This course 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. There will be one oral, in-class presentation (20% of the final grade). In addition, two written pieces of work are required; one Literature Review (30%) (see guidelines, below), and one Research Paper (40%) (the requirements for which will be discussed in class). The final 10% of the grade is given to seminar attendance and contribution.

The length of the Literature Review is 2,000 words (+/-10%). While the Research Paper will be 4,000 words (+/-10%).

The Literature Review is due at the end of week 6. The deadline for the Research Paper will be established sometime during the second half of the semester.

The oral presentation and the Literature Review should be based on different key texts. The Research Paper, however, may be written on the same subject matter as the Literature Review.

**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 points of the critical evaluation should derive explicitly from the wider literature. Given the length of the literature review; just 2,500 words, it is reasonable to expect that no more than 4-5 other works are utilized, likewise informing no more than just a couple of related critical points.
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 Final 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.

F 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:**


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


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

**Key Text:**


**Key Text:**


**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:**


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**Week 8/Seminar 15. Desecuritisation**

**Key Text:**


**Further Reading:**


Mark Salter, ‘Securitization and Desecuritization: A Dramaturgical Analysis of the Canadian Air Transport Authority’, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, vol.11, no.4, 2008.


Kristian Atland, ‘Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic’, *Cooperation and Conflict*, vol.43, no.3, 2008.

**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 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 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:**


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**Key Text:**
Further Reading: