
Paul Roe

Course Description and Aims

The purpose of this course is to provide a particular overview of the field of Security Studies; particular in a number of respects, but perhaps most importantly that it focuses predominantly on the ‘critical turn’ in the discipline.

In its broadest sense, ‘Critical Security Studies’ can be seen as a collection of approaches united by various dissatisfactions with so-called ‘Traditional’ Security Studies. Critical Security Studies seeks to question, though not always do away with, the foundations upon which dominant, state-centrism and military-centrism is built.

The course deals with a number of such approaches: from the ‘conventional’ Constructivists, through the ‘Copenhagen’ and Aberystwyth’ Schools, to Feminist/Gender and other more ‘radical’ Constructivist positions. The goal is not only to explore the main assumptions underpinning each of the approaches, but also, in doing so, to determine the very meaning of ‘critical’. While the course is predominantly theoretical in its orientation, a great deal of emphasis is also placed on empirical application; that is to say, just what is the utility of theories/concepts?

Teaching Method

For this course, there are no lectures: instead, students will participate in seminars where they are expected to form and exchange (and possibly re-form) opinion through critical evaluation of the readings. Seminar discussion will be structured around a short presentation of the topic in which students will (briefly) summarise and then critique the readings. For each seminar there will be one (occasionally two) key text.
Method of Assessment

Each student will be assessed through a combination of seminar contribution and written work. In terms of written work, one research paper (approximately 4,000 words) is required, together with two critiques (approximately 1,500 words) (see guidelines below). In terms of seminar contribution, the number of oral presentations will depend on the number of students taking the course. The research paper will account for 40% of the total grade; each critique 15% (total 30%); with the final 30% being given to the seminar presentations.

Guidelines for ‘Critique’

The purpose of the ‘Critique’ is essentially two-fold: one, to situate the chosen key text within the wider debate(s); and two, to make a critique of the key text informed by the existing literature.

Any text can be situated in a wider debate: its theoretical/conceptual standpoint and the more specific arguments that derive from that standpoint can only be properly understood when set against other works. Together, these texts collectively constitute a written conversation. Some texts may exemplify a particular debate; others might be read as belonging to several, overlapping written conversations. The ‘Critique’ thus demands that students not only identify the general context within which the key text can be situated, but are also explicit as to the specific nature of the debate according to which they will structure their critique.

In terms of structure, one or two introductory paragraphs should be devoted to the above task (context and debate). Following on from this, the main body should then put in place a coherent and sustained, critical evaluation of the key text. Some concluding paragraph is also warranted, although the exact content of that paragraph is dependent on the purpose of the critique. The main points of the critical evaluation should derive explicitly from the wider literature. Given the length of the ‘Critique’; just 1,500 words, it is reasonable to expect that no more than 4-5 other works are utilized, likewise informing no more than 3-4 major critical points.

Please keep in mind that the key text remains the focus of the critique, and will thus serve to structure both the general nature of the debate and the specifics of the critical evaluation.
Week 1/Seminar 1. No Class

Week 1/Seminar 2. No Class

As there are no classes scheduled for this first week, this gives students the opportunity to engage in preparatory reading for the following weeks.

Week 2/Seminar 3. In Defence of Strategic Studies

Key Text:


Further Readings:


Week 2/Seminar 4. Strategic Culture

Key Text:


Further Reading:


**Week 3/Seminar 5. Security Communities**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**

Emmanuel Adler & Michael Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)


Veronica Kitchen, ‘Argument and Identity Change in the Atlantic Security Community’, 


**Key Text:**

**Week 4/Seminar 7. Ontological Security: Biographical Narrative**

**Key Text:**

Further Reading for 3/6 & 4/7:


**Week 4/Seminar 8. Securitization and its Critics**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Week 5/Seminar 9. The Ethics of Securitization

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Week 5/Seminar 10. Security and Ethnocentrism

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Week 6/Seminar 11. Contextualising Securitization

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Week 6/Seminar 12. Desecuritization

**Key Text:**


Key Text:

Further Reading for 6/12 & 7/13:


Key Text:
Further Reading:


Week 8/Seminar 15. The Security of Silence: Marginalisations Nothings, Images

Key Text:


Further Reading:


**Week 8/Seminar 16. Militarised Femininities**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**

Laura Sjoberg & Caron E. Gentry, ‘Reduced to Bad Sex: Narratives of Violent Women from the Bible to the War on Terror’, *International Relations*, vol.22, no.1, 2008.


Week 8/Seminar 16. Female Political Violence

Key Text:


Further Reading:


Week 9/Seminar 17. From Security to ‘Risk’

Key Text:

Further Reading:


Week 9/Seminar 18. Positive Security

Key Text:


Further Reading:


**Week 10/Seminar 19. Security and Emancipation**

**Key Text:**


**Week 10/Seminar 20. The Politics of Emancipation**

**Key Texts:**


**Further Reading for 10/19 & 10/20:**


Booth (ed.) *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2005),
Chapter 9: Richard Wyn Jones, ‘On Emancipation: Necessity, Capacity, and Concrete Utopias’;


**Week 11/Seminar 21. Security, Development, and Biopolitics**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


**Key Text:**


Week 12/Seminar 24. No Class