your analysis. The bibliography should include a mix of articles from reputable news sources and scholarly articles or books published in academic or policy presses. On August 1st (the ninth class), you will offer a brief (10 minute) presentation on the national security topic you chose; the topic should include background information on your topic, along with a discussion of the policy recommendation you have decided to make. More details on the presentation will be provided on the policy memo handout. The grade-break down (as a percentage of your final grade) for the policy memo assignment is as follows:

1. “Preliminary report”: 10%
2. Presentation: 10%
3. Final draft of policy memo: 40%

Key Dates

1. “Preliminary Report” due start of class on July 18
2. Presentations in class on August 1
3. Final draft of policy memo due to me by email and via TED, by midnight on August 3rd.

Academic Integrity: I expect you to do your own work and to provide proper attribution when you draw on others’ ideas. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating in any way will be reported to the dean. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. I reserve the right to request you to upload your papers to turnitin.com for textual similarity review.

Reading Schedule

Note that while we will do our best to adhere to the following schedule, it is subject to revision as the quarter progresses. Changes to the schedule will be announced well in advance in class and over email. All readings will be posted to TED or circulated via email.

Thursday, July 6: Introduction to the course

- Global Trends 2030: Paradox of Progress (Published in January 2017 by the National Intelligence Council).

Tuesday, July 11: Grand Strategy


Recommended

Thursday, July 13: The Drivers of Defense Policy: The President and Congress; the Bureaucracy; the Military

- Wildavsky, Aaron. The Two Presidencies.

Recommended


Tuesday, July 18: The Drivers of Defense Policy, continued: Public Opinion; the Media; Ideas and Information; Special Interests


Thursday, July 20: Nuclear Weapons and Proliferation


Recommended

Tuesday, July 25: Managing Great Power Relationships


Thursday, July 27: Terrorism, Counterinsurgency, and Nation-Building


Tuesday, August 1: Presentations

Thursday, August 3: Cybersecurity and Climate Change