

**POLI 142J**  
**National Security Strategy**

<http://slantchev.ucsd.edu/courses/ps142j/>

Winter 2021  
MWF 9:00a–9:50a  
online

**Professor Branislav L. Slantchev**  
Office: SSB 364  
Office Hours: Mon 10:00a–11:00a  
E-mail: [slantchev@ucsd.edu](mailto:slantchev@ucsd.edu)

**DESCRIPTION:** This course examines the relationship between military power and foreign policy. We shall develop rigorous analytic skills to analyze the uses of force and threats to use force to achieve political objectives. We shall begin with a broad overview of strategies for national security, the tools of coercive diplomacy, and the impact of thermonuclear weapons on strategic thought. We shall then survey the development of U.S. strategic doctrine since the end of the Second World War. We shall then apply our knowledge to the analysis of current security issues such as regional deterrence, nuclear proliferation, national missile defense, preemptive war, and terrorism. By the end of the quarter, you will be expected to:

1. Understand the relationship between diplomacy and violence;
2. Know the evolution of U.S. national security policies;
3. Be able to analyze and critique these policies; and
4. Employ the fundamentals of strategic interaction in your analysis.

**PREREQUISITES:** This is an advanced undergraduate course and correspondingly the reading load is not light. Even though no previous advanced work in international relations is necessary, students will be expected to work through material that is moderately technical. No mathematical skills beyond algebra and elementary deductive logic will be required, but be warned that as upper-division students you will be expected to move back and forth between stark analytical stylization and rich historical narratives quite a bit.

**TEACHING ASSISTANTS:** One graduate student will assist me in this course:

Eric Thai  
[ethai@ucsd.edu](mailto:ethai@ucsd.edu)

Please note that the responsibilities of the assistants are limited to grading and questions related to that. For questions arising from the material during the course, you should ask me.

**REQUIREMENTS:** The course requirement consist of one extended essay that will be written in two phases. Phase I (35%, given out February 5) will consist of collecting and organizing the background information for the events I will ask you to analyze. Phase II (65%, due on March 17) will consist of your analysis and policy recommendations. You must complete both to pass the course. Late essays will incur a 20% penalty for each day that they are late. Each phase is graded separately. The essay must be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins all around, and in typeface of 11 points. Essays that exceed 20 pages in length when formatted according to these requirements will not be accepted.

**ATTENDANCE.** Class attendance will be important for your performance on the exams. Much of the material that we shall cover may either not be in the readings or not be in easily digestible form. Taking notes will

help you structure the substance. The lecture notes on the web site are extensive but class presentation should make organization much more straightforward. Some material is just easier to learn when you hear someone explain it, so do not rely on readings only. Do not print out the lecture notes too far in advance because I may update them up to the day before class.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY.** You are expected to do your own work. Students caught cheating on exams or plagiarizing their essays will receive a failing grade for the course and will be turned over to the dean of their college for administrative sanctions.

**GRADE APPEALS.** You can expect to be graded solely on your academic performance. This includes clarity of thought, knowledge of the material, composition, spelling, and grammar. Students who believe to have received an incorrect grade or a grade based on non-academic criteria should formally appeal it to me. The appeal will consist of a single typed page that identifies the problem and presents a reasoned argument that the grade fits the appeal criteria listed above.

**READINGS:** The course readings will be drawn from a number of books and articles. The following books are required:

- Ambrose, Stephen E., and Douglas R. Brinkley. 2010. *Rise to Globalism: American Foreign Policy Since 1938*. 9th Revised Edition. New York: Penguin Books.
- Schelling, Thomas C. 2008. *Arms and Influence*. 2nd Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press. (The first edition is acceptable as well.)

In addition, we shall read a number of articles and primary documents. These are all listed on the course website.

**SCHEDULE:** The complete reading schedule is on the course website.

**ANALYTICS: COERCIVE DIPLOMACY AND MILITARY POWER**

- Games and Information
- Best Responses and Nash Equilibrium
- Incomplete Information and Sequential Equilibrium
- Revealing and Eliciting Information

**HISTORY: EVOLUTION OF U.S. STRATEGIC DOCTRINE**

- The Nature of the Soviet Union, 1917–1945
- Containment as Grand Strategy during the Cold War
- Sword and Shield: Deterrence and Defense of Europe, 1945–1952
- Thermonuclear War and Nuclear Deterrence
- Limited War and Korea, 1950–1953
- The New Look: Massive Retaliation, 1953–1960
- The Cuban Missile Crisis
- Into the Missile Age: Flexible Response, 1961–1969
- The Vietnam War, 1954–1975
- Détente and the Strategy of Sufficiency, 1970–1980
- Evil Empire: The Reagan Revolution, 1981–1989