INTERNATIONAL SECURITY: CONTEMPORARY DEBATES (PHD, 4 credits)
AY 2009/10

COURSE OUTLINE

FALL TERM

Course instructor: Xymena Kurowska, IRES

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND AIDS

In the recent decades, the field of security studies has become one of the most dynamic and contested areas in international relations. It has proven conducive to the emergence of a number of vibrant European ‘schools’ that established versatile research agendas. This has developed vis-à-vis the traditionally conservative field of security and strategic studies which has however sought its revival in the post 9/11 era. In order to provide a comprehensive picture of these developments, the course surveys the field of international security as practiced by positivist and post-positivist approaches, both from the macro and micro level. It aims to provide the students with an in-depth understanding of the contemporary theoretical debates in the discipline and the ability to identify different arguments so as to critically assess their analytical and empirical purchase.

The course consists in three parts. It begins with different approaches to the conceptualisation of security, from the established definition as a freedom from threat to the notion of its essentially contested nature. It proceeds by revisiting the foundational concepts in international security that have structured the discipline of security studies and continues with post-positivist approaches. Within the former, the focus will be on security dilemma and deterrence, within the latter, larger part, the course will consider the claim by post-positivist scholars that the field be rethought as security is less about the absence of threat and more about technologies of social order, i.e. ‘security is about us’. At the juncture between these two, the course will explore the key tenets and developments within the European schools of security studies: Welsh, Copenhagen and Paris.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course the students will have:
- become familiar with major debates in contemporary security studies and intersections amongst them;
- become able to identify their assumptions as well as their origins in social science theory;
- become familiar with current research conducted within various theoretical frameworks and critically evaluated their arguments;
- attempted to apply this knowledge through a case study;
- critically evaluated the relevance of particular approaches to their own work.

SEMINAR STRUCTURE AND METHOD

There are no lectures for this course but the instructor will seek to structure class discussions around the most significant themes which will be combined with eliciting students’ opinion on particular questions. This will be supplemented by a short presentation and discussion of some additional readings and students conclusions regarding their case studies. The failure to read the required material will influence the grade for the seminar participation. The seminar aims to develop students’ ability to formulate their arguments critically yet coherently and acquire the necessary confidence to voice their standpoints. It thus relies on students’ thorough preparation and engagement with ideas being discussed. It requires the willingness to get involved in a discussion that appreciates alternative positions without
necessarily accepting them, or seeing your own as the ultimate one. The following methods will be used:

- Seminar and group discussion
- Seminar presentation and response
- Review and research essay writing
- Independent research
- Note taking.

**EVALUATION**

Each student will be assessed through a combination of various forms of seminar contribution and written work. These are:

- one presentation (15%)
- discussion of a colleague presentation (5%)
- presentation of a case study with an outline to be submitted in a written form (15%)
- seminar participation (15%).

Written work involves:

- one review essay (20%);
- a final research essay (30%)

**CLASS PRESENTATION**

Each student should provide a short presentation (up to 15 minutes) at least once in the term. The presentation will be based on the week’s additional readings. The presenter should supply a brief summary of the argument but offer a critical interpretation of the reading by drawing out the key ideas of the text, linking them with others already covered, and registering agreements and disagreements. The presenter should also attempt to consider how the given argument could be framed differently. A few critical questions should further be offered for the class to discuss collectively.

The presenter will be given a short written feedback after the presentation, including the grade, which can be followed up by consultation during office hours.

**DISCUSSION**

The discussant may take up the questions offered by the presenter but their major task is to pinpoint issues that were either not raised in the presentation, or they merit a different interpretation.

**CASE STUDY**

Each student will present a short (up to 15 minutes) report on various security practices in social spaces of their choosing. The report should include:

1. the description and justification of the chosen case for the security problematique;
2. the description and discussion of security practices registered;
3. an attempt to identify theoretical explanations for the generated data. The report may relate to the final research essay, e.g. as its empirical part if it suits the chosen subject.

The presenter will be given a short written feedback after the presentation and upon the submission of the outline, including the grade, which can be followed up by consultation during office hours.

**SEMINAR PARTICIPATION**

Everyone is expected to engage in the discussion. It is only possible if the students read and carefully think through at least the required reading before the class. The quality of questions and comments will be valued more than the amount of the contribution while recurring instances of unfamililiarity with the readings will translate into the lowering of the final grade.

**REVIEW ESSAY**

The piece should be around 2,500 words. It is to cover one of the seminar themes and provide a critical reading of three relevant texts (out of which only one may belong to the
required material) as well as the author’s evaluation on the subject. Samples of review essays will be distributed at the beginning of the term.

RESEARCH ESSAY
The research essay should be around 4,000 words and aim at some degree of originality, either empirical or theoretical. The abstract of the essay is to be submitted a month before the essay deadline.

Deadlines for all assessed work will be established at the introductory seminar.

The reading load sometimes varies across seminars and the students are encouraged to plan in advance their reading and writing schedule.

LATE POLICY
Assignments are to be handed in on the due date. Late submissions will translate into the lowering of the grade by 1/3 of a grade for each day of delay.

Students are asked to keep a copy of all work submitted for evaluation.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
Plagiarism and various forms of academic dishonesty consist of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and will invariably result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

In the pre-session students are advised on the issue but it is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty. For information on their various kinds please refer to: Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism, CEU Policy Document and the MA Handbook.

1) Introduction
In this class we will discuss at length what the course is planned to involve, including the allocation of seminar presentations and the discussion on the students’ expectations and needs. Preliminary deadlines for different assignments will also be given.

2) Preparatory reading – no class
The course is reading intensive and the students should prepare themselves carefully to each session if they plan to benefit from them. This reading, non-stationary class should allow you to analyse the reading for the forthcoming seminar and plan your reading schedule.

3) Security: definitions and conceptual analysis
Required:

Additional:

4) Security: a contested concept?
Required:

Additional:

5) Security: mode of governance and social construction of threat
Required:

Additional:


6) Aporias of security: sovereignty and the other.
Required:

7) Security dilemma and deterrence
Required:
Additional:

8) Security community and regional security complex
Required:
Additional:
9) Gendering security

Required:

Additional:

10) Security and the individual

Required:

Additional:

11) Positive security

Required:

Additional:

12) Security as a speech act and securitisation

Required:

Additional:


13) Research within the framework of the Copenhagen School

Required:


Additional:


14) Paris - Erasing the internal/external divide

REVIEW ESSAY DUE

Required:


Additional:

15) The politics of security agencies - Frontex

Required:

Additional:

16) The politics of EU's security policies

The discussion of the special issue of Perspectives on the European Politics and Society, edited by Xymena Kurowska and Patryk Pawlak, forthcoming December 2009. The editorial and selected articles will be provided a week before the seminar.

17) Security and foreign policy (identity)

Required:

Additional:

18) Security (as) identity and community building
Required:

Additional:

19) Biopolitics of security and identity documentation
Required:

Additional:

20) **Security as risk management and uncertainty**  
**Required:**  
**Additional:**  

21) **Security as commodity and common good**  
**Required:**  
**Additional:**  

22) **(Human) Security and development – effective mergers?**  
**Required:**  
**Additional:**


23) Whose values do you serve? - Producing security knowledge

Required:


Additional:


• Comments and replies in *Cooperation and Conflict* 34 (3): FP
  - Kjell Goldmann, ‘Issues, Not Labels, Please!: Reply to Eriksson’;
  - Ole Wæver, ‘Securitizing Sectors?: Reply to Eriksson’

24) Final essay preparation – no class

FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY DUE