



Defense and Strategic Studies Program  
**DSS 5300**  
**U.S. National Security**  
Online Syllabus  
(Last revised Feb 2023)

Instructor: Dr Joe Bassi, PhD (Lt Colonel, US Air Force, Retired)

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Instructor Welcome and Bio:

Welcome to the fascinating, complex, turbulent, and controversial world of US national security/national defense!

Dr. Joe Bassi is your professor for this course. He completed his PhD in History at the University of California, Santa Barbara in June 2009 and specialized in the history of modern US physical science. He was a senior project engineer with the Aerospace Corporation supporting national security space efforts at Vandenberg AFB and then an assistant professor with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University until retirement from there. During his PhD program, Dr. Bassi also was an Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation National Science Foundation IGERT Public Policy and Nuclear Threats research fellow at University of California, San Diego and also was a Guggenheim pre-doctoral fellow in Space History at the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution.

Dr. Bassi is a retired US Air Force officer with twenty-six years of active duty. He at various points in his military career served as Director of the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (Guam), Professor of Strategic Studies at the DOD's Joint Military Intelligence College, Headquarters US Air Force Action Officer and Program Element Manager, Chief of the Acquisition Meteorology Office at Air Force Space Systems Division, and Assistant Professor of Physics at the USAF Academy. After retirement from active service, Dr. Bassi served as a space policy analyst in the Office of the Secretary of Defense while working for the Aerospace Corporation.

In addition to the PhD, he has graduate degrees in Meteorology from Penn State, Astrophysics from the University of Colorado, and History from the George Washington University. While at GWU, he was a NASA Space Grant Research Fellow at the Space Policy Institute, Elliot School of International Affairs. Dr. Bassi graduated from Manhattan College in 1974 with a BS in Physics (Phi Beta Kappa) and was a



distinguished graduate of the Air Force ROTC program. His current interests include the role of technology in national security, national space policy, and US space science history. He has a new book out “A Scientific Peak: How Boulder became a World Center for Space and Atmospheric Science” (American Meteorological Society Press, 2015). This a study of how US science funding policies changed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and how these changes played out in Boulder, Colorado.

### Course Description

This course offers a comprehensive theoretical and organizational examination of the development of contemporary U.S. national security/defense policy and strategy. The course’s primary purpose is to introduce you the basics of US national security and defense. So, the course examines the U.S. national security apparatus, the security environment, homeland security, the history of US national security/defense, and key defense issues and policies. ***Please note, this is not a course in general public policy, “current events,” or US politics, so we will only address those areas when they directly and significantly impact national security/defense issues.***

### Course Objectives

After completion of the course students will be able to:

- Identify and describe the key national security policy-making bodies and documents that shape U.S. strategy and defense policies;
- Explain key changes in the U.S. security/defense environment since the end of the Cold War;
- Outline the current U.S. National Defense Strategy and agenda;
- Outline current U.S. diplomacy and the most important alliances the U.S. is part of, as well as the ‘special relationships’ such as with Britain and Israel;
- Describe the key strategic issues that the U.S. pursues worldwide: global counterinsurgency, and the interaction with strategic competitors, first and foremost Russia and China;
- Discuss the dimensions of homeland security and its role in the overall U.S. national security strategy;
- Outline the U.S. defensive posture and force structure;
- Explain the role and importance of the U.S. defense industrial base and discuss key issues in defense management;
- Independently research specific issues of national security/defense and present the findings in the form of an analytical position paper.



## Textbook & Readings

**1)** Donald Snow. (2017). *National Security: 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. New York: Routledge.  
ISBN-13: 978-0-205-94122-3

**2)** Roger Z. George & Harvey Rishikof, eds. (2017). *The National Security Enterprise: 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press

ISBN: 9781626164390 (paper back)

ISBN: 9781626164413 (ebook)

*Any additional required readings and materials are available online in the course modules.*

## Requirements

The assessments will be weighted as follows:

Discussion Boards	15%
National Security Paper	30%
Paper topic, references, outline	5%
Ally Memo	20%
Final Exam	30%

Detailed grading criteria are provided with the instructions for each assignment in the course modules. Reminder: **This is a graduate level course, so your writing should be professional at all times.** Be sure to proof-read all your work, and this means more than just checking spelling.

**Late penalties:** *Late assignments will be subject to a penalty of 10% per day late. Assignments will not be accepted after they are 3 days late. **To avoid late penalties, just ask for an extension.***

## Scholastic Integrity

As a UTEP student, you are expected to demonstrate scholastic integrity. In particular, you must properly identify and provide references for all material that you quote or paraphrase.

Cheating, plagiarism and collusion are all violations of the UTEP [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#). Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for disciplinary action.

## Disability Statement



Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. If you have a condition which may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, it is your responsibility to contact [The Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) at (915) 747-5148 or [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu) . You are also encouraged to discuss this in confidence with your instructor, preferably before classes begin.

### The Online Learning Community

This course relies on the participation of all the people in the class to make it successful. You should actively engage in the course and be courteous and thoughtful at all times.

While distance education offers greater flexibility than traditional classroom learning, it requires significant **motivation and self-discipline**. In short courses like this one, it is vital that you keep up with the readings and assignments. If, because of work, illness or family emergency, you require a short extension on any assignment, request one from your instructor at least 24 hours before the assignment deadline.

If you require **content-related help and support**, please use the Question & Answer discussion forum. If you are wondering about something, probably other people are wondering too, and you are helping everybody out by being the brave one who actually asks!

If you would like to discuss more **individual issues and concerns**, please contact Dr Bassi via email, [jpbassi@utep.edu](mailto:jpbassi@utep.edu)

If you require **technical support** related to Blackboard, please contact the [UTEP Helpdesk](#) at (915) 747-5257 or [helpdesk@utep.edu](mailto:helpdesk@utep.edu) .

**IMPORTANT:** Please be sure to *READ ALL MY ANNOUNCEMENTS*----- Usually do a couple per week to keep in touch with you, and this is really the only way I can give you current information, course updates/corrections, assignment advice, and other forms of guidance. Try to check your UTEP email at least every 2-3 days. I'm a "hands-on"/interactive type instructor, and this is vital tool for me to help you get the the most you can out of the course, in the most efficient way.

**Discussion Board (DB):** Participation is required. Make one post of about 400-500 words (and not much more or less) for each DB within **four days of module start (ie, Thursday night)**. *Used proper English at all times (no twitter-ese, please) and back up any claims with evidence, references, etc.* Then, respond to at least 2 of your colleagues' responses by **day 6 of the module with substantive comments (about 75-100 words)**. *Use this opportunity to demonstrate, writing, knowledge and analysis skills.* References are encouraged when you cite facts, numbers stats, etc. I will grade based on the overall quality of the answer, and how well your writing is formulated.



Dispute is encouraged, but always treat ideas and comments—even if you disagree--- with respect. NOTE: Please use either Chicago/Turabian or APA formats in all writing in this class.

**NOTE:** The idea of the DB is for scholarly interchange and dialog, not as a forum for “venting” over an issue of concern. It is not a “blog.” So, please keep all discussions professional in tone, scholarly in analysis, and well-referenced.

***The University Writing Center:*** The University Writing Center offers free synchronous online one-on-one writing assistance for UTEP Connect students. Graduate and undergraduate consultants work with writers on projects for a wide variety of classes and provide assistance during all parts of the writing process, including: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Online assistance is available by appointment through the UWC’s website ([uwc.utep.edu](http://uwc.utep.edu)). Most UWC consultants are bilingual Spanish and English speakers. Consultants will not edit your paper for you, and you are the one ultimately responsible for the work you submit and the grade you earn. Instead, Writing Center consultants will guide you through the writing process and teach you valuable writing skills. Visit the UWC’s website to learn more about the services they provide, or make an appointment for an online consultation. Online consultations take place during regular business hours (see website) and must be made at least one day in advance.