



Syllabus | INSS 5306 Contemporary Security Studies CRN | 27107

College | Liberal Arts Department | Criminal Justice – National Security Studies Institute

Instructor | Dr. Paul Ashby Email | pdashby@utep.edu

Technical Support | [UTEP Helpdesk](#) at (915) 747-5257 or helpdesk@utep.edu

Course Dates | January 18th 2022 – May 5th, 2022

Classes | Tuesdays and Thursdays / Education Building Room 318 /4:30 pm-5:50 pm

Please Note | This Syllabus Subject to Change

Introduction

Course and Instructor Introduction

Hello all, and welcome to INSS 5306 'Contemporary Security Studies'! This course aims to introduce you to both the broad academic field of Security Studies and how it can help us understand the global security environment writ large, including a whole host of specific security issues within that. As we will see, examining global security and current trends in Security Studies still involves 'traditional' security subjects such as war, conflict, and terrorism. However, the study of security has moved towards issues like health security (I think we can all appreciate the importance of this now), poverty reduction, migration flows, energy, environmental security, and much more. This course will help us understand these issues and why this shift to broader security concerns has happened. To do this, I also aim to introduce you to deeper issues and roots informing global security, such as theories of International Relations, the salience of political ideologies, some more profound modern history, and the darker logics of societal and regime security. In short, we are going to pack *a lot* in! I hope you will get some new and fresh perspectives on security issues amongst it all.

My name is Dr. Paul Ashby. I suppose I should stop saying I am a recent arrival to El Paso, TX from the U.K. (specifically a seaside town called Ramsgate). I have been here for over six years now and coming here much

longer. I have taught numerous courses in International Relations (I.R.) and Security Studies for... gosh a long time now! That has been both here and in the U.K., and both face-to-face and online. My personal research explores U.S. security interaction with Mexico in the context of Mexico's drug-related security crisis, U.S. Homeland Security, and North American regional security, and really my major research interests are in U.S. foreign policy and grand strategy. However, the aim of this class is a bit different from many others within the INSS program. The idea is to really think globally for its own sake and to really engage with often quite complex and cutting-edge academic ideas and even political debates. This helps us understand the academic and practical global context that U.S. national security operates in, which is crucial to 'doing' good security policy and understanding it but is also worth understanding for its own sake.

Contacting Dr. Ashby

Outside of our official classroom time, it is very much best to **email** me directly with any questions, and indeed I will be emailing you directly, too. Keep an eye on your UTEP email accounts. I will always try and respond to you within 24 hours and always try to help where I can. It will be especially important to contact me if you need any guidance with work.

I **will** be holding official office hours, but due to the pandemic (of which more below), if possible, let us arrange phone calls and virtual meets for the time being. I have a vulnerable young one at home. You can contact me to set something up and discuss it ahead of time. I will be available 9 am-4 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please note that I am aware of how challenging and unpredictable some schedules can be. If necessary, I can meet or talk outside of 'normal' work hours. Please ask about this.

Important Note! I am looking forward to working *with* you all on this course! I am aware that all of you have busy schedules, responsibilities, and commitments. This is especially true at this time. Rest assured, I will remain as flexible to your needs and commitments as the class progresses as I can, whilst also maintaining the standards of a Master's program. You can always discuss issues with me directly and on an individual basis. We can work together to ensure you get the best possible experience from the course! **I will be flexible!**

Teaching Assistant

For the course duration, I will be assisted by a Teaching Assistant with whom some of you may be familiar. Jessica L. Sumrall is a fellow graduate student of the INSS program but has also taken instruction in a myriad of DSS courses over the past two years. With a background in Political Science and experience and training in the intelligence community as a military All-Source Intelligence Analyst, she brings a unique perspective on security studies that will be valued during lessons. Aside from administrative support, you will observe Jessica engaged in the lectures and discussions throughout the semester. More importantly, Jessica is available for tutoring, answering questions about readings/course material, and ensuring that each student is set up for overall success. Jessica will hold official office hours on Tuesday and Wednesday from 1030am-1130am and can meet either in person or virtually. To schedule a meeting, email Jessica at jsumrall@miners.utep.edu, for which you will receive a reply within 24 hours. Remember, she is dedicated to your success and asks you not to hesitate to reach out to her for assistance throughout the course.

Information in the Syllabus

This Syllabus document is meant to be an introductory guide to the Course, giving you the critical information necessary prior to its commencement. It is a bit long but hopefully provides answers to many questions you may have at this point! This includes information on learning in this continuing pandemic crisis.

You should also use the **Blackboard Shell**, which contains a clear breakdown of each Module, its required readings, core questions, and work due.

I will also share a **Work Guidance Document** that gives more profound guidance and advice for all the assessed work on the course.

Online Classroom

We will use Blackboard as our online classroom. I will post all the necessary course materials and module materials there. If you are not familiar with Blackboard, please reach out.

Just so you know, there will be a **Home Page**, **Core and Helpful Information**, and **Module Pages**. There is an official

graded **Discussion Board** for some modules that will be assessed, as detailed below, and some quizzes. I will provide a variety of prior material for each module to help you with these activities. There will also be a **Course Open Discussion Space** in each module for a freer place to discuss the week's topics with each other - and gain some more credit. This will interact with classroom activity. I will try and post interesting material here on a more ad hoc basis, and we can use it to discuss contemporary developments and news stories. There will also be a space to upload your **Final Assignment Plan** and **Final Assignment** here. I will try to help with any technical issues, but if you require technical support related to Blackboard, it is best to contact the [UTEP Helpdesk](mailto:helpdesk@utep.edu) at (915) 747-5257 or helpdesk@utep.edu.

COVID-19 and this Course

Navigating this Time

The first thing I want you to know about learning amid this ongoing, shifting pandemic is that I am here to help. Please reach out if you have any concerns or challenges.

Safety and Practicalities

The most important practical thing - if you do become ill, *prioritize your health – and the health of others*, and do not worry about the course – we have avenues to deal with the fallout academically. **You must not come to class if you are ill or have been in contact with anyone who is!** I cannot stress this enough. I believe if you do become ill, you should still email COVIDaction@utep.edu to report it.

If you are impacted in other ways (family care, increased work responsibilities), also reach out about that. Again, I will be flexible, and I will help.

- This face-to-face class is set up to be online-focused and even 100% online ready for students who require that option. Whilst we have scheduled physical classes, which is our default mode of instruction, you can complete work online if you get sick. Of course, if I get sick or enough of you get sick, these face-to-face classes will not occur, but we are ready to adapt.
- If you are concerned about face-to-face classes, please reach out to me if you feel like discussing online options prior to class. In addition, students who are considered high risk according to CDC guidelines and/or those who live with individuals who are considered high risk may wish to contact the [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS) to discuss temporary accommodations for on-campus courses and activities. You can, again, also discuss with me.
- In the classroom, I think we all know by now mask talking is not the easiest to understand even without factoring in an English – even harder a [Thanetian](#) - accent! **However, I do ask for you to consider wearing a mask.** This is not a rule, but in the spirit of Miners taking care of Miners and remembering vulnerable people, do think about this. I also similarly encourage you to consider complete vaccine programs, including those booster shots!
- If you have any technical requirements or issues (e.g., meeting virtually), please discuss with me outside class in the first week or two
- We are also part of a much bigger picture, and decisions may be taken about the more expansive campus that impacts us. Let us stay flexible.

Concerns about all of this should be raised with me, and I promise to keep you informed. Communication between us is crucial.

The Course

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to academic and practical concepts applying to Security Studies. Reflecting changes in both the world and academic discipline, the course will cover the origins of and changes within Security Studies. It gives us a working knowledge of multiple theoretical and analytical tools that can then help us understand a complex and increasingly fractious global security environment from different perspectives. We will interrogate several contemporary security issues, challenges, and debates. Broadly speaking, the early parts of the

course will give us a solid background in the core theories, themes, concepts, developments, and controversies that make up Security Studies, International Relations, and our modern world. Then we will aim to apply these to real-world contemporary security issues.

Some particular attention will be devoted to the "new security agenda." This has moved the study and the subject of Security Studies beyond "traditional" core concerns of 'national security,' to a much broader and broader understanding of what security is, means, encompasses, and looks like. Security Studies now covers everything from the environment down to the individual. We will discuss the relative usefulness, applicability, strengths, and weaknesses of the "new security agenda" and the widening of Security Studies, again from several differing perspectives.

However, we will also consider that the "traditional" concerns of Security Studies – not least interstate rivalry, war, and conflict, have come roaring back in recent times. I will try to link the broadening and deepening of Security Studies with this reality.

The main aim of the course is to structure and broaden students' understanding of contemporary global security issues and debates and give them the critical and analytical tools to do so. This will help your general knowledge and your ability to think critically about issues in all their glorious and terrifying complexity.

Course Objectives

Through our course together, and most importantly, your own independent research, thinking, and analysis, you will be expected to demonstrate a strong understanding of the key ground we will cover. On completion of the course, students should be able to demonstrate:

- > Knowledge of the main theoretical approaches to security;
- > Understanding of the key concepts and terminologies in the field of Security Studies;
- > Ability to identify and evaluate the assumptions made by different approaches to the study of security;
- > Awareness of the history, the evolution and current trends in Security Studies, and major issues in international security;
- > An ability to apply the above to specific contemporary security issues, including in evaluation and analysis;
- > A deeper and broader understanding of contemporary issues and concerns in Global Security;
- > An ability to critically evaluate the usefulness/applicability of competing theories and concepts within Security Studies and beyond;
- > An ability to evaluate the "new security agenda" from differing standpoints
- > A more profound knowledge of some of the key global security issues ready to take forward to other courses and your career

Textbooks and Recommended Reference Materials

We will use the following as our textbooks. Chapters from the first will be made available to you as PDFs! However, you can also purchase or rent if you wish (always nice to have copies to make notes on, etcetera!) The second will be available at the UTEP bookstore, but I will try to provide some material from it if purchase is a struggle? Please do email with any issues.

- Alexandra Gheciu and William C. Wohlforth [eds] [*The Oxford Handbook of International Security*](#) (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2018)

This is an introductory book for Security Studies, covering the major theoretical debates and a large number of specific security topics in an accessible way. I switched to it recently because of its international focus. We will use it extensively throughout the course, but it will undoubtedly be helpful for other INSS courses. It gives good introductory overviews and reading recommendations for scores of topics. I will be interested to hear your feedback on it.

- Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde [*Security: A New Framework for Analysis*](#) (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997)

Perhaps *the* book of the 'new security agenda' spearheaded by the Copenhagen School takes us more profoundly into the subjects and nuances of debates – and into graduate-level territory!

Course Module Breakdown

Here is a simple, at-a-glance breakdown of the weekly module topics on the course (see onto next page).

Week	Module	Class Date
1.	1. What is Security Studies? Getting to know a discipline	01.18.22/01.20.22
2.	2. The Rise of Modernity and Some Deeper History	01.25.22/01.27.22
3.	3. Theories of Security Realism, Liberalism, and the Classic Approaches	02.01.22/02.03.22
4.	4. Still the Big Question? Warfare, the Great Powers, and Global Stability	02.08.22/02.10.22
5.	5. Theories of Security "The New Security Agenda," Constructivism, and Securitization	02.15.22/02.17.22
6.	6. Theories of Security Critical Approaches	02.22.21/02.24.22
7.	7. Deeper Roots Politics, Ideology, and Society	03.01.22/03.03.22
8.	8. Deeper Roots Economics, Resources, and the Environment	03.08.22/03.10.22
9.	Spring Break!!!	No class ☐
10.	9. Contemporary Threats Wars Old and New, and How to Stop Them...	03.22.22/03.24.22
11.	10. Contemporary Threats Global Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime, and the Dark Side of Globalization	03.29.22/03.31.22
12.	11. Contemporary Threats Health Security	04.05.22/04.07.22
13.	12. Contemporary Threats Environmental Security and Climate Change	04.12.22/04.14.22
14.	13. Contemporary Threats (?) Global Poverty and Migration	04.19.22/04.21.22
15.	14. Contemporary Threats (?) Political Fracture, New Technologies, and New Risks	04.26.22/04.28.22
16.	15. A World on Fire? Contemporary Global Security and the Role of Security Studies	Physical Class 05.03.22 (no class Thursday)

Task Breakdown

This course has several tasks and assessments, which will be due and weighted as follows (see onto next page, and refer to Blackboard):

Activity	% of Overall Grade	Due Date
Student Introduction	1%	01.23.22 11:59 pm

Weekly Classroom Contribution (Physical)	5%	Throughout course
Weekly Discussion (Online)	9%	Throughout course
Presentation	10%	Assigned after Spring Break
Theory and Concept Applications (3)	18% (6% each)	In Modules 4, 6, and 8
Discussion Pieces (3)	21% (7% each)	In Modules 10, 12, and 14
Mid-Term Paper	10%	03.20.22
Final Assignment Plan	5%	04.11.22
Final Assignment	20%	05.09.22 (TBC)
Course Evaluation Credit	1%	By UTEP deadline (TBC)
Total	100%	

The achieved grades will be given numerically in percentages on the UTEP grading scale:
59 & below (F) | 60-69 (D) | 70-79 [C] | 80-89 (B) | 90-100 (A)

Course Expectations and Key Advice

My Expectations of You...

My expectations are straightforward - I expect you to try your best on this course, keep to deadlines - or keep me informed if you need some extra time - and complete the work required! This course relies on the participation of all the people in the class to make it successful. This is a 15-week course, but work comes thick and fast!

As this is a graduate course, the reading is quite extensive and very important. This is the key thing I expect each week – for you to have completed some of the required reading. This reading, and some extra effort, is key to your Content Challenges and Discussion Pieces, Presentations, and in Mid-Term and the Final Assignment. Indeed, reading is the *key* to success! In my experience, there is almost always a correlation between those who demonstrate they have read carefully and widely during the course and those who get the highest marks!

What you can expect of me

You should expect flexibility from me and understanding of any situations that might impact your work.

You should always feel comfortable approaching me for help, guidance, and advice. If you do need something, let me know. I will endeavor to respond to any email queries within 24 hours. I really do encourage you to contact me about your assignment topics early on. I will also be understanding of personal circumstances affecting work and deadlines – as long as we communicate—more on that below.

Instructions and what you need to do to perform well in individual assessments, tasks, and the course as a whole should be clear from the material provided to you within and without class.

I will endeavor to provide assessment feedback within seven days of the due date. I will let you know if there is any likely delay to that. I have found this tougher going with responsibilities as Program Director/Advisor on the Defense and Strategic Studies program and with recent events (not least a new addition to my household!). If I am delayed, deadlines for you will be adjusted accordingly.

Expectations of each other!

If there is anything you are unsure of, let me know! Again, communication between us will only ever help.

If you require content-related help and support, please reach out. You can use the Help Forum in the Blackboard shell - if you are wondering about something, probably other people are wondering too, and you are helping everybody out by being the brave one who asks! Plus, you can, of course, contact me directly anytime. I will aim to help with content and any situations that are affecting or likely to affect your work. I am always available! You simply need to reach out – you will not find out unless you ask! ☐

Be courteous in online communication and in class. Stick to the rules and expectations of academic integrity! More on those below, too!

Late Policies

It is **essential** to be organized and manage your time wisely.

However! If you find yourself struggling to keep up with what is expected because of work, illness, or a family emergency, please email me as soon as possible. I know that life does, of course, intrude on other plans on occasion! As I mentioned above, I am aware that you have existing commitments and responsibilities. I will be flexible if you communicate with me!

If you require an extension on course work because of extenuating work, health, or family reasons, email me **at least 12 hours before** the relevant assignment deadline. Briefly explain your situation and request an extension of a specific length (e.g., one day). I will reply as soon as possible. Depending on the case, you may need to submit supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's note).

In cases where an extension has not been arranged and no contact has been made between the student and me, work submitted late will be subject to a penalty of 5% per day.

Assignments will not be accepted after they are five days late and there has been no communication between us; they will be given a grade of 0.

IMPORTANT! I will work with you on these issues! I know how busy you all are in the INSS program, often with full-time work commitments and everything else life throws at us! All I ask is that you make sure you let me know what is going on, and I will help.

Academic Integrity

As a UTEP student, you are expected to demonstrate academic integrity. 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](#). Again, for more on this, see the relevant section of the [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#). 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.

***IMPORTANT NOTE!** Large tracts of texts copied verbatim, even if you have a reference for them, can be considered technical plagiarism, especially if they are not indicated with quotations. Repeating your own work is a form of self-plagiarism. In both cases, action can be taken accordingly. More importantly, this will very badly negatively impact your grade even if plagiarism is not suspected or determined*

We will cover this again in class. However, if you have any questions or concerns about this, please do let me know. If in doubt – check!

Evaluations

We will have an official evaluation near the completion of the course through UTEP.

UTEP greatly appreciates your input and opinion on courses. From a personal perspective, I take your feedback seriously and will always try to incorporate it into the course where appropriate. We, therefore, greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete these evaluations. **IF I GET A 70% EVALUATION RESPONSE RATE, I WILL GIVE EXTRA CREDIT!**

The Online Learning Community

Learning 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. Before you begin the course, take a few minutes to review the [core rules of online communication](#). The key thing - be as respectful online as you would offline! Disagreement is healthy and natural; insults and *ad hominem* are not! Read other's post carefully, respond with mutual respect, and remember we are a community learning together.

Other Important / Helpful Information

UTEP Course Drop Policy

If unforeseen circumstances happen where a drop is necessary, *students* are responsible for initiating any course drop. It is the student's responsibility to determine how dropping courses may affect financial aid. **Students are limited to dropping no more than six courses over their entire academic career of all courses taken at any public college or university in Texas.**

You should contact me as your advisor about this.

- a) Students who drop a course *before the "official census date,"* the course will not appear on the transcript and does not count toward the 6-course drop limit.
- b) Dropping a course *after the official census date but before the "course drop date"* will generate a "W" in the course—although the drop shows on your transcript, a "W" does not lower your GPA. However, a "W" counts against your 6-drop limit.
- c) If the course is dropped *after the "course drop date"* or if the student just stops participating, taking tests, etcetera, UTEP requires the instructor to issue an "F" in the course that permanently remains on the transcript.
- d) UTEP also allows instructors to administratively drop any student because of too many times the student fails to submit assignments, discussion questions, or because of disciplinary reasons. In this case, the student will be notified of the course drop through their UTEP student email account. A "W" or an "F" will be issued. A "W" for these reasons counts against the 6-drop limit.

Disability Statement

Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. If you have a condition that may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, it is your responsibility to contact [The Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS) at **(915) 747-5148** (voice or TTY) or cass@utep.edu. CASS has a new portal for students and instructors that makes the whole system electronic – there is information in the link above. You are also encouraged to discuss this in confidence with me, preferably before classes begin.

Copyright & Fair Use

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