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.

**COVID Health considerations**

This course will be synchronous throughout the semester. We will meet for the first session and will jointly decide on whether to meet in-person or remotely.

Please remember these basic precautions:

- Complete their daily Mason COVID Health Check online health survey before coming to campus or leaving their residence hall;
- Quarantine at home if their health survey produces a yellow or red condition;
● Be prepared to show their daily green health status upon entering any classroom; and
● Practice all enhanced hygiene practices, including wearing a face covering that covers the nose and mouth, washing hands, maintaining at least six feet of physical distance, and staying away from campus and getting tested if they feel any symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Course requirements

1. A major research paper, submitted twice. To better apply the policy lens we will be developing over the semester, you will be responsible for one major research paper that you will submit twice.
   a. The first submission is due October 8th. This version should be a complete and final paper. In it, you will provide the following:
      i. Briefly survey the future security environment identifying a specific problem not well-addressed by the current defense program.
      ii. Adopt the perspective of one of the major organizations within the defense policy community (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, or other specific DOD organization) and present a short overview of your organization and its interests and how it best solves the problem identified by your survey of the environment (note you are to identify with that organization and its understanding of US national security, not a generic version of US national security).
      iii. 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?
      iv. 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.
      v. Anticipate criticisms of your recommendation and outline a plan to ensure your recommendation is funded in the President’s budget, particularly those arguments that will be made by a bureaucratic rival of the organization you have selected. In such a way, you will then have two perspectives: an argument for the program from your chosen organization’s perspective and an argument against from at least one other organization.
   b. To help align your security problem, your organizational perspective, your favored program, and the arguments against it, a brief topic proposal is due
   c. This initial version will be graded as if it were a final paper, but I will then provide feedback on how to sharpen the paper into a more policy-relevant product. Due October 8th and worth 35% of your grade.
d. A second submission will serve as your final course product. This version should add new research and explicitly address the concerns and points raised in response to the first version. This version is due December 10th and worth 50% of your grade. By iterating on the papers, we can work to create policy-sensitive and -relevant papers that should serve you in writings for your future career. The iteration allows us to together develop a sharper paper without expecting an understanding of policy analysis or writing greater than the graduate-level students you are.

2. Class participation and reading responses. Together worth 15% of your grade.

   a. The class is a discussion seminar. Reading assignments critically is vital for your and the rest of the class’s success. 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.

   b. As part of the participation grade, you are expected to complete two short responses to the course readings. Responses should be no more than 500 words. You may choose the weeks you respond to the readings, but one should be submitted before October 8 and one after. They need not be complete, detailed arguments, but should be analytical as befits a policy course and should focus on raising or answering questions that integrate concepts from the readings. These readings provide a means to get feedback on your writing style in preparation for the major paper.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>Course Overview &amp; Introduction to the Department of Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>Theoretical Underpinnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>September 10</td>
<td>The US Army and the US Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>The US Air Force and US Marine Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>September 24</td>
<td>The US Space Force and Special Operations Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Centralization I: The Civilian Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>Guest Speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>October 15</td>
<td>Centralization II: The Military Side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>October 22</td>
<td>Combatant Commanders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>Defense Strategy Formulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Defense Budget Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>November 12</td>
<td>Acquisition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>November 19</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>The Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>December 10</td>
<td>Final Paper due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Schedule – Topics and Readings

Week 1  August 27  Course Overview & Introduction to the Department of Defense


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 3  Theoretical Underpinnings

- Samuel P. Huntington, “Civilian Control and the Constitution,” The American Political Science Review, Vol. 50, No. 3 (Sep., 1956)

Week 3  September 10  The Army and Navy

- 2020 Army Posture Statement

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

• 2020 US Navy Posture Statement

• For each of the service classes, refer to the Congressional Budget Office’s “The U.S. Military’s Force Structure: A Primer,” July 29, 2016, which is the most accessible way to understand what makes up the US military.

Week 4 September 17 The Air Force and Marine Corps


• 2020 US Air Force Posture Statement


• US Marine Corps 2020 Posture Statement

Week 5 September 24 The Space Force and SOCOM


2020 USSOCOM Posture Statement

Week 6 October 1 Centralization I: the Civilian Side


- Rosalind Lewis et al, “Acquisition Regimes on Their Own Terms,” Aerospace, February 2019


Week 7 October 8 Guest Speaker

Week 8 October 15 Centralization II: the Military Side


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

Week 9 October 22 Combatant Commanders


Week 10 October 29 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 5 Defense Budget Process

● Jim Cooper and Russell Rumbaugh, "Real Acquisition Reform," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 4th quarter 2009


Week 12 November 12 Acquisition


Week 13  November 19  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

Week 14  December 3  The Future...