**THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO**

**Political Science Department**

Political Science 53300

Nuclear Weapons and International Politics Seminar

Spring 2022

Instructor: John Mearsheimer

**Course Description**: The aim of this course is to help students think about the implications of nuclear weapons for international politics. Special attention will be paid to three broad topics. The first subject is *nuclear strategy*, which concerns how states think about employing their nuclear weapons for different purposes, such as coercion, deterrence, and warfighting. The second topic is *nuclear proliferation*, where it is important to consider: why states want nuclear weapons, what are the obstacles to acquiring them, and what are the consequences of the spread of nuclear weapons. The third subject concerns the *nuclear revolution*, where there is a simple question on the table: have nuclear weapons revolutionized international politics?

**Course Requirements**: Every student is expected to do all the reading, be present for every class, and participate in the discussion as much as possible. The final grade will be based on classroom participation (33%), and two 7-page papers (33% each).

I will provide students with a list of paper topics from which they can choose two. Both papers will be due in my inbox ([j-mearsheimer@uchicago.edu](mailto:j-mearsheimer@uchicago.edu)) no later than 5:00 pm on Wednesday, June 1. Papers received after that time will be dropped one letter grade for each day past the due date. For graduating students, papers will be due no later than 5:00 pm on Monday, May 25th.

The papers must be no longer than 7 pages of text, double-spaced, have at least 1-inch margins on all four sides, and have a standard-sized font (12).

The first class will be on Zoom, but all subsequent classes will be in-person. A link for the first class will be posted on Canvas and it will be sent to each student well before the first class on March 28. Students should have read all the readings assigned for the first class and be prepared to discuss them.

**Readings and Books**:

There are no books for this course. All the readings are available on Canvas.

**Course Outline**:

**1. March 28 (Mon): Nuclear Strategy – MAD, Manipulation of Risk, & Splendid First Strike**

Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), chaps. 1-3.

Albert Wohlstetter, “The Delicate Balance of Terror,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (January 1959), pp. 211-34.

**2. April 4 (Mon): Nuclear Strategy – Counterforce War-Fighting**

Joseph M. Grieco, “Paul H. Nitze and Strategic Stability: A Critical Analysis,” Cornell University Peace Studies Program, Occasional Paper No. 9, November 1976.

Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, “The New Era of Counterforce: Technological Change and the Future of Nuclear Deterrence,” *International Security*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Spring 2017), pp. 9-49.

Austin Long and Brendan R. Green, “Stalking the Secure Second Strike: Intelligence, Counterforce, and Nuclear Strategy,” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, Nos. 1-2 (2015), pp. 38-73.

Jan Lodal, “Assuring Strategic Stability: An Alternative View,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 1976.

Paul Nitze, “Assuring Strategic Stability in an Era of Détente,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 1976.

**3. April 11 (Mon): Nuclear Strategy – Nuclear Coercion & Inadvertent Escalation**

Matthew Kroenig, “Nuclear Superiority and the Balance of Resolve: Explaining Nuclear Crisis Outcomes,” *International Organization*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (Winter 2013), pp. 141-71.

Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, “Coercive Nuclear Campaigns in the 21st Century; Understanding Adversary Incentives and Options for Nuclear Escalation,” PASCC Report 2013-001, Naval Postgraduate School, March 2013.

Barry R. Posen, *Inadvertent Escalation: Conventional War and Nuclear Risks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), chap. 1.

Todd S. Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann “Crisis Bargaining and Nuclear Blackmail,” *International Organization*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (Winter 2013), pp. 173-95.

Caitlin Talmadge, “Would China Go Nuclear? Assessing the Risk of Chinese Nuclear Escalation in a Conventional War with the United States,” *International Security*, Vol. 41 No. 4 (Spring 2017), pp. 50-92.

**4. April 18 (Mon): Extended Deterrence**

Fiona S. Cunningham, “Calculating Dependence: Soviet Security Guarantees and China’s Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons,” Paper presented at ISAC-ISSS Joint Annual Conference, Austin, Texas, November 14-16, 2014.

Eliza Gheorghe, “Balance of Power Redux: Nuclear Alliances and the Logic of Extended Deterrence,” *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 2022.

Do Young Lee, “Strategies of Extended Deterrence: How States Provide the Security Umbrella,” *Security* Studies, Vol. 30, No. 5 (2021), pp. 761-796

J. Michael Legge, “Theater Nuclear Weapons and the NATO Strategy of Flexible Response,” Rand Report R-2964 (Santa Monica, CA: April 1983).

**5. April 25 (Mon): Nuclear Arms Control & Global Zero & NFU**

# Andrew J. Coe and Jane Vayman, “Why Arms Control Is So Rare,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (2020), pp. 342-355.

# Ivo Daalder and Jan Lodal, “The Logic of Zero: Toward a World Without Nuclear Weapons,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 6 (November/December 2008), pp. 80-95.

“ISSF Policy Roundtable 9-4 on U.S. Nuclear Policy,” *H-Diplo*, December 22, 2016.

John J. Mearsheimer, “Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence in Europe.” *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Winter 1984/1985), pp. 19–46.**]**

John D. Maurer, “The Purposes of Arms Control,” *Texas National Security Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (November 2018), pp. 9-27.

# John D. Maurer, “The Forgotten Side of Arms Control: Enhancing U.S. Competitive Advantage, Offsetting Enemy Strengths,” *War on the Rocks*, June 27, 2018.

Scott D. Sagan, “The Case for No First Use,” *Survival*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (June/July 2009), pp. 163-182.

Thomas Schelling, “A World Without Nuclear Weapons?” *Daedalus*, Vol. 138, No. 4 (Fall 2009), pp. 124-29.

**6. May 2 (Mon): Nuclear Weapons in the Cold War**

Brendan R. Green and Austin Long, “The MAD Who Wasn't There: Soviet Reactions to the Late Cold War Nuclear Balance,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (October 2017) pp. 606-41.

# David Alan Rosenberg, The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960, International Security, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Spring, 1983), pp. 3-71.

Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), chaps. 7-8.

**7. May 9 (Mon): The Causes of Proliferation**

Richard K. Betts, “Paranoids, Pygmies, Pariahs & Nonproliferation Revisited,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Spring 1993), pp. 100-24.

Scott D. Sagan, “Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb, *International Security,* Vol. 21, No. 3 (Winter, 1996-1997), pp. 54-86

Bradley A. Thayer, “The Causes of Nuclear Proliferation and the Nonproliferation Regime,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (Spring 1995), pp. 463-519.

Kenneth Waltz, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Better,” *Adelphi Paper No. 171* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1981).

**8. May 16 (Mon): The Obstacles to Proliferation**

Henry Farrell and Abraham L. Newman, “Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion,” *International Security*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Summer 2020), pp. 42-79.

Francis J. Gavin, “Strategies of Inhibition: U.S. Strategy, the Nuclear Revolution, and Nonproliferation,” *International Security*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Summer 2015), pp. 9-46.

Eliza Gheorghe, “Proliferation and the Logic of the Nuclear Market,” *International Security*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Spring 2019), pp. 88-127.

Nuno P. Monteiro and Alexandre Debs, “The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation,” *International Security*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Fall 2014), pp. 7-51.

Nicholas Miller, “The Secret Success of Nonproliferation Sanctions,” *International Organization*, Vol. 68, No. 4 (September 2014), pp. 913-44.

Etel Solingen, “The Political Economy of Nuclear Restraint,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall 1994), pp. 126-69.

**9. May 23 (Mon): Was There a Nuclear Revolution?**

Daniel H. Deudney, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), chap. 9.

Robert Jervis, *The Meaning of the Nuclear Revolution: Statecraft and the Prospect of Armageddon* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), chaps. 1-3.

Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, *The Myth of the Nuclear Revolution: Power Politics in the Atomic Age* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020) Introduction, chapter 1.

John Mueller, “The Essential Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons: Stability in the Postwar World,” International Security, Vol. 13, No. 2 (Fall, 1988), pp. 55-79

Nina Tannenwald, “The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use.” *International Organization*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 433-68.

Stephen Van Evera, “A Farewell to Geopolitics,” in Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro, eds., *To Lead the World: American Strategy after the Bush Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 11-35.