The objective of this course is to provide you with a strong foundation for critical thinking on the following three subject areas:

- Roles, missions, and structure of the US Department of Defense and the armed forces
- Processes for defense policy development, planning, and resource allocation, and the political and bureaucratic environment in which those processes operate
- Key debates in contemporary defense policy and planning

Course Format

Each week will be seminar-based. Suggested study questions provided for each week will provide grist for class discussion and you will be expected to offer informed, analytic perspectives on those questions and other key concepts from the readings. You should also keep apprised of current events relevant to the course topic.

Readings

Course readings are posted on the course Canvas site. No books are required for the course.
Course requirements

1. Write three short (300-500 words) responses to the course readings. You may choose the weeks you want to turn in these reading responses, but you must turn in at least one of the three in the weeks before the October 10 class. These responses may address the weekly study questions from the syllabus, or they may address any other subject raised in the readings. They need not be complete, detailed arguments, but should be analytical and should focus on raising or answering questions that integrate concepts from the readings. They should not simply summarize points made in the readings. (25% of grade)

2. Complete a take-home, open-note written mid-term exam, consisting of short ID and essay questions. (30% of grade). Midterm out October 24th and due October 31st.

3. Write a research paper (4,000 – 6,000 words) in which you adopt the perspective of one of the major organizations within the defense policy community (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, a specific Combatant Command, or a specific office in the Office of the Secretary Defense), and then do the following:
   a. Present a short overview of your organization and its interests (note you are to identify with that organization and its understanding of US national security, not a generic version of US national security).
   b. Briefly survey the future security environment for factors relevant to your organization’s mission
   c. Based on your assessment of the future security environment, choose a program you believe is very important to your organization’s mission and to national security and make a case for why it should be funded. Why is it not currently funded at the level you suggest?
   d. Suggest another program or programs that should be eliminated or pared back to pay for your preferred program and explain why they should be assigned lower priority. Ideally this ‘offset’ is redundant because of the better solution your preferred program provides.
   e. Anticipate criticisms of your recommendation and outline a plan to ensure your recommendation is funded in the President’s budget

Topic proposals (just a paragraph by e-mail to me) will be due by October 17, and papers will be due during final exam week (on Thursday, December 12). More guidelines on the research papers will be provided during the first part of the semester. (35% of grade)

4. Participate in class discussions. Read readings critically. Many of our sources are written by advocates; does what they are telling you correspond to what other readings have told you? You are expected to attend every class. Unexplained absences will affect your grade for this requirement. (10% of grade)
If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Faculty in the Schar School have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty and will strictly enforce Mason’s honor code.
## Course Schedule – Overview

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Course Overview &amp; Introduction to the Department of Defense</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>Theoretical Underpinnings</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>The US Army</td>
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<td>September 19</td>
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<td>October 3</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Centralization I</td>
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<td>Defense Budget Process</td>
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<td>Final</td>
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<td>Final Paper due</td>
</tr>
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As of May 2019

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Course Schedule – Topics and Readings

Week 1 September 3 Course Overview & Introduction to the Department of Defense


Further Reading:

Study Questions:
- What problems did the creation of the Department of Defense attempt to solve?
- What problems did Goldwater-Nichols attempt to solve?
- How much does this history affect today’s policy-making?

Week 2 September 5 Theoretical Underpinnings


Further Reading:
Week 3 September 12 The US Army

- 2019 Army Posture Statement

Further Reading:

- Fred Kaplan, “The End of the Age of Petraeus: The Rise and Fall of Counterinsurgency,” *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2013

Week 4 September 19 The US Navy

- Captain R. Robinson Harris and Lieutenant Robert McFall, "The Transformation (Again!) of the Surface Navy," *Proceedings Magazine*, January 2012
- 2019 US Navy Posture Statement

Further Reading:

Week 5  September 26  The US Air Force

- Dana Priest, “United NATO Front Was Divided Within,” Washington Post, September 21, 1999

Further Reading:


Week 6  October 3  US Marine Corps and Special Operations Forces

- US Marine Corps 2019 Posture Statement
- 2019 USSOCOM Posture Statement

For further reading
Week 7  October 10  Centralization I: the Civilian Side


Further Reading:


Week 8  October 17  Centralization II: the Military Side


- Paula Thornhill and Mara Karlin, “The Chairman the Pentagon Needs,” *War on the Rocks*, January 5, 2018

Further Reading:


Week 9  October 24  Combatant Commanders

- Rajiv Chandrasekaran, “‘Little America’ Excerpt: Obama’s Troop Increase for Afghan War was Misdirected,” Washington Post, June 22, 2012

Week 10  October 31  Defense Strategy Formulation

- Kirk A.Yost, "Fear and Loathing in the QDR," Proceedings, May 2004
- Michael Fitzsimmons, “Scenario Planning and Strategy in the Pentagon,” Strategic Studies Institute, January 29, 2019
- 2018 National Defense Strategy
- Also review JP-1, Chapter 1, from Week 1 for a description of the strategies

Week 11  November 7  Defense Budget Process

- Jim Cooper and Russell Rumbaugh, ”Real Acquisition Reform,” Joint Forces Quarterly, 4th quarter 2009


Further Reading:

• “Department of Defense and Army Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE), An Executive Primer,”

• Kathleen Hicks, “Invigorating Defense Governance,” Chapter 2, pp. 1-12

Week 12  November 14  Acquisition


• Russell Rumbaugh, “What We Bought: Defense Procurement from FY01 to FY10,” Stimson Center, October 2011

Week 13  November 21  People


• Charles Henning, “How the Army Recruits and Manages the Officer Corps,” *Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress*, July 5, 2006, Appendix A, p. 18-21

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Further Reading:


Week 14 December 5 The Future…