INSS 5305
Introduction to Intelligence Analysis
Spring 2020

National Security Studies Institute
University of Texas at El Paso

6:00 pm - 8:50 pm/Wednesday
Liberal Arts Building 210

Stephen J. Coulthart, PhD
sjcoulthart@utep.edu
(915) 747-5639
Office Hours: By appointment
Welcome to INSS 5305: Introduction to Intelligence Analysis

How is data transformed into intelligence? What obstacles do analysts face? What techniques and “tricks of the trade” do they employ? This course will delve into these questions and more. Students who successfully complete the course will learn the basic theory and practice of intelligence analysis including analytical communication (written/oral), evaluation of sources, problem structuring, hypothesis testing, forecasting, and competitive analysis, among others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Discuss the main issues and controversies in the academic and professional intelligence analysis literature as well as apply to emerging news events</td>
<td>• Annotated bibliographies of course readings that summarize the main points, arguments, and contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Develop the basic skills and knowledge to create intelligence products using i2 Analyst’s Notebook</td>
<td>• A take-home midterm with an oral component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Improve analytical writing and briefing skills</td>
<td>• Analytical homework assignments to practice key skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• An original intelligence product using i2 Analyst’s Notebook and open source data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

University Catalog Description

This course will examine the process of intelligence analysis. The course will focus upon critical thinking, the analytical process, the nature of bias, the avoidance of bias in qualitative analysis, as well as dealing with uncertainty. Central will be the use of hypotheses and argumentation in the analytical process. Students will also learn to categorize intelligence evidence. Causal analysis and interpreting intentions will be stressed. Forecasting procedures, target analysis, and the psychology of intelligence analysis will round out the subjects examined. Prerequisite: INSS 5302 (may be taken concurrently) and department approval.

Required Texts

Along with journal articles and book chapters, the readings include one required textbook:

Additional readings will be available on Blackboard and/or through the University Library’s online resources.

Our style guide for the course is *Style Manual and Writers Guide for Intelligence Publications* (2011). Available for free at: https://fas.org/irp/cia/product/style.pdf. Since the CIA style manual does not include guidance on citation style, we will use the Chicago Style manual for citing references (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

**Assignments and Evaluation**

**Grading Scale.**

Please note that a “C” or “average” work is that which meets the basic requirements and “Good” or “B” work exceeds the basic requirements. “Excellent” or “A” work greatly exceeds basic requirements. Typically, most undergraduate work falls in the “C” category and most graduate work in “B.” Students seeking the M.S. in Intelligence and National Security must get a “B” in this course to get credit towards the degree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>500-450</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>449-400</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>399-350</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>349-300</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;324</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Inadequate (fail)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lateness policy.

All assignments must be completed on time. Exceptions will only be made in extreme circumstances, when students can provide supporting documentation, and/or at the instructor's discretion.

Assignments in Brief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Pts.</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
<th>When will you have to do it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annotation journal</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Completed before class each week for weeks January 29 to March 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home midterm</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Oral exams held on March 11; written component due 3/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis homework</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Completed before class 4/1 to 5/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence brief and memo</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Briefing delivered on 5/13; memo due 5/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment Descriptions.

**Annotation Journal- 20% (100pts)**

Students will annotate the course readings from January 29 to March 25. The annotations will be kept in a single Microsoft Word file. See the appendix for details on instructions and evaluation.

**Take-Home Midterm- 30% (150pts)**

The midterm exam will have written and oral components. The written component will be a short essay response to a question prompt(s) that requires students to synthesize their knowledge of course content. A short oral component will further probe students’ knowledge.

**Analysis Homework- 20% (100pts)**

To reinforce concepts covering in the second half of the course on analysis, there will be five homework assignments.

**Intelligence Briefing and Memo- 30% (150pts)**

Students will write a concise intelligence memo on a national security threat. If done properly, the final project can be used for a professional writing sample. A briefing based on the memo will be presented on 5/13.

Course Calendar and Guidelines
Please note that I reserve the right to make modifications to the course schedule during the semester for logistical reasons.

Part I: Key Intelligence Discussions, Debates, and Themes

*Overview.*
In the first part of the course we will cover the key issues in the intelligence analysis academic and professional literatures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main Topic</th>
<th>Subtopics/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>Course Introduction and Definitions</td>
<td>• Cover syllabus&lt;br&gt;• Key concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/29</td>
<td>History and Art-Science Debate</td>
<td>• History of intelligence analysis&lt;br&gt;• Art versus science debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>• Cognitive biases&lt;br&gt;• Naturalistic model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Teams and culture</td>
<td>• Small group processes&lt;br&gt;• Analytical culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>• Policy maker-analyst relations&lt;br&gt;• Impact of intelligence on policy-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>• Causes of intelligence failure&lt;br&gt;• Denial and deception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>• Big data&lt;br&gt;• Future trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3/11</td>
<td>Midterm Exam emailed to students on 3/6; due before 11:59pm on 3/18</td>
<td>No readings: oral exams held on 3/11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part II: Introduction to Intelligence Analysis Skills

*Overview.*
The second part of the course provides an introduction to the practice of intelligence analysis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Main Topic</th>
<th>Subtopics/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9  | 3/25 | Intelligence targets              | • Puzzles, mysteries, and complexities  
                                 | • Target models and problem structuring                                        |
| 10 | 4/1  | Introduction to i2 Analyst’s Notebook | • Basic overview  
                                | • Creating charts and inserting data                                           |
|    |      |                                    | Note: We will be in Liberal Arts computer lab                                 |
| 11 | 4/8  | Importing data into i2 Analyst’s Notebook | • Basic data import/Import specs  
                                | • Importing different chart types                                              |
|    |      |                                    | Note: We will be in Liberal Arts computer lab                                 |
| 12 | 4/15 | Analyzing data in i2 Analyst’s Notebook | • Finding information  
                                | • Bar charts, histograms, etc.  
                                | • Network analysis                                                            |
|    |      |                                    | Note: We will be in Liberal Arts computer lab                                 |
| 13 | 4/22 | Hypothesis Testing and Forecasting | • Analysis of competing hypotheses  
                                | • Scenario generation                                                         |
| 14 | 4/29 | Writing for Intelligence          | • Expressing uncertainty and words of estimative probability  
                                | • Informal argumentation and fallacies                                         |
| 15 | 5/6  | Analytical briefing               | • BLUF briefing style  
                                | • Displaying information                                                      |
| 16 | 5/13 | Submit paper on 5/15 before 11:59pm | N/A                                                                            |

**Course Guidelines**

*Communication.*

I will only use your UTEP email to communicate with you.

*General Expectations*
Students are encouraged to take an active and engaged orientation to their own learning. Ultimately, the more students put into the process, the more they will learn. The following guidelines will create a comfortable and productive learning environment throughout the semester.¹

You can expect me:
- To start and end class on time as well as provide you with an interactive and interesting class
- To reply to e-mails within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends.
- To assign coursework and reading that adequately covers the material and meets the learning objectives of the course while adhering to the time expectations for the course.
- To give a midterm exam and final project that accurately reflect the material covered in class and assigned coursework.

I can expect you:
- To come to class on time and to not take unnecessary and frequent breaks during class (this is distracting for all of us)
- To refrain from unnecessary and unrelated use of electronic devices during class.
- To spend an adequate amount of time on the coursework each week, making an effort to understand the content.
- To seek help when appropriate.

**Academic Integrity Statement.**
Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are not attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. For more information, see: the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution’s website: https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/

**Student Disability Services Statement.**
The course instructor will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please contact me personally in the first week of class, to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in the East

¹ This section is a reproduced and modified version provided by the Elderly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University: https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/syllabus/samples-policiesexpectations/
Union Bldg., Room 106 within the first two weeks of classes. The CASS Office can also be reached in the following ways:
Website: http://sa.utep.edu/cass/
Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY Fax: (915) 747-8712 E-Mail: cass@utep.edu

Course Readings

Note: an asterisk (*) indicates the reading is available on Blackboard. All others are in required textbook or available through UTEP library resources.

Course Introduction and Defining Intelligence Analysis (1/22)


Marrin, Stephen. "Evaluating the Quality of Intelligence Analysis: By What (Mis) Measure?" Intelligence and National Security 27, no. 6 (2012): 896-912.


History of Intelligence Analysis and the Art-Science Debate (1/29)

Please read in this order:


Kerbel, Josh, "Lost for Words: The Intelligence Community's Struggle to find its Voice." Parameters 38, no. 2 (2008): 102-12.

The Psychology of Intelligence Analysis (2/5)

Please read in this order:


Teams and culture (2/12)


Intelligence Analysis at the Policy-Level (2/19)

Please read in this order:


Marrin, Stephen. "Why Strategic Intelligence Analysis has Limited Influence on American Foreign Policy." Intelligence and National Security 32, no. 6 (2017): 725-42.

Intelligence Failure (2/26)


**Emerging Technologies and the Future of Intelligence Analysis (3/4)**

* Torres-Baches, Efren R. and Daniela Baches-Torres. “Through the Cloak and Dagger Crystal Ball: Emerging Changes that will Drive Intelligence Analysis in the Next Decade.” *Journal of Mediterranean and Balkan Intelligence* 10, no. 2 (December 2017): 161-86.


**Take-home Midterm Exam (3/11)**

Midterm Exam emailed to students on 3/9; oral exams held on March 11; written component due before 11:59pm on 3/18

**Intelligence Targets (3/25)**


SWARM, “Key Assumptions Check,” available at: https://swarm-help.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360003065231-Key-Assumptions-Check

Introduction to i2 Analyst’s Notebook (4/1)
Analytical homework due: Problem structuring exercise

Importing Data (4/8)
Analytical homework due: Create basic link chart; identifying important i2 Analyst’s Notebook concepts

i2 Analyst’s Notebook (4/15)
Analytical homework due: Data import exercise

Hypothesis Testing and Forecasting (4/22)
Analytical homework due: Analyzing data


Writing for Intelligence (4/29)
Analytical homework due: Hypothesis testing and forecasting


Briefing (5/6)
Analytical homework due: Analytical writing


Final project presentation (5/13)
No readings or homework
APPENDIX: ANNOTATION JOURNAL

Directions

Students will annotate readings for weeks 2-7 and 9 and keep them in a single Microsoft Word document. Citations will be formatted using the Chicago style manual. The entry for each reading must have 1) a citation of the reading and 2) a 150-200 word description. The description should cover the theoretical and/or practical problem the author is addressing (in other words, why is the author writing the piece), the main argument they are making, supporting data, and possible implications (the “so what?”) for research and/or practice. You can also list separately any questions that came up during the reading. DO NOT COPY AND PASTE SENTENCES/PHRASES INTO THE DESCRIPTIONS.

Submission

Save the file in a Microsoft Office file (no PDFs, please). The document should be in Times New Roman font with 1” margins, single-spaced.

Please name the file: Lastname_Firstname_INSS5305_AnnotationJournal

Throughout the semester I will randomly ask you to hand in your journals to make sure you are keeping current with the readings.

Evaluation

This should be a very easy assignment. All I am looking for is that you 1) read and understood the readings and 2) that you took the assignment seriously and completed the directions. If I get the sense you did not read or took the assignment seriously, I will send it back for you to properly complete it.

Examples of Excellent Annotations:


Treverton compares “complexities” and “wicked problems.” He states that issues range from puzzles to mysteries to complexities and that puzzles have solutions, mysteries have “some shape,” and “complexities,” are problems that are not “amenable to predictive analysis like puzzles” (2009, 6) and lack an established pattern. He claims that mysteries depend on other things and can be prevented or mitigated; he uses the example of financial crisis to explain the concept. Treverton says that “complexities” lack the boundaries of mysteries and that terrorists seek the element of surprise to prevent being predictable, a trait that allows them to act outside of the realm of what is expected. Treverton then explains how “complexities” compare to “wicked” problems, described as “messy, circular, and aggressive” (2009, 8) and clarifies that they are “ill-defined, ambiguous, and strongly stakeholder dependent.” Treverton says that “wicked” problems, much like “complexities” have no straight solution, only better or worse conditions, can be interrelated, and explained in various ways. He says treating terrorism as a “complexity” requires analysts and policymakers to remain mindful they

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
may be wrong, and new ideas and ways of thinking may be necessary. Treverton concludes his article by suggesting ways to approach “complexities” including, involving stakeholders, staying true to the organization’s identity, focusing on action, and being forward-looking.


The authors argue that IC analysts should focus less on eliminating uncertainty and more on assessing uncertainty. This focus on eliminating uncertainty in assessments, leads analysts into the trap of consequence or probability neglect. Consequence neglect happens when an analyst focuses too much on the probability of an event as opposed to the possible consequences of said event; conversely, probability neglect results from paying too much attention to the consequences of an event instead of the likelihood the event will occur. The authors believe that it is more important to assess uncertainty rather than eliminate it entirely, which is impossible to do. By assessing uncertainty, the analyst can avoid trying to find the one “right answer” and can discuss a variety of possibilities along with indications of the likelihood of the events and source reliability, which also permit the analyst to shift the assessment as new information becomes available. The authors reviewed almost four hundred declassified assessments and found that very few allow for such flexibility, and only one used an unbiased approach that laid out several possibilities along with their likelihood and confidence, thereby allowing the policymaker or decision maker to make the best possible judgement.