

INTL 8269 Deterrence Policy
Tuesday 3:00-6:10
115 Candler Hall

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Office Hours: 3:30-5:30 Tuesdays.

(Make appointments via: <https://jeffreyberejikian.youcanbook.me/>)

Overview

The first Russian nuclear test in 1949 ushered in the modern era of nuclear deterrence. While the technology of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems has advanced considerably, the core principles of nuclear doctrine and deterrence logic have changed only incrementally. Today, however, the United States and other major powers are undertaking a comprehensive reassessment of the role and purposes of nuclear weapons in security policy. Most notably, the policy portfolio for nuclear weapons is expanding, with important implications for how deterrence may evolve—and for the likelihood that these weapons could be used in a conflict.

After a period of relative neglect, the “logic of deterrence” has returned to prominence among policymakers, scholars, and governments. This renewed interest extends beyond the nuclear domain to other arenas such as space, cyber, and so-called “gray-zone” conflict. The central question is how the underlying logic and core assumptions of nuclear deterrence apply to this new and expanding set of policy challenges.

Learning Outcomes:

This class is designed primarily for students in the *Master of International Policy (MIP)* program. There are four components learning outcomes related to this class. By the end of the semester students will have a firm grasp of:

- *Deterrence Foundations:* Understand the foundational concepts of (mostly nuclear) deterrence theory since end of WWII.
- *Policy Implementation:* Understand the evolution of US deterrence policy.
- *Deterrence Decision Making:* Be prepared to critically evaluate of the assumptions in deterrence theory and policy with respect to human decision making, including how these have evolved over time, the role of misperception, and cognitive factors.
- *Empirically-Driven Policy Change:* Develop a framework to identify the issues in deterrence that we still don't fully understand empirically, but that are necessary for improving deterrence policy and practice.

Assignments:

There are five graded components for the course. Details for each assignment will be distributed in class.

White Paper Policy Funding Proposal:

Individual: Construct policy-focused empirical research design on deterrence. Identify an empirical question that, if answered probably, would help improve deterrence stability (not related to proliferation). Length: 5,000 words maximum including a oral presentation to class (15-minute max). 250 points (200 for written document 50 for presentation)

Policy Review:

Team: Policy teams will present a review and analysis of national nuclear policies and doctrine 3,500-4,000 words. 150 points (100 for written analysis, 50 points for class presentation)

Critical Essays¹:

Individual: Weekly essays on reading assigned readings. 4 (four) in total (1,000 word maximum). Due day readings are discussed in class. 75 points per essay. 300 points total. Note: You may **not** submit a critical essay when you are also leading class discussion.

Participation:

Individual: Average weekly assessment of your engagement with the class including level of preparation, participation level, quality of comments. 150 points

Weekly Reading Presentation and Discussion Lead:

Individual: Present summary weekly readings to class and (more important) produce a framework for discussion and critical analysis. Sign up at this [LINK](#) – password “Nukes” (note: each individual will meet with me prior to their assigned presentation date class to prepare). Two sessions, 50 points each. 100 points total.

Grading Scale (percent basis)

100-93 A, 92-90 A-, 89-88 B+, 87-83 B, 82-80 B-, 79-78 C+, 78-73 C, 72-70 C-, 69-60 D

Policies and Procedures:

- Please observe the UGA academic honesty policy at all times:
"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi.
- The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. So, we may make changes to the readings and assignment deadlines. If this occurs, we will announce the changes in class, and they will be reflected in an updated syllabus available through ELC.

¹ For guidance on how to draft these essays, see Knopf, J. W. (2006). “Doing a Literature Review. *PS: Political Science & Politics*.

- There is no attendance policy for this class. However, unexcused absences will be recorded as a “0” for the purposes of weekly class discussion.
- Please come to class having completed and carefully considered the readings.
- All course work must be done on an individual basis, including exams, unless the syllabus clearly indicates that the assignment is team graded. *Important note: The use of generative AI (e.g., Chat GPT, Bard, etc.) in writing assignments is prohibited with the exception of checking for typographical/grammatical errors and spell checking.* This includes, but is not limited to, using such tools to produce content related to any of the assignments noted above.
- However, you are **encouraged** to use AI for the purposes of creating presentation materials. Include a footnote explain how AI assisted in the presentation and which model was consulted.

You can schedule an office hour appointment here: <https://jeffreyberejikian.youcanbook.me> (Note: this app requires a Google account)

Readings Schedule:²

Required sections from the following books are available at no cost, online through the UGA library web portal.

Larsen, J. A., & Kartchner, K. M. (2014). On limited nuclear war in the 21st century. Stanford University Press.

Morgan, P. M. (2003). Deterrence Now. Cambridge University Press.

Week 1 August 13: Introduction

Introduction to deterrence concepts, and make collective decisions about course design, assignments, and readings.

Bender, Bryan. “The Dangerous and Frightening Disappearance of the Nuclear Expert: *Politico*. 7/28/2023. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2023/07/28/nuclear-experts-russia-war-00108438>

Section 1: Core Concepts

Week 2 August 20: The Cold-War Version of Nuclear Deterrence

Morgan, P. (2003) “History of Deterrence in the Cold War” in *Deterrence Now*. Cambridge University Press.

National Security Archive (<https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/nuclear-vault/2020-05-22/us-nuclear-weapons-posture-during-cold-war-compilation-core-primary-sources>). This contains over two dozen critical US documents across all administrations during the cold war. It defines the evolution of US nuclear deterrence strategy at the Presidential level of authority and decision making. I strongly encourage you to read all documents and/or (at least) the summaries. Required readings include the following:

Overview: "A Short Documentary History of U.S. Nuclear Posture during the Cold War"

Document 03: 1952 Rand Report on the potential of a hydrogen bomb for deterrence

Document 16: Emergency use of nuclear weapons

Document 23: The first articulation of nuclear warfighting – Carter Administration

Document 24: Regan administration revision of Carter's nuclear strategy

Jervis, R. (1979). Why nuclear superiority doesn't matter. *Political Science Quarterly*, 94(4), 617-633.

Deep Dive:

Kaplan, F. (1991). *The wizards of Armageddon*. Stanford University Press.

Week 3 August 27: The Case for Nuclear Warfighting as a Deterrence Policy ("Integrated Deterrence")

Peters, R., Anderson, J., & Menke, H. (2018). Deterrence in the 21st century: Integrating nuclear and conventional force. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 12(4), 15-43.

McCue, J. R., Lowther, A., & Davis, J. (2023). A Tactical Nuclear Mindset. *Æther: A Journal of Strategic Airpower & Spacepower*, 2(2), 5-17.

Becker, J. D. (2020). Strategy in the New Era of Tactical Nuclear Weapons. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 14(1), 117-140.

Giles, Gregory. (2021) "Conventional-Nuclear Integration: Avoiding Misconceptions and Mistakes. *War on the Rocks*. <https://warontherocks.com/2021/08/conventional-nuclear-integration-avoiding-misconceptions-and-mistakes/>

Deep Dive:

Payne, K. B. (2020). The great divide in US deterrence thought. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 14(2), 16-48.

Mount, Adam and Pranay Vaddi (2020) "An integrated approach to deterrence posture: reviewing conventional and nuclear forces in a national defense strategy." *Federation of American Scientists*. <https://uploads.fas.org/2020/12/An-Integrated-Approach-to-Deterrence-Posture.pdf>

Week 4 September 3: The Case Against Nuclear Warfighting and Integrated Deterrence

Gower, John (2018). "The Dangerous Illogic of Twenty-First-Century Deterrence Through Planning for Nuclear Warfighting" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*.
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/06/dangerous-illogic-of-twenty-first-century-deterrence-through-planning-for-nuclear-warfighting-pub-75717>

Wilson, W. (2008). The myth of nuclear deterrence. *Nonproliferation Review*, 15(3), 421-439.

Chatham House Special Edition: *21st Century Deterrence* (2020).
<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/04/perspectives-nuclear-deterrence-21st-century-0/nuclear-deterrence-destabilized> (note: this digital volume – download the PDF – that contains a set of 10 short essays. Read all)

Deep Dive:

Weiner, S. K. (2023). The Ethics of Choosing Deterrence. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 37(1), 29-38.

Week 5 September 10: Alliance Management

Michaels, J. H. (2023). “No annihilation without representation”: NATO nuclear use decision-making during the Cold War. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 46(5), 1010-1036.

Yost, D. S. (2009). Assurance and US extended deterrence in NATO. *International Affairs*, 85(4), 755-780.

NATO's nuclear deterrence policy and forces
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50068.htm

NATO 2022 Strategic Concept
https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf

Fayet, H., Futter, A., Kühn, U., Kulesa, L., van Hooft, P., & Bruusgaard, K. V. (2025). European Nuclear Deterrence and Donald Trump. In *Survival: February–March 2025* (pp. 123-142). Routledge.

Deep Dive:

Mattelaer, A. (2021). Nuclear Sharing and NATO as a ‘Nuclear Alliance’. *Alliances, Nuclear Weapons and Escalation: Managing Deterrence in the 21st Century*, 123-131.

Tanter, R., & Hayes, P. (2011). Beyond the Nuclear Umbrella: Re-thinking the Theory and Practice of Nuclear Extended Deterrence in East Asia and the Pacific. *Pacific Focus*, 26(1), 5-21.

Knopf, J. W. (2012). Varieties of assurance. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35(3), 375-399.

Section 2: Deterrence Challenges

Week 6: Sept 17 Deterrence and (Mis)perception

Jervis, R. (1982). Deterrence and perception. *International security*, 7(3), 3-30 (Note: read very carefully)

Lebow, R. N., & Stein, J. G. (1989). Rational deterrence theory: I think, therefore I deter. *World politics*, 41(2), 208-224.

Deep Dive:

Jervis, R. (1989). Rational deterrence: Theory and evidence. *World Politics*, 41(2), 183-207.

Week 7 Sept 24: Behavioral Deterrence Theory

Thayer, B. A. (2007). Thinking about nuclear deterrence theory: Why evolutionary psychology undermines its rational actor assumptions. *Comparative Strategy*, 26(4), 311-323.

Berejikian, J. D. (2002). A cognitive theory of deterrence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 39(2), 165-183.

Berejikian, J., & Zwald, Z. (2020). Why language matters: Shaping public risk tolerance during deterrence crises. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(4), 507-540.

Snyder, J. L. (1978). Rationality at the brink: The role of cognitive processes in failures of deterrence. *World Politics*, 30(3), 345-365.

Deep Dive

Sörenson, K. (2023). A Misfit model: irrational deterrence and bounded rationality. *Theory and Decision*, 94(4), 575-591.

Berejikian. "What Godzilla can Teach us about Nuclear Weapons" TEDx
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8R2RAKCjYc>

Week 8 October 1: Artificial Intelligence and Nuclear Stability

Zala, B. (2024). Should AI stay or should AI go? First strike incentives & deterrence stability. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 78(2), 154-163.

Johnson, J. (2021). 'Catalytic nuclear war' in the age of artificial intelligence & autonomy: Emerging military technology and escalation risk between nuclear-armed states. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 1-41.

Akiyama, Nobumasa. "AI nuclear winter or AI that saves humanity? AI and nuclear deterrence." *Robotics, AI, and Humanity: Science, Ethics, and Policy*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021. 161-170.

Cox, J., & Williams, H. (2021). The unavoidable technology: How Artificial Intelligence can strengthen nuclear stability. *The Washington Quarterly*, 44(1), 69-85

Lieber, Keir A. and Daryl G. Press. "The New Era of Counterforce: Technological Change and the Future of Nuclear Deterrence." *International Security* 41, no. 4 (Spring 2017): 9-49.

Deep Dive:

Nadibaidze, A., & Miotto, N. (2023). The Impact of AI on Strategic Stability is What States Make of It: Comparing US and Russian Discourses. *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, 1-21.

Bajema, N. (2022). Will AI Steal Submarines' Stealth?: Better Detection will make the Oceans Transparent—and Perhaps Undermine Nuclear Deterrence. *IEEE Spectrum*, 59(9), 36-41

Wong, et. al (2020) "Deterrence in the Age of Thinking Machines." Rand Corporation
<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1090316.pdf>

Weber, A., & Parthemore, C. (2019). Smarter US modernization, without new nuclear weapons. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 75(1), 25-29.

Bracken, P. (2016). The cyber threat to nuclear stability. *Orbis*, 60(2), 188-203.

Holmes, J. R. (2016). Sea changes: The future of nuclear deterrence. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 72(4), 228-233.

Sultan, A. (2012). Pakistan's emerging nuclear posture: impact of drivers and technology on nuclear doctrine. *Strategic Studies*, 32(1), 147.

Week 9 October 8: Research Proposal Workshop. Students informally present summary of their research proposal ideas for feedback.

Reading Assignment:

All summaries will be posted on shared Google Doc, by October 6. Please review each summary and offer constructive comments and suggestions. Please post your name above each comment to receive credit for participation.

Week 10 October 15: Deterrence Stability and Nuclear Taboo

Davis Gibbons, R., & Lieber, K. (2019). How durable is the nuclear weapons taboo? *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 42(1), 29-54.

Press, D. G., Sagan, S. D., & Valentino, B. A. (2013). Atomic aversion: Experimental evidence on taboos, traditions, and the non-use of nuclear weapons. *American Political Science Review*, 107(1), 188-206.

Ju, C., & Byun, J. (2024). Under no circumstances? What the Chinese really think about the wartime use of nuclear weapons. *International Studies Quarterly*, 68(2), sqae037.

Schwartz, J. A. (2024). When foreign countries push the button. *International Security*, 48(4), 47-86.

Deep Dive:

Tannenwald, N. (1999). The nuclear taboo: The United States and the normative basis of nuclear non-use. *International organization*, 53(3), 433-468.

Tannenwald, N. (2018). How Strong Is the Nuclear Taboo Today. *The Washington Quarterly*, 41(3), 89-109.

Carranza, M. E. (2018). Deterrence or taboo? Explaining the non-use of nuclear weapons during the Indo-Pakistani post-tests nuclear crises. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 39(3), 441-463.

Week 11 October 22: Nuclear Doctrine Review Presentations

- China
- India
- Pakistan
- United States
- Russia
- NATO
- North Korea

Week 12 October 29: Case Study: North Korea

Choi, J. H. (2020). North Korea's advanced nuclear weapons and US Extended deterrence for Japan: An assessment based on nuclear deterrence theory. *Journal of the Asia-Japan Research Institute of Ritsumeikan University*, 2, 109-134.

Lisowski, E. (2022). Potential Use of Low-Yield Nuclear Weapons in a Korean Context. *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, 5(sup1), 85-100.

Park, H. R. (2023). The Necessity to Discuss 'Deterrence Failure' Regarding North Korea's Nuclear Threat. *International Studies*, 60(1), 67-90.

Kwon, E. (2025). North Korea's nuclear gambit: Coercion, deterrence, and the escalation-de-escalation paradox. *Asian Politics & Policy*, 17(1), e70006.

Week 13 November 5: Class-selected Topic.

Readings: TBD

Possible Topics

- Stability Instability Paradox
- Grey-Zone Deterrence
- Russia
- China

Week 14 November 12

- Research Proposal Presentations

Week 15 November 19

- Research Proposal Presentations

Revise proposals in light of feedback. Submit paper copy December 3, by 12:00 pm.

[Note: Last day of classes is Nov. 19. The next week is Thanksgiving break. All classes end on Tuesday, Dec. 2]

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.
- UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).
- If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center.
- Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Please note that faculty and staff are obligated to report any knowledge of sexual assault and/or relationship violence to UGA's Equal Opportunity Office.

