This course, which is taught at both the PhD and MA levels, is concerned with how the so-called ‘critical turn’ in International Relations has been reflected specifically in thinking about Strategy and Security.

‘Critical Security Studies’ is, in its broadest sense, a collection of approaches all united by a profound dissatisfaction with so-called ‘traditional’ security studies. Critical Security Studies seeks to question, though not always completely do away with, the foundations upon which the dominant state-centrism and military-centrism is built.

This course deals with a number of these approaches: from the ‘conventional’ constructivists, through the ‘Copenhagen’ and ‘Aberystwyth’, or ‘Welsh’, Schools, to more ‘critical’ constructivist positions. In doing so, not only does it seek to illuminate the main theoretical assumptions underpinning each of the various approaches, but also to explore just how they are ‘critical’; that is, in what ways they challenge traditional security studies, and in what ways they compare and contrast with each other. While the course is mainly theoretical in its orientation, much emphasis is also placed on empirical application; how, and to what kind of cases, each of the approaches can be profitably applied.

Teaching Method
For this course, there are no lectures. Instead, students will participate in seminars where they are expected to form their own opinions through ‘critical’ evaluation of the readings. For each seminar, there will be one or two key texts (which are in the course reader). Seminar discussion will be structured around a short presentation of the text(s), in which students will summarise and critically evaluate the readings. Seminar discussion therefore depends on serious preparation: it is crucial that students do all of the reading required and come into the seminar fully prepared to actively take part in the discussion. For the topics discussed, there is not necessarily a right answer. What is important is to focus on the way that people think.
Method of Assessment

Each student will be assessed through a combination of seminar contribution, oral presentation, and written work.

For MA students, the requirement is two literature reviews and one research paper. The literature review is 1,500 words long (plus/minus 10%); the research paper is 4,000 words long (again, plus/minus 10%), and can be, if chosen, an extension to one of the prior literature reviews. For the final grade: 25% is given to each literature review (40%); 50% to the research paper; with the remaining 10% being allotted to seminar attendance and contribution.

For PhD students, the requirement is three in-class, oral presentations and three literature reviews. The literature review is 3,000 words long (plus/minus 10%). For the final grade: 30% is given to each oral presentation and literature review taken as a whole (60%); with, again, the remaining 10% being allotted to seminar attendance and contribution.

For MA Students, the First Literature Review is due at the end of week 5; the second at the end of week 9. All other deadlines for assessed work will be established in the first, introductory seminar.

Guidelines for the Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review 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 literature review 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
text of the critical evaluation should derive explicitly from the wider literature. Given the length
of the literature review; just 1,500 words (for MAs) it is reasonable to expect that no more than 4-
5 other works are utilized, likewise informing no more than just a couple of critical points. For
PhDs, with a bigger limit of 3,000 words, the inclusion of more sources will be appropriate.

Please keep in mind that the key text remains the focus of the literature review, and will thus
serve to structure both the general nature of the debate and the specifics of the critical evaluation.

**Guidelines for Assessment**

The research paper is the most important element as part of the overall assessment. In terms of
grading the term paper, the categories below provide some guidance as to what qualities assessors
are looking for, and what kinds of weakness may incline assessors towards giving a lower mark.

A  Work of *exceptional quality* that authoritatively demonstrates knowledge and
understanding of the topic. Well argued, organised, and structured. Critical
awareness of the theoretical and/or empirical material, and shows originality of
thought.

A-  Work of *high quality* that is well above the average for a postgraduate paper. Not
necessarily faultless in terms of the above, but still shows some originality of
thought.

B+  A *very competent* piece of work displaying substantial knowledge and
understanding. There may well be room for improvement in terms of organisation
and structure, although in general terms the work is solid.

B  Again a piece of *some competence*. More improvement than the above will be
required organisationally and structurally. Work at this level may also display some
oversimplification and irrelevance.

B-  An *adequate* piece of work, but where significant improvements must be made.
Too much oversimplification and irrelevance. Required points are missing. Work
may also contain serious grammatical errors.

C+  *Inadequate*. A work displaying far too many of the above weaknesses.
A totally unacceptable piece of work. Fail.

**Week 1/Seminar 1. Introduction**

**Week 1/Seminar 2. No Class**

**Week 2/Seminar 3. Third Generation Strategic Culture: Global Norms**

**Key Text:**

**Week 2/Seminar 4. Third Generation Strategic Culture: Institutional Culture**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading for 2/3 & 2/4:**


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

*Key Text:*


*Further Reading:*


*Key Text:*


*Further Reading:*


Jane Cramer, ‘Militarized Patriotisms: Why the U.S. Place of Ideas Failed Before the Iraq War’, 


Jack Holland, ‘‘When You Think of the Taliban, Think of the Nazis’: Teaching Americans ‘9/11’ in NBC’s *The West Wing*’, *Millennium*, vol.40, no.1, 2011.

Richard Jackson, *Writing the War on Terrorism* (Manchester: MUP, 2005).


**Week 4/Seminar 7. Ontological Security: Social Dependence and Routinisation**

*Key Text:*


*Key Text:*

Brent Steele, ‘‘Ideals That Were Never Really in Our Possession: Torture, Honor and US Identity’, 

**Further Reading (for 4/7 & 4/8):**


Steele, Organizational Processes and Ontological (in)Security: Torture, the CIA and the United States’, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol.52, no.1, 2017,


**Week 5/Seminar 9. Securitization**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Collins (ed.), *Contemporary Security Studies*, Chapter 9: Ralf Emmers, ‘Securitization’.
Week 5/Seminar 10. No Class

Week 6/Seminar 11. ‘Second Generation’ Securitization

Key Text:

Further Reading:

Week 6/Seminar 12. Contextualising Securitization

Key Text:

Further Reading:


**Week 7/Seminar 13. The Ethics of Securitization**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Week 7/Seminar 14. The ‘Paris School’: Securitization as Practice

Key Text:

Further Reading:

Week 8/Seminar 15. Desecuritisation

Key Text:

Further Reading:


**Week 8/Seminar 16. Risk**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


**Week 9/Seminar 17. Human Security, Development and Biopolitics**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**

**Week 9/Seminar 18. No Class**

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

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**

Week 10/Seminar 20. Marginalisations, Nothings, Images

Key Text:

Further Reading:


Week 11/Seminar 21. Militarised Feminities

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 11/Seminar 22. The Gendering of Political Violence**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**

**Week 12/Seminar 23. ‘Positive-’, ‘Negative-’, and ‘Anti-Security’**

**Key Text:**

**Further Reading:**


**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**
