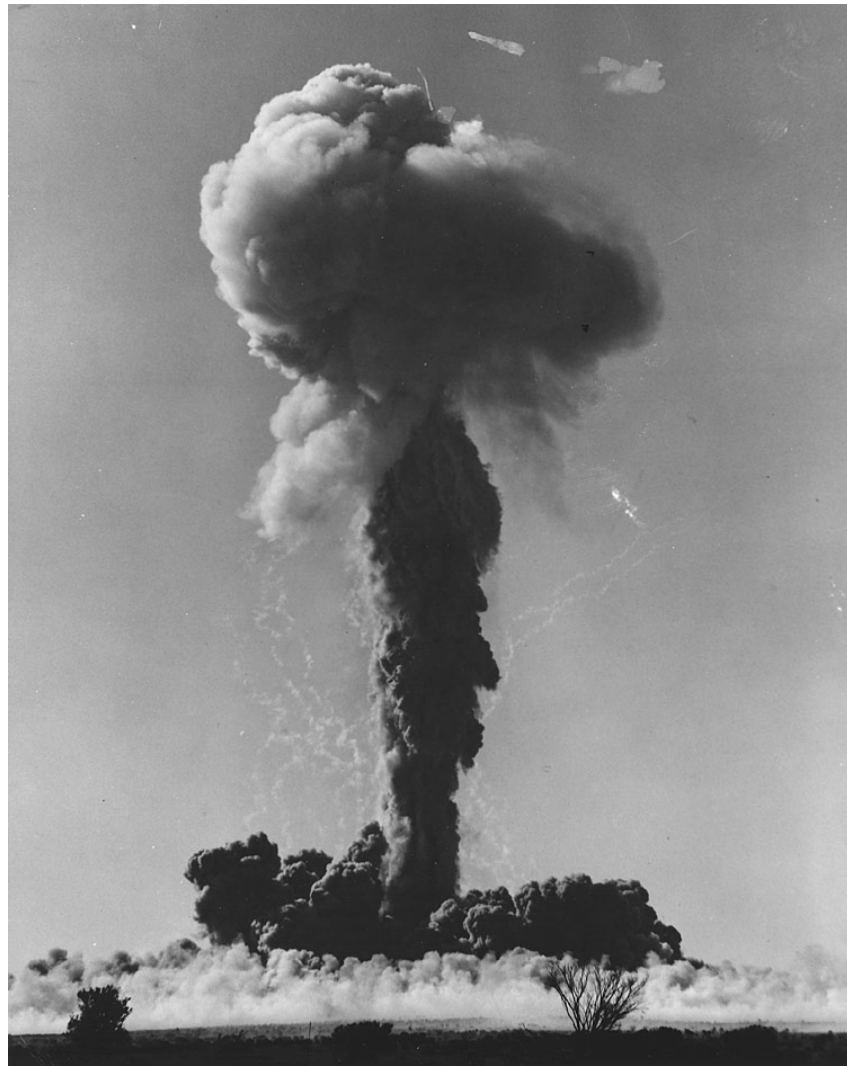


SUMMER
SEMESTER 2024



Mondays
11:00–12:20

B218

[Readings](#)
[\(folder\)](#)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN WORLD POLITICS

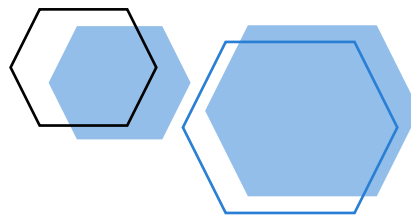
doc. PhDr. Michal Smetana, Ph.D.

- B.A. course about the role of nuclear weapons in international politics
- provides you with a basic introduction to the scholarship investigating the impact of nuclear weapons on international affairs
- is recommended for active students who enjoy interactive teaching methods, lively debates, and scholarly puzzles
- the course is quite challenging and requires intensive weekly work on assignments
- an integral part of the course is a simulation game taking place during the last three sessions of the semester



WHAT DO WE COVER IN THE COURSE?

As you are becoming experts in the field of international studies, you simply cannot avoid the issue of nuclear weapons in the world politics of the 20th and 21st centuries. Whether you think that nuclear weapons represent the ultimate evil or they are the guardians of a long great-power peace, the spread of nuclear weapons is frequently placed among the top international security threats humanity is facing today. In this course, we will discuss the contemporary discords in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime; unpack new disarmament initiatives; elaborate on the current problems with nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea; assess the risk of nuclear weapon use in the Russo-Ukrainian war; and try to solve the big puzzles that keep nuclear scholars awake at nights – such as why countries develop nuclear weapons in the first place, what are the consequences of nuclear weapons spread, and why they have not been used in a military conflict since the Second World War.



WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CLASS?

Most classes in this course are lecture-seminar hybrid; while I try to share with you some basic overview of the current developments in the field and relevant academic concepts and theories, your own input and ideas are critically important for the joint learning process. There will be some special lectures delivered by practitioners and other guests. Attendance in classes is compulsory, with up to three abstentions allowed (for whatever reason – no prior excuse is needed).





WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CLASS?

After each class, I will ask you to follow up on what we've learned and read a scholarly article to elaborate on our problem in more detail. There is good evidence that from a learning perspective, this approach works much better than the traditional "read first – attend the lecture second" approach. Readings for each class will be available for you in the [Dropbox folder](#).

Moreover, after each class, you will do an assignment related to the simulation game (see below). This mostly requires you to write a short policy memo that you must submit by Sunday of the same week to the simulation coordinator, Karim Kamel karim.kamel@fsv.cuni.cz. Note that in order to pass the course, you need to submit policy memos for each week. You can be late with your memo up to three times during the semester but not more than that.



SIMULATION GAME

The point of this simulation exercise is to immerse yourself in the role of a country's diplomatic mission. All students will partake in this roleplaying game, where they represent a government during negotiations. You will learn three things from this exercise. First, you will study your assigned country's position on the topic. A useful reference to study countries' positions is the [Nuclear Threat Initiative country profiles](#). Your main reference, however, should be official statements and working papers produced by governments, which can be found on [Reaching Critical Will's website](#). Second, you will need to learn about the broader context in which the negotiations are taking place. This means you will study other countries' positions, their redlines, influential political groupings, and the history of the topic and the discourse in policy, media, and academia. Third, you will be exposed to the "art" of negotiations. Diplomacy and negotiations have been described [as an art and a science](#). Studying the Rules of Procedure (check: [Processes of International Negotiations](#)) and mastering them could help you in the deliberations. There is also literature on [negotiations](#) and negotiation tactics (check: [Never Split the Difference](#)) that could bolster your negotiation skills.

Simulation exercises are proven to be among the most effective methods for learning. By immersing oneself in a stakeholder role, you incentivize active learning (check: "[Simulations and Experiential Learning in the International Relations Classroom](#)"). A recent study suggests that a useful learning tool is a simulation with pop-up quizzes of debriefing. To this end, during one class this semester, there will be a "surprise request" from your capital for a debriefing. This means you will present to your ministry of foreign affairs—played by class instructors—where you are with the articulation of your position, and what your strategy for the negotiations is.

In this particular exercise, we will imagine we are taking part in negotiations through the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament (OEWG). The subject we will be negotiating is [Nuclear Risk Reduction](#), which is an orientation to treat nuclear war from a risk management angle. Nuclear risk reduction is seen as a "reconciliatory" position, with most support coming from the U.S. and the West. The concept is not novel and could be traced back to the inception of [Transparency and Confidence Building Measures](#) (TCBMs). However, it has risen to the fore in recent Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) review cycles due to the perceived heightened nuclear risk. Some analysts see that a nuclear risk reduction is a useful approach (check: "[The Nuclear Risk Reduction Approach: A Useful Path Forward for Crisis Mitigation](#)"). Others see it as a distraction from real progress on nuclear disarmament (check: "[The False Promise of Nuclear Risk Reduction](#)"). Your first assignment will be to study your assigned country's position on nuclear risk reduction and, from there, articulate your strategy to handle negotiations on the topic.

Note that while there are weekly tasks relevant to the game, the **simulation itself will take place over the last three sessions**. Attendance at **these three sessions is compulsory**. If you cannot make it to one or more of these sessions, let us know and you will be assigned an alternative task to pass the course.



EXAM

We will do an oral group exam where you will discuss the negotiations and their outcome in the context of ideas, concepts, and theories we discussed in the classes or that you have read about in the assigned readings. You will need to demonstrate that you can connect abstract theories with concrete empirical developments in nuclear politics. I will set dates for these oral exams in May.

NO-ELECTRONIC-DEVICES POLICY

In all my courses, including this new one, we observe a strict no-laptop / no-tablet / no-phone policy; in other words, the students and lecturers are not allowed to use electronic devices during class. Please note that the motivation for this rule is not to discipline the students or to make it harder for you in any way – on the contrary. Using laptops for note-taking during class has, according to the latest studies in neuroscience and pedagogics, very high cognitive costs; it is a constant distraction for your brain, which is unable to focus on the lecture itself fully. This ‘no electronic devices’ policy has been tested at many renowned universities abroad, and the results are extremely positive. I encourage you to just listen to the lectures, pose questions whenever something is unclear or worth further elaboration, actively engage in the in-class debates, and just make a short note on paper when you feel it is something you would like to follow up on at home.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Feb 19): Introduction: The Problem of Nuclear Proliferation in World Politics

Week 2 (Feb 26): Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Birth of Nuclear Order

Week 3 (Mar 4): Banning the Bomb: Politics of Nuclear Disarmament

Week 4 (Mar 11): The War in Ukraine and Global Nuclear Order */guest lecture by Dr. Stephen Herzog/*

Week 5 (Mar 18): Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Causes of Nuclear Proliferation

Week 6 (Mar 25): Nuclear Taboo or the Tradition of Non-Use?

Week 7 (Apr 1): No class (Easter Monday)

Week 8 (Apr 8): Curbing the Arms Race: The Practice of Nuclear Arms Control

Week 9 (Apr 15): Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Advocacy */guest lecture by Alyn Ware/*

Week 10 (Apr 22): Technology of Nuclear (Non-)Proliferation */special field trip – a visit to a nuclear reactor; approx. 08:30–13:00/*

Week 11 (Apr 29): Monitoring and Verifying Nuclear Non-Proliferation */guest lecture by Tariq Rauf/*

Week 12 (May 6): Simulation Exercise I

Week 13 (May 13): Simulation Exercise II

Week 14 (May 20): Simulation Exercise III

	Simulation assignments
1	No assignment till next session when delegations are assigned
2	Write a memo (400 words) to your foreign minister explaining how the latest NPT PrepCom meeting (2023) handled the issue of “nuclear risk reduction,” and indicate whether the outcomes from the meeting your country’s national security
3	Write a memo to your foreign minister providing an honest critique (400 words) of your country’s position during the TPNW negotiations
4	Write a memo to your foreign minister (400 words) providing your analysis on how the war in Ukraine is impacting the nuclear nonproliferation regime. For instance, does it reduce or increase the risk of nuclear war? Does it have any impact on international norms or safeguards applications?
5	Write a memo (400 words) to your foreign minister explaining whether “nuclear risk reduction” would help reduce the likelihood of more countries acquiring nuclear weapons according to the existing expert literature on the topic. You can choose one theoretical work to base your analysis (such as Scott Sagan’s)
6	Write brief remarks (400 words) for your ambassador to deliver at an academic/NGO workshop on the nuclear taboo
7	Write a memo (400 words) to your foreign minister explaining the relationship between arms control and “nuclear risk reduction”
8	Write a memo (400 words) to your foreign minister identifying the most alarming emerging technology that would negatively affect your countries national security from a (non)-proliferation angle (provide explanation)
9	Choose one civil society organization that could be your ally during “nuclear risk reduction” negotiations. Provide reasons on why they would make a good ally and how you plan to operationalize a potential partnership (400 words).
10	Submit your country’s position for the negotiations (400 words). In this memo, you should explain your 1) Priorities 2) Secondary objectives 3) Redlines, and 4) Diplomatic strategy (negotiation tactics)
11	Opening statements and negotiations commence
12	Negotiations on text
13	Negotiations conclusion and closing statements



OKAY...A SUMMARY

During each class: listen, ask, discuss, challenge, think; up to three absences are allowed; we observe 'no-electronic-devices' policy

After each class: read the assigned readings, write a short policy memo, and submit it to karim.kamel@fsv.cuni.cz by Sunday on the same week; you should not be delayed more than three times during the semester

May 6, 13, 20: in-class simulation game

May/June: exam sessions



EVALUATION

Policy memos:

0-22 points

Simulation performance:

0-25 points

Exam:

0-38 points

In-class activity:

0-15 points

100-91 points: A

90-81 points: B

80-71 points: C

70-61 points: D

60-51 points: E

50-0 points: F

Remember that in order to pass the course, you need to get at least 50% of points in each of the four aspects of evaluation – that is, at least 5 points for in-class activity, 13 points for the podcast, 25 points for the exam, and 11 points for after-class reflections. Moreover, you must submit *all* in-class reflections (and not be delayed more than three times) and have less than three abstentions in the class.

ABOUT ME

I am an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Director of the [Peace Research Center Prague \(PRCP\)](#), and a Head Researcher at the [Experimental Lab for International Security Studies \(ELISS\)](#). My main research interests revolve around nuclear weapons in world politics, but I am also very interested in applying social/cognitive/experimental psychology in IR, studying the dynamics of international norms, theorizing deterrence models, and examining frozen conflicts in Europe and Asia. You can visit my [academic website](#) and [Twitter page](#). For consultations, you can contact me at smetana@fsv.cuni.cz