Arguably, there is no geographic area in the world as culturally, socially, economically, and politically diverse as the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific region encompasses the world’s largest land mass and population centers. It includes 36 nations, is home to over 50% of the global population, 3,000 languages, and two of the three largest economies. Additionally, it holds the two most populous nations, the largest democracy, and the largest Muslim-majority nation. The region is a vital driver of the global economy and includes some of the most active shipping lanes and nine of the ten largest ports.

This geo-political environment with its high economic growth and wide variety of ethnic and religious groups fosters high levels of tension. Indeed, the complexity inherent in the region presents tremendous security challenges to the U.S. and its allies. It is perhaps not surprising that the Indo-Pacific theater is also heavily militarized, with seven of the world's ten largest standing militaries and five of the declared nuclear nations. Five regional states are allied with the U.S. through mutual defense treaties, hence Washington’s tremendous interest in the theater.
This course’s focus is decidedly U.S.-centric, and it is primarily through the lens of our security interests, as well as those of our regional allies and partners, that we will view the Indo-Pacific theater. However, this does not mean we will overlook the critical perspectives of all the nation states in the region. Far from it; only if we understand the security threats, their gravity, and the way these threats are viewed by the regional players, can we craft appropriate responses and mitigation efforts. Therefore, it is vital to understand all perspectives in the region’s security milieu, so there will also be emphasis on non-U.S. geo-political dynamics.

Moreover, we will focus on all the elements of national power, as defined by the DIME model, that is Diplomatic-Intelligence-Military-Economic.¹ We will discuss how these elements of national power can be leveraged to achieve a manageable security environment, one which respects human rights, supports civil society and permits the unencumbered exercise of commercial activity. It can be argued that such a security environment exists in only a handful of states in the Indo-Pacific theater.

We will begin by examining the regional strategic situation that existed prior to World War II and the subsequent Cold War era. For instance, the evolution of U.S.-Chinese and U.S.-Japanese relations, which have ebbed and flowed over time, as well as the Korean War and its modern legacies. Attention will also be placed on Russia’s considerable influence, as well as the other rising great power—India and its growing political, military and economic influence. This will also include traditional U.S. allies, such as Australia, New Zealand and the Philippines, but also comparatively new ones, such as Japan, Singapore and South Korea.

At the center of the region’s economic and political dynamic is China, which has risen to a global power in a remarkably short period of time. For this reason, much of this course will center on the U.S.-China dynamic, however, we will consider many of the other security challenges to the region. Ultimately, at the end of the course, the student will have a much broader and nuanced understanding of the general security environment in this fascinating and critically important area of the world.

¹ This has been further defined by DIME-FIL (Finance-Information-Legal) or MIDFIELD (Military, Informational, Diplomatic, Financial, Intelligence, Economic, Law, and Development).
1. **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Regular attendance and Class Participation**

It is important that students read the assigned material and attend all the classroom meetings to benefit from the discussions and interaction. Students should also familiarize themselves with current events and keep up with the news via major, reputable media outlets. This should include domestic and foreign news sources to obtain a balanced perspective. **Please note that class participation is 30% of a student’s grade**, and I will routinely call on students during class to answer questions or contribute to the discussion.

**In-class presentations and short paper**

Beginning in the second week, selected students will submit a **3-page** paper on a subject of their choosing. Additionally, those students will provide a **ten-minute** oral presentation of their paper. **Please do not exceed the 3-page or ten-minute limitations.** The papers will be emailed to me before the beginning of class. This assignment will ensure that students are able to condense the material into succinct and manageable written and oral products. Each student will conduct at least two presentations/short papers. I will consider additional papers/presentations for extra credit.

**Research paper**

Each student will write a research paper of no more than 7 pages double-spaced in Word on a topic relevant to the subject of the course. **Students are required to contact the instructor prior to deciding on a paper topic.** A one-page proposal for this paper is due (via email) no later than June 21, 2019; early submissions are encouraged. The research paper is due on July 24, 2019, submitted to my email address. I have no preference as to the style as long as it is applied consistently throughout the paper.

**The paper accounts for 40% of a student’s grade** and should reflect: 1) research and analytical skills (no opinion pieces or essays are acceptable); 2) knowledge of international relations theories; 3) solid writing skills. Students should identify a topic of personal interest.

The following should be reflected in the final paper:
a. **Research question**: Ex. Does Neo-realism provide a useful framework of analysis for Chinese actions in the South China Sea?

b. **Main Argument**: Ex. In the case of the Chinese actions in the South China Sea, Neo-realism offers little explanatory power.

c. **Working Hypotheses**: Ex. If international social and political norms constitute the main driver(s) of the Chinese actions in the South China Sea, then Neo-realism only partly explains developments in the region.

d. **When you first approach the instructor with a topic, be prepared to offer the following**: 1. A statement of paper topic, 2. Research question, 3. Working hypothesis, 4. Expected findings.

**Students should also familiarize themselves with the Graduate Honors Code**, available on the GMU website. GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. GMU takes academic integrity seriously, so if in doubt, ask.

1. **Student Learning Outcomes**
   - A general understanding of the region’s recent history and how this has influenced current security events
   - An overview of the political, military and economic interplay in one of the world’s most dynamic region
   - Analyze the evolution of the U.S. involvement in the greater Indo-Pacific region and its current manifestations
   - Appreciation and application of the elements of National Power (DIME/DIMEFIL or MIDFIELD) and how they influence state goals and policies
   - Examine how national security strategies are used to attain broader geo-political goals
   - Understand the significance of great power politics and broader implications in the Indo-Pacific region
   - Investigate the impact of China’s rise on the regional and global economy and general stability
2. **Course Readings and Schedule**

There are three main sources required for this course:


Additionally, texts will be available via electronic journal archives, such as JSTOR, accessible through the GMU library website. Others will be available on the course website. Contact me immediately if you cannot find the reading assignments in one of these two ways.
Readings for Week 1

Session 1: Introduction

- Murphey, Chapters 13 and 15
- The Economist Special Report, “Asian Geopolitics,” 20 April 2017  
  https://www.economist.com/technology-quarterly/2017-04-22

Recommended Readings:

- The Economist Special Report, “China and America,” May 18-24, 2019

Session 2: Early U.S. Strategy and Relations

- Green, Introduction, Chapters 1, 3 and 4

Recommended Readings:

- Green, Chapters 2, 5 and 6
Week 2 (June 10 and 12, 2019) The United States as a Pacific Power (Cont’d).

Readings for Week 2:

Session 1: Early Cold War

- Kennan, George, “American Diplomacy, 1900-1950, and the Challenge of Soviet Power, Chapters 2 and 3
- Green, Chapters 7 and 9

Recommended Readings:

- Green, Chapter 8
- Dept of State; selected notes from the early Cold War
  [https://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1950v06/ebook/frus1950v06.epub](https://static.history.state.gov/frus/frus1950v06/ebook/frus1950v06.epub)

Session 2: U.S.-Asian Relations in the late Cold War and into the 21st Century

- Green, Introduction to Part 4, Chapters 11, 12, 15

Recommended Readings:

- Green, Chapter 13 and 14
Week 3 (June 17 and 19, 2019): The Rise, Fall and Rise of China

Readings for Week 3:

Session 1: Modern Chinese History through Mao to Deng Xiaopeng

- Murphey, pages 327-343; 392-409

Session 2: Chinese reforms and into the 21st Century

- The Economist, “China v. America: The end of engagement,” Leaders, October 18, 2018

Recommended Readings:

- Rand China Page
  https://www.rand.org/topics/china.html
• The Economist, “Seeking salvation: Forty years after Deng opened China, reformists are cowed,” Print edition, Dec 8, 2018

• Khan, Natasha, “Hopeless in Hong Kong: China’s Squeeze Triggers Talk of a New Exodus,” The Wall Street Journal, Dec. 26, 2018


Week 4 (June 24 and 25, 2019): Looking to the East: Russia in the Pacific

Readings for Week 4:

Session 1: Contemporary Russian history in East Asia


- The Economist, “Russia’s pivot to Asia: Vladimir Putin is leaning east, but his engagement is superficial,” Nov 26, 2016


Recommended Readings:

- Rand Russia Page [https://www.rand.org/topics/russia.html]

Session 2: Russia Recap/Oral Presentations?
Week 5 (July 1 and 3, 2019): Rising India

Readings for Week 5:

Session 1: The Raj, Independence and into the Digital Age

- Murphey; Chapter 14, pages 343-357, Chapter 20
- Coons, Chris and Puneet Talwar, “The Case for a U.S.-India Partnership,”

Recommended Readings:

- The Economist Special Report, “India,” 2015
- Rand India Page [https://www.rand.org/topics/india.html](https://www.rand.org/topics/india.html)

Session 2: India Recap/Oral presentations
Week 6 (July 8 and 10, 2019): U.S. Allies: Australasia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan

Readings for Week 6:

Session 1:

- Murphey, Chapter 19

Australia


- Australian Security Magazine, “Intelligence Committee to review important national security legislation,” April 5, 2019

Recommended Readings:

- Rand Australia Website
  [Link](https://www.rand.org/australia.html)

- Australian 2016 Defence White Paper

- Australian 2018 Defence Industrial Capability Plan

- Australian Department of Defence
  [Link](http://www.defence.gov.au/)
New Zealand

- New Zealand Ministry of Defence (Skim)
  https://defence.govt.nz/

Recommended Reading:

- Rand New Zealand Page
  https://www.rand.org/topics/new-zealand.html

Japan

- Murphey; Chapter 17, pages 382-392

- Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution
  https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html


Recommended Readings:

- Rand Japan Page
  https://www.rand.org/topics/japan.html

- National Defense Program Guidelines for FY 2014 and beyond, December 17, 2013

- Medium Term Defense Program (FY2014-FY2018)

Session 2:

Singapore


South Korea

- Murphey; pages 412-419
- Petrovsky, Vladimir, “South Korea’s new national security strategy: Priorities and nuances,” Modern Diplomacy, December 29, 2018  

Recommended Readings:

- Rand South Korea Page  
https://www.rand.org/topics/south-korea.html

Taiwan

- Global Security, “Taiwan has 'overall plan' to boost defense of Taiping Island,” April 17, 2017  
- Thompson, Drew, “Hope on the Horizon: Taiwan’s Radical New Defense Concept,” War on the Rocks, October 2, 2018  

Recommended Readings:

- Rand Taiwan Page  
https://www.rand.org/topics/taiwan.html
Week 7 (July 15 and 16, 2019): North Korea and other regional states

Readings for Week 7:

Session 1: North Korea

- Przystup, James, “Aspiration vs. Reality: Where are We with the North Korea Denuclearization Process?” Strategic Insights [date?]


Recommended Reading:

- Rand North Korea Page
  https://www.rand.org/topics/north-korea.html

Session 2: Indonesia, The Philippines, Vietnam,

- Murphey; 419-437

- Gindarsahd, Iis and Adhi Priamarizki, “Indonesia’s Maritime Doctrine and Security Concerns,” Indonesia Programme


Recommended Readings:

- Blaine, Seth, “12 Islamist Fighters Killed in Philippines,” Center for Security Policy, July 13, 2018
  https://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/tag/philippines/


  https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/vietnam/policy.htm

  https://amti.csis.org/vietnams-foreign-policy-search-new-delicate-balance/

  https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-philippines-defense-alliance
Week 8 (July 22 and 24, 2019): Options for the U.S. and its allies in the USINDOPACOM AOR

If we look at the theater from a U.S. military perspective, oversight is provided by the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), one of six geographic combatant commands within the DoD’s Unified Command Plan (UCP). USINDOPACOM integrates United States Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps forces within the USINDOPACOM area of responsibility (AOR) to achieve U.S. national security objectives.

Readings for Week 8:

Session 1:

- Murphey, Chapter 21
- Green, Conclusion, “Historical Case for an Asian Strategy.”
- Department of Defense, “National Defense Strategy,” 2018
- The Economist, “Parleying with the PLA: The US and Chinese armies struggle to learn how to talk to each other,” Print edition, Dec 18, 2018

Recommended Readings:

Session 2: Concluding discussion/Oral presentations
Miscellaneous/Recommended Readings:

- Department of Defense, “Cyber Strategy-2018: Summary” 2018
- Bouchat, Clarence J., “U.S. Landpower In the South China Sea,” Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, July 2017