CONTEMPORARY THEORY AND ANALYSIS OF SECURITY (JPM569)

WS 2014/2015 (4 ECTS)

Thursday 12:30-14:00 (J4020)

Lecturers: Dagmar Rychnovská (rychnovska@fsv.cuni.cz), Jakub Záhora (zahora.jakub@gmail.com)

Course description

The aim of this course is to introduce selected contemporary theoretical and analytical approaches to security. The first part of the course describes the key developments in security research after the end of the Cold War and focuses on the discursive and practical turns in studying security. The second part of the course explores methodological tools used in (critical) security studies. Its goal is to discuss general methodological and philosophical assumptions underpinning critical social research, as well as distinct methods used in the contemporary security research.

Aim of the course

After completion of the course, students shall understand the main concepts used in contemporary security studies. With the help of the newly acquired analytical skills, they shall be able to critically reflect on the dynamics of how threats and risks are constructed in modern societies and how they are dealt with politically. They shall also have basic knowledge of research methods used in the critical approaches to security research and be able to apply them in their own projects.

Structure of the course

1) Roots of critical thinking on (international) security – 9/10/2014 (Záhora)

(Buzan and Hansen 2009: ch. 5 and 7, Krause and Williams 1996)

- Roots of critical approaches to security studies
- Post-Cold War debates on reformulation the notion of security
- Contemporary security research
2) Discursive construction of security – 23/10/2014 (Záhora)

(Buzan et al. 1998: ch. 1, Stritzel 2007, Balzacq 2011b)

- Linguistic turn in security studies
- Securitization theory and its criticism


(Balzacq et al. 2010, Bigo 2008, Neumann 2002)

- Practice turn in security studies
- Security practices and (in)securitization

4) Methodology of critical security research – 20/11/2014 (Rychnovská)

(Ryan 2006, Salter 2013, Balzacq 2011a)

- Introduction to research methods and research design in critical security studies
- Reflexivity and abductive reasoning

5) Critical security methods – 4/12/2014 (Záhora)


- Distinct methods: linguistic methods (discourse analysis, content analysis), praxeological approaches, ethnography

6) Security politics and contemporary theory – 18/12/2014 (Rychnovská)

(Hagmann and Dunn Cavelty 2012, Guillaume 2013, Neal 2013, Hynek and Chandler 2013)

- Normative and practical challenges of security research
- Criticality and the role of the researcher

Course requirements

Active participation (20%): Students are supposed to read the required literature (please note that there are required readings already for the first session), prepare for the classes and be able to critically assess the literature and put it in a broader context. More than one absence during the semester shall be documented by a medical proof or similarly relevant document.
Two short papers (25%): Each participant shall compose two brief papers of ca. 1 000 words. Instructions to each paper will be specified in the seminar (the first paper is due 18th November, the second one due 16th December 2014).

Research paper (55%): Each participant is required to prepare a final paper (4 000 to 5 000 words) related to the topic of the course which is to be handed in by 18th January 2015. The topic shall be discussed with the lecturer(s) and before the last session, each student shall prepare a brief research design (deadline 17th December 2014), outlining the research question, theoretical framework of the paper, empirical case(s) (if applicable) and the key literature to be used.

Late submissions of the papers will be subject to grade penalty (minus 2% from the total score for each day after the deadline).

Evaluation

Excellent 88-100%
Very good 74-87%
Good 60-73%
Fail 0-59%
Literature


