

# **PS 1581: Origins and Consequences of Nuclear Proliferation Capstone**

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University of Pittsburgh  
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Seminar: Mondays, 1:00-3:30  
Posvar 4801

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Posvar 4446, 1:00-3:00

For more than 70 years, nuclear weapons have had a central role in international relations, beginning with Cold War diplomacy between the United States and Soviet Union to ongoing negotiations with Iran and North Korea today. This class investigates why states develop nuclear weapons and how nuclear weapons affect international politics following proliferation. We will use a seminar method, with students presenting existing research papers and others commenting and criticizing the work. The class culminates in students developing their own papers.

## Course Materials

Blackboard is difficult to work with. Thus, I will post all course materials on my website: <https://williamspaniel.com/classes/nuclearpolitics/>. Most importantly, this includes links to required readings and PDFs of any materials students develop for the class.

There are no required books for this course.

## Paper Reports

The majority of our meetings will consist of two students presenting reports on the assigned readings for the week. Each student should plan to spend an hour in front of the class describing the paper(s) assigned to him or her. These presentations should clearly:

- identify the author's research question and answer to that question
- explain the author's theory (i.e., what is the story that the author is trying to tell?)
- summarize the empirical evidence that supports the author's theory
- highlight any shortcomings of the article's argument

Non-presenting students must participate in these discussions—do not slack off on readings just because you are not presenting. The goal here is to have a conversation among the 17 of us, with one person leading the charge.

## Research Paper

Each student will write an original research paper on either (1) the origins of nuclear proliferation or (2) the consequences of nuclear proliferation. The research methodology is up to the student—both case studies and quantitative papers are acceptable. Note that your research on why countries did *not* develop nuclear weapons are just as viable as research on why countries did.

The paper must be written as though it would be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. That is, it should have (1) an introduction, (2) a section explaining the theory the student is either developing or adapting from existing work, (3) empirical evaluation of the theory, and (4) a conclusion. The final paper should be around 20 pages.

Students should look to begin their projects early so as to ensure a quality final product. Before spring break, students must submit an introduction and an outline of the remainder of their paper. After spring break, students will present rough drafts of their research to solicit feedback from their colleagues. The final two weeks of class will consist of another round of presentations, with students handing in their papers during finals week.

## Evaluation

I will weigh the above components in following manner:

- Weekly Participation: 25%
- Paper Report: 15%
- Outline: 10%
- First Presentation: 10%
- Second Presentation: 10%
- Final Paper: 30%

After calculating the weighted averages, I will assign final grades in the following manner:

$93\% < x$ : A  
 $90 \leq x \leq 93\%$ : A-  
 $87\% < x < 90\%$ : B+  
 $83\% < x \leq 87\%$ : B  
 $80\% \leq x \leq 83\%$ : B-  
 $77\% < x < 80\%$ : C+  
 $73\% < x \leq 77\%$ : C  
 $70\% < x \leq 73\%$ : C-  
 $x < 70\%$ : Non-passing grades

### **Late Work**

Absent any university regulations that provide exceptions or a North Korean attack on the American homeland, no late work will be accepted under any circumstance.

### **Disabilities**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both myself and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

### **Disclaimer**

This syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class. You alone are responsible for attending lecture and checking the website to stay up-to-date.

## Readings and Schedule

The readings and schedule are subject to change, pending international crises and how fast we move through the material. Please see the website for links to the readings and an up-to-date schedule.

### January 8: Introduction

Stephen Schwartz: [Atomic Audit](#) (just introduction)

We will divide the readings for the rest of the semester.

### January 15: No Class (MLK)

### January 22: Nuclear Coercion

Kyle Beardsley and Victor Asal: [Winning with the Bomb](#)

Matthew Kroenig: [Nuclear Superiority and the Balance of Resolve: Explaining Nuclear Crisis Outcomes](#)

Erik Gartzke and Dong-Joon Jo: [Bargaining, Nuclear Proliferation, and Interstate Disputes](#)

### January 29: Nuclear Skepticism

Todd Sechser and Matthew Fuhrmann: [Crisis Bargaining and Nuclear Blackmail](#)

Scott Sagan: [The Perils of Proliferation: Organization Theory, Deterrence Theory, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons](#)

John Mueller: [The Essential Irrelevance of Nuclear Weapons: Stability in the Postwar World](#)

### February 5: Who Proliferates? Security and Alliances

Scott Sagan: [Why Do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb](#)

Nuno Monteiro and Alexandre Debs: [The Strategic Logic of Nuclear Proliferation](#)

Philipp Bleek and Eric Lorber: [Security Guarantees and Allied Nuclear Proliferation](#)

## **February 12: Who Proliferates? Economics and Regimes**

Sonali Singh and Christopher Way: [The Correlates of Nuclear Proliferation: A Quantitative Test](#)

Christopher Way and Jessica Weeks: [Making It Personal: Regime Type and Nuclear Proliferation](#)

## **February 19: Who Proliferates? Capacity**

Matthew Fuhrmann: [Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreements](#)

Matthew Kroenig: [Importing the Bomb: Sensitive Nuclear Assistance and Nuclear Proliferation](#)

Dong-Joon Jo and Erik Gartzke: [Determinants of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation](#)

## **February 26: Nuclear Latency**

Matthew Fuhrmann and Benjamin Tkach: [Almost Nuclear: Introducing the Nuclear Latency Dataset](#)

Bradley Smith and William Spaniel: [Introducing v-CLEAR: A Latent Variable Approach to Measuring Nuclear Proficiency](#)

Rupal Mehta and Rachel Elizabeth Whitlark: [The Benefits and Burdens of Nuclear Latency](#)

Outlines due.

## **March 5: No Class (Spring Break)**

### **March 12: Rough Research Presentations, Part I**

Harris, Courtney, Rosemary, Taylor, Jackie, Arielle, Eric, Robert

### **March 19: Rough Research Presentations, Part II**

Abby, Nick, Stephanie, Coleby, Daylen, Dana, Kyle, Andrew

## **March 26: Preventive War**

James Fearon: [Rationalist Explanations for War](#)

Sarah Kreps and Matthew Fuhrmann: [Attacking the Atom: Does Bombing Nuclear Facilities Affect Proliferation?](#)

Thomas Chadeaux: [Bargaining over Power: When Do Shifts in Power Lead to War?](#)

Philip Streich and Jack Levy: [Information, Commitment, and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905](#)

### **April 2: Bargaining**

Alexandre Debs and Nuno Monteiro: [Known Unknowns: Power Shifts, Uncertainty, and War](#)

William Spaniel: [Arms Negotiation, War Exhaustion, and the Credibility of Preventive War](#)

### **April 9: Final Research Presentations, Part I**

### **April 16: Final Research Presentations, Part II**

### **April 25: Papers Due**

Place them under my door by 3 pm.