INTERNATIONAL SECURITY & MILITARY STRATEGY:
THE CONTEXT and APPLICATION of
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
SYLLABUS
AY 23

JOINT PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION
PHASE I INTERMEDIATE LEVEL COURSE

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
Twenty-first Century Leaders for Twenty-first Century Challenges

Version 1.3
Current of 7 September 2022
FOREWORD

This syllabus of the *International Security and Military Strategy* course for the Air Command and Staff College, Academic Year 2023 (September-December 2022), provides both an overview of the course narrative, objectives, and questions, as well as a description of each lesson to assist students in their reading and preparation for lecture and seminar. Included herein is information about course methods of evaluation, schedule, and the fulfilment of joint professional military education core goals.

SIGNED

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD ........................................................................................................... 2  
TABLE OF CONTENTS ......................................................................................... 3  
COURSE OVERVIEW ............................................................................................. 5  
  COURSE DESCRIPTION ................................................................................. 5  
  COURSE OBJECTIVES ............................................................................... 5  
  COURSE REQUIREMENTS ......................................................................... 5  
  REQUIRED BOOKS ..................................................................................... 6  

COURSE SCHEDULE

PHASE I: APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY  
DAY 1  Introduction to International Security .................................................. 7  
DAY 2  Realism .................................................................................................. 8  
DAY 3  Liberalism .............................................................................................. 9  
Day 4  Constructivism & Alternative Approaches ........................................... 10  

PHASE II: GRAND STRATEGY AND THE INSTRUMENTS OF POWER  
Day 5  Grand Strategy ..................................................................................... 11  
DAY 6  Information ........................................................................................... 12  
DAY 7  Economics ............................................................................................ 13  
DAY 8  Diplomacy ............................................................................................. 14  

PHASE III: MILITARY STRATEGY AND DECISION MAKING  
DAY 9  Military Strategy and Theories of Victory .......................................... 15  
DAY 10  Rational Decision Making and Strategy ........................................... 16  
DAY 11  Organizational and Bureaucratic Politics and Strategy .................... 17  
DAY 12  Cognitive Impacts and Strategic Cultures ....................................... 18  

PHASE IV: U.S. SECURITY CHALLENGES AND COMBATANT COMMAND STRATEGIES  
DAY 13  China .................................................................................................. 19  
DAY 14  North Korea ....................................................................................... 20
DAY 15  INDO PACOM

DAY 16  Russia

DAY 17  EUCOM

DAY 18  Iran

DAY 19  CENTCOM

DAY 20  AFRICOM/SOUTHCOM: Human Security & The Global South
COURSE DESCRIPTION

ISMS explores the context of international security with a focus on the US national interest, as well as the tools at its disposal for the attainment of its interests. The course introduces “traditions” of International Relations (IR), which present distinct and contrasting perspectives on the causes of war, the conditions of peace, and, in turn, what counts as a national security interest. It reinforces questions of national interests by leveraging the debate over US grand strategy in the 21st century, and explores the instruments of national power (DIME) by which national interests and objectives may be pursued and obtained. The course explores the concept of military strategy and what impedes effective strategy conception and execution. Finally, it applies these traditions and tools to better understand and develop responses to challenges in the strategic environment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how international security relates to the continuum of competition, conflict, and war.
2. Understand competing approaches to determining national interest, grand strategy, and the use of instruments of national power.
3. Understand the challenges of formulating, assessing, innovating, and executing military strategy to meet political objectives.
4. Apply an understanding of military strategy to global and regional security concerns.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **IS-600 (E): MIDTERM ASSIGNMENT**
   Analyze the 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance through the perspective of one IR tradition: realism, liberalism, or constructivism. Provided to students on Day 1, due October 14, 2022 at 1700. 25% of overall course grade.

2. **IS-601 (E): FINAL ASSIGNMENT, Part 1**
   Military Strategy Essay. Provided to students on October 14, 2022, due on November 16, 2022 at 1700. 25% of overall course grade.

3. **IS-602 (E): FINAL ASSIGNMENT, Part 2**
   Strategic Framework Essay. Provided to students on October 14, 2022, due on December 9, 2022 at1700. 30% of overall course grade.

4. **IS-603(P): CLASS PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION, AND CONTRIBUTION**
   Students are expected to attend lectures and seminars, read the assigned materials, and meaningfully contribute to seminar discussions. 20% of the overall course grade.
The course includes readings from books issued by ACSC and readings from electronic files posted on Canvas (indicated as “[EL]”). Students can access the syllabus, lecture videos, electronic readings, and other supplemental materials online through Canvas. ACSC provides students with copies of the following course books, which must be returned at the conclusion of the course:


Please refer questions to the course team:
Dr. Andrew Akin, Course Director ([andrew.akin@au.af.edu](mailto:andrew.akin@au.af.edu))
Lt Col Dustin Hansen, Deputy Course Director ([dustin.hansen@au.af.edu](mailto:dustin.hansen@au.af.edu))
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY & MILITARY STRATEGY  
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS  

Phase I: APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY  

DAY 1–INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL SECURITY  

DATE: 20 September 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Explore the terms “international security” and “national interest.”  
2. Identify the competing theoretical approaches to study international security.  
3. Identify the role of violence in relations between states.

ISMS-500 (L): Course Introduction & Introduction of International Security, Dr. Andrew Akin  
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-501 (S): What is International Security?


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend offensive realism and defensive realism.
2. Understand national security according to realism.
3. Comprehend realist predictions concerning the likelihood of future great power war and peace.
4. Comprehend realist predictions concerning the likelihood of war or peace with a rising China.

ISMS-502 (L): Realism Now and Forever, Dr. James W. Forsyth
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-503 (S): The Rationale of Realism


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the broad “family portrait” of liberalism and comprehend the democratic peace theory.
2. Understand national security according to liberalism.
3. Comprehend liberal predictions concerning the likelihood of future great power war and peace.
4. Comprehend liberal predictions concerning the likelihood of war or peace with a rising China.

ISMS-504 (L): Liberalism: An Overview, Dr. Mary Hampton
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-505 (S): Liberal Idealism

4. The Declaration of Independence [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand constructivism as a critique of other IR paradigms and comprehend its components: primarily, the role of identities, norms, and ideas in the international system.
2. Understand national security according to constructivism.
3. Comprehend constructivist predictions concerning the likelihood of future great power war and peace.
4. Comprehend constructivist predictions concerning the likelihood of war or peace with a rising China.
5. Explore alternative approaches to IR and International Security.

ISMS-506 (L): CONSTRUCTIVISM: A CRITIQUE OF REALSIM & LIBERALISM AND THE ROLE OF IDENTITY, Dr. Wes Hutto
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-507 (S): Identity, Subjectivity, and Alternative Approaches.


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand how realism, liberalism, constructivism, and institutionalism inform the various grand strategy options for the United States.
2. Comprehend the retrenchment-engagement debate in US foreign policy.
3. Infer future options for US grand strategy as they relate to a rising China or belligerent Russia.

ISMS-508 (P): The IR Paradigms and Ensuing Grand Strategies. Dr. James W. Forsyth, Col. Sarah N. Bakhtiari, Ph.D., Dr. Wes Hutto
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute panel discussion.

ISMS-509 (S): GRAND STRATEGY: AN ONGOING DEBATE

4. Ronald O'Rourke, “The US Role in the World: Background and Issues for Congress” (21 January 2021), 1-13, 17-20 [EL]
5. Joint Publication 1, I-10-I-16 [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the role of information and soft power in international politics.
2. Infer the varying role of soft power within distinct grand strategies.
3. Comprehend China’s use of strategic communication.

ISMS-510 (L): Information in Grand Strategy, Lt Col Sean N. Blas, Ph.D.
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-511 (S): Soft Power, Strategic Communication, and Information Warfare.


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
Phase II: GRAND STRATEGY AND THE INSTRUMENTS OF POWER

DAY 7: THE ECONOMIC IOP

Date: 14 October 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the role of economics as an instrument of state power.
2. Comprehend Bretton Woods and other international economic institutions
3. Understand how states, especially China, use economic activity to coerce or reward.
4. Comprehend the security implications of China’s dominance rare earth mineral supply chains.

ISMS-5012 (L): International Political Economy, Dr. Kathryn Boehlefeld.
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5013 (S): The Economic IOP


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
Phase II: GRAND STRATEGY AND THE INSTRUMENTS OF POWER

DAY 8: THE DIPLOMATIC IOP

Date: 18 October 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the role of diplomacy and diplomats in international politics, generally, and, specifically, with respect to influencing relations with China.
2. Comprehend the relation of international law to diplomacy, particularly China’s “lawfare.”
3. Infer the variable role of diplomacy within distinct grand strategies, especially towards China and Russia

CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5015 (S): Diplomatic Statecraft, IGOs, and Track II Diplomacy


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
DAY 9: Military Strategy and Theories of Victory

Date: 21 October 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend how the military instrument of power complements grand strategy.
2. Understand how victory is defined and conceptualized in military operations.
3. Comprehend the complexity of developing military strategy

ISMS-5016 (L): What is Victory? Defining the goals of Military Strategy, Dr. Anne Mezzell
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5017 (S): What is Military Strategy & What is winning?

3. The National Defense Strategy - Unclassified Summary

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
DAY 10: Rational Decision Making and Strategy

**Date:** 25 October 2022

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. Comprehend the assumptions of the rational actor decision-making model.
2. Apply the principles and assumptions of the rational actor model to explain the formulation and execution of strategy associated with the Cuban Missile Crisis.
3. Comprehend the foundations of political-military integration (PMI) in strategy development and strategic effectiveness.

**ISMS-5018 (L): Military Strategy and Rational Decision Making, Dr. Rob DiPrizio**

CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

**ISMS-5019 (S): Effective Military Strategy**


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the assumptions of the organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics decision-making models.
2. Apply the principles and assumptions of the organizational behavior and bureaucratic politics models to explain the formulation and execution of strategy associated with the Cuban Missile Crisis.
3. Analyze the links between organizational effects and bureaucratic politics on decision making, PMI, and the formulation and execution of military strategy.

ISMS-5020 (L): Bureaucracy and Organizational Politics in Decision Making, Lt Col Tanya Iwanenko, EdD.
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5021 (S): Bureaucratic Politics, Organizational Behavior and Strategy Making

4. Stephen Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important? (Or Allison Wonderland),” *Foreign Policy*, no. 7 (Summer 1972): 159-179 [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
DAY 12: The Cognitive Domain and Strategic Culture

Date: 1 November 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend the influence of cognitive-psychological bias and strategic culture on military strategy.
2. Apply cognitive-psychological and strategic cultural explanations to historical cases of and contemporary debates on military strategy.
3. Analyze the links between cognition-psychology, strategic culture, and the assessment of military strategy, and (implications for) the formulation of military strategy.

ISMS-5022 (L): Strategic Culture: Ideas and Innovation, Dr. Kevin Holzimmer
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5023 (S): Cognitive, Psychological, and Strategic Culture influences on Military Strategy


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
Phase IV: ADVERSARIAL STATES AND US CCMD STRATEGIES

DAY 13: China

Date: 4 November 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand China’s national security perspective.
2. Understand the history of Chinese grand strategy.
3. Infer options for US foreign policy in approaching China.

ISMS-5024 (L): China and US Foreign Policy, Dr. Jared McKinney
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5025 (S): China Ascendant

1. Xinping, Xi., General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. Address. The 19th Communist Party Congress [Selections], 18 October 2017. [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
Phase IV: ADVERSARIAL STATES AND US CCMD STRATEGIES

DAY 14: North Korea

Date: 8 November 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand North Korea’s national security perspective.
2. Understand the strategic predicament of the North Korean regime.

ISMS-5026 (L): North Korea and US Foreign Policy, Dr. Todd Robinson
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5027 (S): North Korea Gone Rogue?

1. House of Representatives, *An Insider’s Look at the North Korean Regime [Selections], Hearing before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 115th Cong., 2nd sess., 2017* [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
Phase IV: ADVERSARIAL STATES AND US CCMD STRATEGIES

DAY 15: INDOPACOM: Regaining the Advantage

Date: 15 November 2022

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend USINDOPACOM efforts to “regain the advantage” as a deterrent strategy and the warfighting implications of the debate over this strategy’s ways and means.
2. Analyze factors that complicate the formulation and execution of US military strategy in the USINDOPACOM AOR.

ISMS-5028 (L): INDOPACOM: Leveraging Partners and Allies, Lt Col Jerry Chua (SG)
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5029 (S): USINDOPACOM: Regaining the Advantage

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Understand Russia’s national security perspective.
2. Understand the history of the post-Soviet space.
3. Infer options for US foreign policy in approaching Russia.

ISMS-5030 (L): Russia and US Foreign Policy, Dr. Andrew Akin.
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5031 (S): Russian Security Challenges

1. Vladimir Putin, (address, Munich Conference on Security Policy, Munich, Germany, 10 February 2007). [EL]
2. Angela Stent, Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest (New York, NY: Twelve, 2020) 1-43.
CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend extended deterrence as a military strategy.
2. Analyze factors that complicate the formulation and execution of US military strategy in the USEUCOM AOR.
3. Understand the US & NATO strategy towards Russia during the Ukrainian invasion.

ISMS-5032 (L): Strategic Design, Dr. Jared Donnelly.
CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

ISMS-5033 (S): USEUCOM: Deterrence, Alliances, and Partnerships


CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
Phase IV: ADVERSARIAL STATES AND US CCCMD STRATEGIES

DAY 18: Iran

**Date:** 2 December 2022

**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. Understand Iran’s national security perspective.
2. Understand the history of Iranian relations with the West and, in particular the United States.
3. Infer options for US foreign policy in approaching Iran.

**ISMS-5034 (L): Iran and US Foreign Policy, Dr. Christopher Hemmer**

CONTACT HOURS: 50-minute lecture.

**ISMS-5035 (S): Iran and Regional Hegemony**

1. Ayatollah Khamenei. Address. Delivered on the occasion of Nowruz and Eid ul Mab’ath [Selections], 22 March 2020. [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Comprehend decapitation and targeted killings as a military strategy and how it relates to the competition in the Middle East between the US, China, and Russia.
2. Analyze factors that complicate the formulation and execution of US military strategy in the USCENTCOM area of operation.
3. Analyze the efficacy of decapitation and targeted killings as a military strategy.

ISMS-5036 (S): Guided Practice, Strat Design
CONTACT HOURS: 1-hour in seminar.

ISMS-5037 (S): USCENTCOM: Decapitation, Drones, and Countering Malign Influence

1. Posture Statement of Gen Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr., Commander, United States Central Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 117th Congress, 2021 [EL]

CONTACT HOURS: 2-hour seminar.
**LESSON OBJECTIVES**

1. Comprehend alternative, non-state based, human focused approaches to security studies.
2. Understand the unique security challenges posed by the Global South.
3. Comprehend the main efforts of USSOUTHCOM and USAFRICOM Strategies.

**ISMS-5038 (P): The Global South, Panel Discussion.**
CONTACT HOURS: 1.5-hour panel presentation.

**ISMS-5039 (S): The Global South, Panel Discussion.**
CONTACT HOURS: 1.5-hour seminar discussion.

**NO READINGS ASSIGNED TODAY**