

**CONTEMPORARY SECURITY STUDIES**  
**CRIM.5750.031**  
**Fall 2025**

Instructor: Professor Chris Linebarger  
University of Massachusetts Lowell  
School of Criminology and Justice Studies

Format: 15-week Online Course via CANVAS, September 3 thru December 20, 2025

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Chat Sessions (Optional): Thursday, 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

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This course examines the complex nature of key domestic and international security threats and how nations respond to them. While the traditional focus of security studies has been the phenomenon of war, the past two decades have seen tremendous growth and expansion of the field. Some scholars have studied the threat, use and control of military force, while others have studied various forms of political violence such as terrorism, organized crime, and insurgency or armed rebellion. Research in this field also incorporates scholarship on the politics of defense and foreign policymaking, traditional theories of international relations, comparative analysis of national and regional case studies, ethics and morality of security policies, and transnational issues like arms trafficking, piracy, and the proliferation of materials and technology for weapons of mass destruction. Overall, the study of national and international security has evolved into a complex and fascinating interdisciplinary field.

As a graduate-level seminar, the reading assignments in this course include a significant number and diversity of academic journal articles, government reports, and original source materials. Lecture notes are provided for each lesson. Students are expected to review the lecture notes and reading assignments each week, understand the concepts that are presented, and become familiar with all the concepts and terminology introduced in the readings and lectures. Material presented in the lectures generally parallels the assigned reading, but frequently contains additional elements. The discussion boards allow you to demonstrate your understanding of the key concepts and issues provided in the readings and lectures. For more information, please see the “Discussion Board Guidelines” section provided towards the end of this syllabus.

**Required Textbooks**

This course will use the following graduate-level textbooks, in addition to scholarly journal articles and other materials made available via the course website:

Title: *Security Studies: An Introduction* (4<sup>th</sup> **Edition**)  
Author/Editor: Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald  
Publisher: Routledge (2023)  
ISBN: 978-1032-162737

**Note:** This graduate course requires you to complete reading assignments of at least 50 pages each week before completing the discussion question assignments. Please plan accordingly.

## GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Student performance in this course will be assessed by a midterm exam, a security-focused policy paper, and a final exam. In addition, active participation in online discussions is a core component of the course, and a student's level of participation in the weekly discussion forums will impact their final grade.

### **1. Midterm Exam (25% of final grade) - Due by Day 7 of Week 7**

The first major assignment in this course will involve an exam in which students will have **6 hours (360 minutes)** to provide short essay answers to a small number of open-ended questions. Please note: a "short essay" is usually considered to be at least 2-3 complete paragraphs. Instructions for this exam will be made available in the Assignments section of the course website. The exam is not made available until Wednesday morning of Week 7 in order to allow students to complete the weekly reading assignments before attempting to take the exam.

**Please note:** A core purpose of this timed open book, open notes exam is to assess how well students have learned the terms, concepts, and factual material presented in the course each week. With **only 6 hours** to complete the exam, students who are not fulfilling their responsibilities for completing the weekly reading assignments will struggle considerably when trying to write comprehensive and coherent short essay answers. On the other hand, students who are diligently completing the reading assignments each week, and taking notes while doing so, typically do very well on this exam. In order to maximize your use of the available time, be sure to have all your notes and textbook open for your reference before starting the exam. Due no later than 11:59pm on **Sunday, October 26, 2025**.

### **2. Security Policy Brief (25% of final grade) - Due by 11/26 (Wednesday of Thanksgiving Recess)**

The major written assignment for this course is a 4,000-word (minimum) Security Policy Brief, **described in a separate document available in the Start Here module and in the Assignments page of the course website**. Approval for your paper topic should be requested no later than Sunday of **Week 5 (Sunday, October 12)**. **Your paper is due no later than 11:59pm Wednesday, November 26, 2025**

### **3. Final Exam (30% of final grade) – Due by last day of the semester**

The final written assignment in this course will involve an exam in which students will be required to provide several short essay answers and a longer integrative essay that collectively demonstrate what you have learned in this course.

The exam does not need to be completed all in one sitting, but once you begin the exam, you will need to complete it within 24 hours. Please note: the highest grades on this assignment are given to students who provide the most thorough and detailed answers to each question, supported by quality reference source citations, demonstrating a graduate degree-level understanding of these complex security issues. Additional instructions for this exam will be made available in the Assignments section of the course website. Due no later than 11:59pm on **FRIDAY, December 20, 2025**.

### **4. Discussion Question and Peer Response Postings (20% of final grade)**

Each week, you will be asked to provide your response to discussion questions. In addition to your initial response, you must also respond to a minimum of 2 of your classmates' posts. In the online environment, the discussion board is the classroom, and students are considered valued colleagues in the learning process who respond to contributions by other students and provide critical comments.

## CRIM.5750 Contemporary Security Studies

### WEEKLY SCHEDULE, Fall 2025

Week	Dates	Topic
1	9/3-9/7	Introduction to CRIM.5750
2	9/8-9/14	Introduction to Theories of Security Studies
3	9/15-9/21	Essential Concepts and Terms
4	9/22-2/28	Human Security, State Failure and Refugees
5	9/29-10/5	Terrorism and Insurgency
6	10/6-10/12	Transnational Organized Crime
7	10/13-10/19	Arms Trafficking and WMD Proliferation
8	10/20-10/26	Cybersecurity and Information Security + <b>Midterm Exam due NLT Sun 10/26</b>
9	10/27-11/2	Energy, Environmental and Health Security
10	11/3-11/9	National and International Security Perspectives
11	11/10-11/16	U.S. Homeland Security & Critical Infrastructure
12	11/17-11/23	Intelligence
13	11/24-11/30	<b>Thanksgiving Recess</b> Security Policy Brief <b>due NLT 11:59pm Wednesday 11/26</b>
14	12/1-12/7	Economic, Industrial and Private Security
15	12/8-12/14	Science and Technologies of Security
	12/15-12/19	<b>Final Exams – due by Friday, December 19</b>

Chat Sessions (Optional): Thursday mornings on Zoom, 9:30-10:30am EST.

Online chat sessions will be held each week during the term. Participation in these chats is recommended, **but not required**, and is not a factor in the final grade. The first chat session will be particularly important for anyone with administrative questions about the class.

### Summary of Major Assignment Due Dates

<b>Sunday, Oct 5</b>	Submit your proposed Security Policy Brief topic for approval
<b>Sunday, Oct 26</b>	Midterm Exam due before 11:59pm
<b>Wednesday, Nov 26</b>	Security Policy Brief due before 11:59pm
<b>Friday, Dec 19</b>	Final Exam due before 11:59pm
<b>** And of course, discussion posts are due weekly. **</b>	

## WEEKLY LESSON TOPICS

### WEEK 1: Introduction to CRIM.5750

Since the Fall 2025 semester begins on a Wednesday, there are only a few short reading assignments, allowing you some extra time to ease into the course (and get a copy of the textbook if you haven't already). If you have time, perhaps you can also get an early start on the first full week of reading assignments (see the Week 2 module in Canvas).

#### **Required Reading:**

- Week 1 Lecture Notes
- Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald, "An Introduction to Security Studies," in ***Security Studies, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2023*** (course textbook), edited by Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald, p. 1-14.
- CSIS, "10 Conflicts to Watch in 2025". Online at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2025>

*In addition to these short introductory reading assignments, please review this syllabus and all course administrative materials by Sunday, and e-mail your instructor with any questions you may have about the course assignments, grading expectations, etc.*

#### **Discussion Forum Assignment**

Post a brief biography that includes your educational background, work experience, and personal interests or hobbies, and describe at least three of your favorite sources of information on national and/or international news. *Please do this before Sunday night.*

Please also respond to one or more of your classmates' introductions, as this course seeks to develop a mutually respectful environment that supports peer learning. And I guarantee you will have some interesting classmates this semester.

**OPTIONAL:** Introductory Chat Session via Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

## **PART ONE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS**

### **WEEK 2: Introduction to Theories of Security Studies**

The first full week of this course introduces key theoretical perspectives in the field of security studies, with a particular focus on the philosophical and political frameworks through which nation-states view a wide variety of security threats.

#### **Required Reading:**

- Week 2 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 1: Michael A. Jensen, “Realisms,” in ***Security Studies, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2023*** (course textbook), edited by Paul D. Williams and Matt McDonald, p. 17-35
- Chapter 2: Cornelia Navari, “Liberalisms,” in ***Security Studies***, p. 36-51
- Chapter 3: Matt McDonald, “Constructivisms,” in ***Security Studies***, p. 52-66
- Jack Snyder, “One World, Rival Theories” *Foreign Policy* (Nov-Dec, 2004).
- Chapter 7: Joanna Nyman, “Securitization,” in ***Security Studies***, p. 115-130

#### **Discussion Question Assignment, Week 2**

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

2a) In general, do you consider your views on national security challenges and responses to be more oriented toward theories of realism, liberalism or constructivism? Please explain why.

*or*

2b) In general, do you think that people tend to “securitize” things more if they are realists, liberalists, or constructivists? Please explain why.

#### **Discussion Board Tasks**

- By Friday midnight Eastern Standard Time (EST) post an answer to the Discussion Question provided above. Please be sure you have completed this week’s reading assignments before posting to the online discussion forums.
- Respond to at least two of your colleagues’ postings for this week’s Discussion Question by midnight Sunday.

**OPTIONAL:** Week 2 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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### WEEK 3: Essential Concepts and Terms in Security Studies

In this week, we explore various kinds of security-related behavior among nation-states. For centuries, the main actors in the Westphalian system (nation-states) have sought to influence the behavior of others in ways that help ensure their own security. The strategies and tactics of war – the ultimate use of force – have evolved through the centuries, as have the reasons behind a nation-state's decisions about going to war. Key concepts include conventional, inter-state and intra-state war; asymmetric, unconventional, and irregular warfare; coercion, balancing, deterrence, uncertainty, arms control, and mutually assured destruction.

#### Required Readings & Video:

- Week 3 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 9: Ken Booth and Nicholas J. Wheeler, "Uncertainty," in **Security Studies**, p. 151-168
- Graham Allison, "The Cuban Missile Crisis at 50", *Foreign Affairs* 91(4), p. 11-16
- Chapter 10: Beverly Loke, "Great Power Competition," in **Security Studies**, p. 169-185
- Graham Allison (Video), "[Is War Between China and the U.S. Inevitable?](#)" Ted Talk (2018)
- Chapter 13: Lawrence Freedman and Srinath Raghavan, "Coercion," in **Security Studies**, p. 219-234
- American Red Cross, "[Summary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols](#)," April 2011.
- [UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#)

#### Discussion Questions, Week 3

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

- 3a) Explain how the concepts of uncertainty, coercion and great power competition frame the "Thucydides Trap" that Graham Allison describes in his TedTalk.
- or*
- 3b) Describe what—if anything—the international community can do to ensure that future conflicts involving the use of force adhere to the Just War Theory norms of discrimination and proportionality.
- or*
- 3c) Describe a current situation, somewhere in the world, in which increasing uncertainty about a country's intentions and/or capabilities is likely to result in efforts (by the U.S. and/or the international community) to coerce that country's behavior, and could possibly lead to some kind of future war.

#### Discussion Board Tasks

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT). Please be sure you have completed this week's reading assignments before posting to the online discussion forums.
- Respond to *at least* 2 of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

#### Recommended:

- Chapter 12: Paul D. Williams, "War", in **Security Studies**, p. 202-218
- [Video] Sir Lawrence Freedman, "[The Future of War: A History](#)," CSIS (October 18, 2017).

OPTIONAL: Week 3 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## PART TWO: SPECIFIC SECURITY CHALLENGES

### **WEEK 4: Human Security and State Failure**

This lesson examines the increasingly popular topic of human security, and how it relates to many of the topics and concepts discussed thus far in this course. Then we look at contexts in which a nation-state's leaders are unable or unwilling to ensure human security for its people, and consider how these contexts can impact global security and U.S. national security. And finally, we will briefly explore the morality and legality of how to respond to security challenges like genocide and other "crimes against humanity".

#### **Required Reading:**

- Week 4 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 15: Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv, "Human Security," in ***Security Studies***, p. 251-267
- Fund for Peace and *Foreign Policy*, "The Fragile State Index" (Global data and map)
  - Identify the most fragile countries
  - Review the kinds of data and indicators used to compile these annual rankings.
- Chapter 16: Alex J. Bellamy, "The Responsibility to Protect," in ***Security Studies***, p. 268-283
- Chapter 24: Adam Jones, "Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity," in ***Security Studies***, p. 407-421
- "[Overview of the International Criminal Court](#)" and "[How the International Criminal Court Works](#)"

#### **Discussion Questions, Week 4**

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

4a) Based on this week's reading assignments, which "fragile", underdeveloped or "failing" state represents the greatest challenges for human security, and what should the U.S. do about this (if anything)?

*or*

4b) Many people have different opinions about whether the U.S. should embrace the International Criminal Court or reject it (and its mission of prosecuting those responsible for genocide and other crimes against humanity). Make a compelling argument for one or the other, supported by some of the theories (e.g., realism, liberalism) and concepts (e.g., sovereignty, human security, R2P, etc.) that we have covered in this course.

#### **Discussion Board Tasks**

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT). Please be sure you have completed this week's reading assignments before posting to the online discussion forums.
- Respond to *at least 2* of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

#### **Recommended:**

[Video] Gary Lewis, "[Human Security](#)," TEDx Talk (June 11, 2015).

Chapter 17: Danielle Beswick, "Development," in ***Security Studies***, p. 284-299

Chapter 33: Sita Bali, "Migration and Refugees," in ***Security Studies***, p. 552-567

**OPTIONAL:** Week 4 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 5: Terrorism and Insurgency

The readings and discussion questions for this week focus on various dimensions of terrorism, insurgency, rebellion and other forms of political violence. Topics include: definitions of political violence versus criminality; categories of terrorist ideologies; radicalization and indoctrination processes; and the intersections of (and distinguishing features between) terrorism and insurgency.

### Required Readings (most of these are relatively short):

- Week 5 Lecture Notes
- U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *Guide to the Analysis of Insurgency*, 2012. Washington, DC: U.S. Directorate of National Intelligence. Read the Preface, p. 1-4, and “Defining Insurgency” p. 28-29.
- Bruce Hoffman, “[Defining Terrorism](#),” *Inside Terrorism*. Columbia University Press, 2019.
- David C. Rapoport, “[The Four Waves of Rebel Terror and September 11](#),” *Anthropoetics* 8, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2002).
- Brian M. Jenkins, “[The 1970s and the Birth of Contemporary Terrorism](#),” RAND (July 30, 2015).
- Brian M. Jenkins, Bruce Hoffman, and Martha Crenshaw. “[How Much Really Changed About Terrorism on 9/11?](#)” *The Atlantic* (September 22, 2016).
- “Global Terrorism Index” (March 2025), Institute for Economics & Peace. [Please read the “Executive Summary” pages 2-10 and “Trends in Terrorism” pages 33-46]. Online at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-terrorism-index-2025>
- FBI/DHS (June 2023), “Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Data on Domestic Terrorism” [please read p. 2-10]

### Discussion Questions, Week 5

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

5a) Based on your reading assignments for this week about the definitions, history and current threats of terrorism, what are 3 things every U.S. citizen needs to understand about terrorism?

*or*

5b) Based on your reading assignments for this week, explain why countering domestic terrorism is such a complex challenge.

### Discussion Board Tasks

- Post an answer to this week’s discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least* 2 of your colleagues’ postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

### Recommended

- [Video] [Bruce Hoffman on History of Domestic Terrorism in the U.S.](#) (July 2020).
- Alex P. Schmid, “[Defining Terrorism](#),” ICCT Report (March 2023) [please read p. 2-23].

OPTIONAL: Week 5 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 6: Transnational Organized Crime

As clandestine organizations, terrorists and criminals have several things in common, notably their use of violence, expertise in trafficking and weapons, and their need for operational security. However, the motivations, organizational models, and activities of criminal networks also differ, as this week's lesson will examine. Topics include: drug cartels, triads, mafias and other forms of organized crime; trafficking in small arms and light weapons, drugs, and humans; piracy and other threats to maritime security; black markets and financial safe havens; and understanding the nature of potential criminal-terrorist collaboration.

### **Assignment due: SECURITY POLICY BRIEF TOPIC DUE VIA E-MAIL BY SUNDAY NIGHT**

Choose the security studies topic you will cover in your Security Policy Brief and e-mail your instructor for approval via the Canvas course e-mail system.

### **Required Readings (most of these are quite short):**

- Week 6 Lecture Notes
- Phil Williams, "Transnational Organized Crime" (Chapter 31) in **Security Studies**, p. 519-534.
- United Nations Fact Sheets (Organized Crime, Human Trafficking, Migrant Smuggling, and Counterfeit Products – all links provided in folder)
- [\*The Global Illicit Economy: Trajectories of Transnational Organized Crime\*](#). Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (March 2021).
- Duncan Deville, "The Illicit Supply Chain." In M. Miklaucic and J. Brewer, eds. *Convergence: Illicit Network and National Security in the Age of Globalization*. Washington, DC: NDU, 2013, p. 63-72.
- Reuters Investigation (July 2024), "The Ease of Making Fentanyl." Online at: <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/drugs-fentanyl-supplychain/>
- Patrick Radden Keefe, "The Geography of Badness: Mapping the Hubs of the Illicit Global Economy." In *Convergence*, p. 97-107.
- "Spain busts record 9.5 tons of cocaine hidden in a banana shipment from Ecuador," *Associated Press* (August 25, 2023).
- Gavin Voss, "Spanish Mega Lab Raises Questions About Cocaine Production in Europe," [\*InsightCrime\*](#) (April 19, 2023).

### **Discussion Questions, Week 6**

Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:

6a) Of all the organized crime network activities described in this week's reading assignments, which ones should be the highest priority for the U.S. and other countries to combat?

or

6b) How can the U.S. work more effectively with international partners (e.g., Interpol, UNODC, etc.) to combat transnational organized crime? Explain who should do what, and why.

### **Discussion Board Tasks**

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least* 2 of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

**OPTIONAL:** Week 6 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

## WEEK 7: Arms Trafficking and WMD Proliferation

In this week's lecture and readings, we examine how the proliferation of weapons impacts the security of nation-states and citizens worldwide. We begin with a look at small arms and light weapons, and then in the second part we examine the dimensions of WMD proliferation, and the possibility of terrorists acquiring and using them.

### Required Readings:

- Week 7 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 32: Andrew T.H. Tan, "Global Arms Trade," in **Security Studies**, p. 535-551.
- Colin Clarke, "[Small Arms and Light Weapons \(SALW\) Trafficking, Smuggling, and Use for Criminality by Terrorists and Insurgents: A Brief Historical Overview](#)," ICCT (July 15, 2020).
- "[Cashing In on Guns: An Interactive Infographic on Small Arms and Light weapons and Terrorist Financing](#)," ICCT (August 2021).
- Brian Castner, "[Tracing ISIS' Weapons Supply Chain–Back to the U.S.](#)" *Wired* (Dec. 12, 2017).
- Giacomo Persi Paoli, "[The Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons on the Dark Web: A Study](#)," UNODA Occasional Papers No. 32 (October 2018), **p. 1-57**.
- Joby Warrick, "10 years after deadly chemical attack, Syria's survivors seek justice," *The Washington Post* (August 21, 2023).
- Fact Sheet, [Chemical Weapons Convention](#)
- Fact Sheet, [Biological Weapons Convention](#)
- Molly MacCalman, "[A.Q. Khan Nuclear Smuggling Network](#)," *Journal of Strategic Security*, 1(9), (2016) p. 104-118.
- Chapter 22: Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, "The Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Regime," in **Security Studies**, p. 372-388.

### Discussion Questions, Week 7

Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:

7a) How could the U.S. be more effective (with or without international partners) to combat the global trafficking in small arms and light weapons (SALW) described in this week's reading assignments?

or

7b) How could the U.S. be more effective (with or without international partners) to combat the global trafficking of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials and/or weapon described in this week's reading assignments?

### Discussion Board Tasks

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least 2* of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

OPTIONAL: Week 7 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 8: Cybersecurity

This week, our review of security threats takes us into a world that has become vital to the public and private sector. As we expand our reliance on information and services provided via the Internet, concerns are growing about the security of cyberspace. Topics covered in this lesson will include online vulnerabilities, state-based hacking and intrusion threats, organized criminal activities, disinformation and other forms of digital influence warfare, technological tools used by hackers, and strategies for responding.

### **Required Assignment:**

**Midterm Exam Due NLT Midnight Sunday, Oct. 26** (be sure to complete reading assignments first)

### **Required Readings:**

- Week 8 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 39: Rhea Siers, “Cybersecurity,” in **Security Studies**, p. 651-665.
- Derek S. Reveron and John E. Savage, “Cybersecurity Convergence: Digital Human and National Security,” *Orbis* (August 2020), p. 555-570. doi:10.1016/j.orbis.2020.08.005
- SANS Institute, “Hacking: The Basics” (rev. June 2006), **p. 2-12.** s
- CISA Overview of Cyber Threats Posed by China, Russia, North Korea and Iran. Online at: <https://www.cisa.gov/topics/cyber-threats-and-advisories/nation-state-cyber-actors>
- Robert McMillan and Dustin Volz, “How North Korea’s Hacker Army Stole \$3 Billion in Crypto, Funding Nuclear Program,” *The Wall Street Journal* (June 11, 2023).
- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, “[America’s Data Held Hostage: Case Studies in Ransomware Attacks on American Companies](#),” (March 24, 2022), **p. 1-29**
- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, “Federal Cybersecurity: America’s Data Still at Risk.” Staff Report, (August 2021). **Executive Summary, p. ii–vi**
- *U.S. National Cybersecurity Strategy* (March 1, 2023).

### **Discussion Questions, Week 8**

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

8a) What can the U.S. government and/or the private sector do to deter adversary countries like China, Russia, North Korea and Iran from engaging in the kinds of cyber activities described in this week’s reading assignments?

*or*

8b) What are the most important takeaways from the *2023 National Cybersecurity Strategy* that every U.S. citizen needs to understand, in order to reduce our nation’s vulnerabilities to the kinds of cyber activities described in this week’s reading assignments?

### **Discussion Board Tasks**

- Post an answer to this week’s discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least 2* of your colleagues’ postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

**OPTIONAL:** Week 8 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 9: Energy, Environmental and Health Security

This lesson examines the national security aspects of ensuring access to energy resources (like oil or natural gas) and environmental resources necessary for sustaining human life (like drinking water, arable land for agriculture, and food supplies). Some scholars predict that “resource wars” are inevitable due to scarcity of finite resources amid expanding populations in Africa and Asia. Finally, this lesson will also address the security implications of infectious diseases and the threat of bioterrorism, particularly to a nation’s agriculture and food supply.

### Required Reading

- Week 9 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 34: Michael T. Klare, “Energy Security,” in **Security Studies**, p. 568-582.
- Resource: “Share of Electricity Production by Source,” *Our World in Data*
- Chapter 36: Matt McDonald and Simon Dalby, “Environmental Change,” in **Security Studies**, p. 599-614.
- Caleb Larson, “[An Invisible Enemy: Navy Sees Climate Change as National Security Threat](#),” *The National Interest*, May 25, 2022.
- Caitlin Werrell and Francesco Femia, “[Climate Change as a National Security Threat and What to Do About it](#),” *War on the Rocks*, Dec. 3, 2018.
- James Ramsay and Terrence O’Sullivan. “[There’s a Pattern Here: The Case to Integrate Environmental Security into Homeland Security Strategy](#),” *Homeland Security Affairs* 9(6) (2013).
- Chapter 37: Jessica Kirk, “Health,” in **Security Studies**, p. 615-630.
- The White House. *American Pandemic Preparedness: Transforming Our Capabilities* (September 2, 2021).
- Dean Olson, “[Agroterrorism: Threats to America’s Economy and Food Supply](#),” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (February 1, 2012), U.S. Department of Justice.
- *U.S. Energy Sector Vulnerabilities to Climate Change and Extreme Weather*. U.S. Department of Energy, July 2013 (read p. 1-35 only)

### Discussion Questions, Week 9

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

9a) Make a realist argument in favor of hoarding energy or water resources as a way of ensuring a nation’s security. Then make a liberalist argument in favor of sharing resources with other nations as a way of ensuring a nation’s security. Now, which do you believe more strongly, and why?

*or*

9b) Describe how elected leaders of the U.S. government can make a national security-related argument for investing in alternative fuel sources, preventing water pollution, or a nationwide public health system.

### Discussion Board Tasks

- Post an answer to this week’s discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least* 2 of your colleagues’ postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

OPTIONAL: Week 9 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## **PART THREE: RESPONDING TO SECURITY CHALLENGES**

### **WEEK 10: National and International Security**

This week, we are moving into Part 3 of the course. Up to now, we have focused mainly on concepts and theories (Part 1) and on various kinds of security threats (Part 2). For the remainder of this course, we'll examine various dimensions of how the U.S. is responding to these threats, beginning with this week's review of national security strategies and our efforts to tackle complex security challenges in partnerships with the international community. This lesson will also describe different U.S. agencies involved in the security strategy and foreign policy-making process; an interagency policy model of integrating all facets of national power: diplomacy, information, military, economic, finance, intelligence and legal/law enforcement (DIMEFIL); challenges to organizational collaboration; and international cooperative efforts like alliances, collective security organizations, and sanctions regimes.

#### **Required Reading:**

- Week 10 Lecture Notes
- Van Jackson, "[Who Does What in National Security Policy](#)," *War on the Rocks* (February 13, 2017).
- The White House, [U.S. National Security](#) (October 2022).
- Chapter 18: Sara Bjerg Moller, "Alliances," in ***Security Studies***, p. 303-319.
- Christine Wormuth, "The Role of Allies and Partners in U.S. Military Strategy and Operations," Congressional Testimony (Sept. 23, 2020).
- Chapter 19: Louise Fawcett, "Regional Organizations," in ***Security Studies***, p. 320-336.
- Chapter 20: Thomas Weiss & Danielle Zach, "The United Nations," in ***Security Studies***, p. 337-355
- Chapter 21: Michael Pugh, "Peace Operations," in ***Security Studies***, p. 356-371.

#### **Discussion Questions, Week 10**

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

10a) In what ways does the *U.S. National Security Strategy* (October 2022) reflect the concepts of realism, liberalism, uncertainty, coercion, human security and others we examined in Part One of this course?

*or*

10b) How should the U.S. work more effectively with alliances and collective security organizations in responding to contemporary "problem states" like North Korea, Russia, Venezuela, Syria, Iran, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, etc.?

#### **Discussion Board Tasks**

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least 2* of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

**OPTIONAL:** Week 10 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 11: Homeland Security and Critical Infrastructure Protection

This lesson will review several topics, including how we distinguish national security from homeland security; strategies and policies of transportation, border and port security, and critical infrastructure protection; key agencies involved in homeland security; mechanisms for multi-level interagency collaboration, including fusion centers and Joint Terrorism Task Forces across the country; the role of the private sector in working with government agencies on homeland security initiatives; and the relationship between homeland security and local law enforcement.

### Required Readings:

- Week 11 Lecture Notes
- Department of Homeland Security, [Homeland Threat Assessment 2025](#).
- Hillel R. Smith, "U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Powers and Limitations: A Brief Primer," CRS Legal Sidebar, Congressional Research Service (December 9, 2020).
- Andy Greenberg, "[A hacker tried to poison a Florida city's water supply, officials say](#)," *Wired* (February 8, 2021).
- Zeba Siddiqui and Christopher Bing, "Chinese Hackers Spying on US Critical Infrastructure," *Reuters* (May 25, 2023).
- Colin Clarke, et al., "The Targeting of Infrastructure by America's Violent Far-Right," *CTC Sentinel* (May 2023)
- Brian Michael Jenkins, "[Elements of a Pragmatic Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Violence](#)," *CTC Sentinel*/ Volume 15, Issue 10 (October 2022).
- NCTC/FBI/DHS [Guide on Homegrown Violent Extremist Mobilization Indicators](#), 2021 Edition
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security, *National Network of Fusion Centers, Final Report* (October 2018). Read "Executive Summary", "Introduction", "Key Findings and Recommendations" (p. ii-5).
- National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), "[Insider Threat Mitigation for U.S. Critical Infrastructure Entities: Guidelines from an Intelligence Perspective](#)," (March 23, 2021).

### Discussion Questions, Week 11

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

11a) Of all the homeland security challenges you have read about this week, which ones do you feel are the biggest and most urgent challenge for us to address, and why?

*or*

11b) Find a news article about a recent physical attack or cyber attack against a critical infrastructure target in the U.S. Briefly describe the incident and then explain the kinds of lessons we need to learn from it for improving homeland security.

### Discussion Board Tasks

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least* 2 of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

OPTIONAL: Week 11 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 12: Intelligence

The complex, multilevel U.S. intelligence community plays a central role in how our nation responds to the security threats discussed in Part One of this course. This lesson will address just a small handful of

the myriad topics and dimensions one can study in this area, such as: local, state and federal intelligence organizations, from DNI, CIA, NCTC etc. to Joint Terrorism Task Forces, Fusion Center, and other examples of inter-agency intelligence sharing; national security intelligence and the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government; and various types including human intelligence, signals intelligence, and financial intelligence.

### **Required Readings:**

- Week 12 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 29: Richard J. Aldrich, "Intelligence," in ***Security Studies***, p. 485-501.
- The Soufan Center, "Five Eyes Infographic" (July 2022).
- Dylan Matthews, "The Obscure Federal Intelligence Bureau That Got Vietnam, Iraq, and Ukraine Right," *VOX* (May 28, 2024).
- William J. Burns, "Spycraft and Statecraft: Transforming the CIA for an Age of Competition," *Foreign Affairs* 103, no. 2 (March/April 2024).
- Brian Katz, "[Intelligence and You: A Guide for Policymakers](#)," *War on the Rocks* (Nov. 14, 2018).
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *The U.S. National Intelligence Strategy, 2023*
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "[Principles of Professional Ethics for the Intelligence Community](#)."
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence (March 2025) "[Annual Threat Assessment of the US Intelligence Community](#)"
- United States National Intelligence Council. [Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World](#). (2020).  
**Read the [Executive Summary](#) and skim the rest if interested.**

### **Discussion Questions, Week 12**

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

12a) Intelligence agencies of many different countries may compete against each other one day, and then collaborate the next. Explain how the theories of international security we covered in Week 1 (realism, liberalism, constructivism and securitization) help us understand these dynamic relationships.

*or*

12b) Briefly describe the most important takeaways from the [2025 DNI Annual Threat Assessment and the 2040 Global Trends report by the National Intelligence Council](#) that all Americans should know.

### **Discussion Board Tasks**

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least 2* of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

### **Recommended:**

(Podcast) John Brennan and ADM (ret.) William McRaven, "[Reflections on a Lifetime in Intelligence](#)," *War on the Rocks* (November 27, 2020).

**OPTIONAL:** Week 12 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 13: Thanksgiving Recess

**REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT: Security Policy Brief Due NLT Midnight on Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2025**

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## WEEK 14: Economic, Industrial and Private Dimensions of Security

In our effort to address the most important topics in contemporary security within a 15-week course, it is sometimes necessary to combine a few somewhat different topics into one lesson. Such is the case this week. We begin with a look at how economics and national security intersect, then at how corporate industries provide security for themselves (e.g., efforts to prevent industrial espionage, hiring private security guards, establishing security guidelines, etc.) and how governments try to help the private sector respond to security challenges. Then we turn to look at how the private sector is increasingly helping the government achieve its national security objectives through the use of private military and security companies, whose employees are often deployed to conflict areas (like Afghanistan and Iraq).

### Required Readings (Note: several of these are only a few pages):

- Week 14 Lecture Notes
- National Counterintelligence and Security Center (NCSC), [“Supply Chain Risk Management: Reducing Threats to Key U.S. Supply Chains.”](#)
- Josh Fruhlinger, [“What is Corporate Espionage?”](#) CSO (July 2, 2018).
- Pete Williams, [“FBI Director Wray says scale of Chinese spying in the U.S. ‘Blew me away’.”](#) *NBCNews.com* (February 2, 2022).
- U.S. Department of Justice, [“Chinese Government Intelligence Officer Sentenced to 20 Years in Prison for Espionage Crimes,”](#) (November 16, 2022).
- Yudhijit Bhattacharjee, “The Daring Ruse That Exposed China’s Campaign to Steal American Secrets,” *NY Times* (March 7, 2023).
- Reuters, “U.S. Companies Spending Record Amounts to Protect Executives” (Aug. 5, 2025)
- FBI primers on “The Insider Threat”, “Visitor Risks”, and “Intellectual Property Protection”
- NCSC, “Protecting Your Organization’s Secrets” (2-page PDF brochure)
- Chapter 23: Deborah Avant, “Private Security Companies,” in *Security Studies*, p. 389-404
- Sean McFate, *Mercenaries and War: Understanding Private Armies Today* (National Defense University Press, 2019), pages 2-43.
- Raphael Parens, et al. [The Wagner Group’s Expanding Global Footprint](#), FPRI Report (April 2023).

### Discussion Questions, Week 14

*Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:*

14a) First, briefly describe a news story published within the last 6 months that exemplifies the kinds of security vulnerabilities (like workplace shootings or corporate espionage) described in this week’s reading assignments. Then tell us what you think should be done to address this threat more effectively. Who should do what?

*or*

14b) Make a compelling argument for why private military contractors like the Wagner group should—or should not—be banned by the international community and/or held liable for their actions via the International Criminal Court.



#### Discussion Board Tasks

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least 2* of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

OPTIONAL: Week 14 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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## WEEK 15: Science and Technologies of Security

In this final lesson of the course, we will explore a small number of scientific and technological issues that intersect with national and global security concerns, including autonomous lethal drones, artificial intelligence, electronic surveillance, quantum computing and electromagnetic disruption.

### Required Readings:

- Week 15 Lecture Notes
- Chapter 38: Paul D. Williams, "Emerging Technologies," in **Security Studies**, p. 631-650
- TX Hammes, "Key Technologies and the Revolution of Small, Smart and Cheap in the Future of Warfare," in Thomas F. Lynch III, ed. **Strategic Assessment 2020: Into a New Era of Great Power Competition**, (National Defense University Press, 2020), p. 121-138
- Zachary Kallenborn, Gary Ackerman, and Philipp C. Bleek. "Swarming Terror," *Small Wars Journal* (June 2022), Online at: <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/swarming-terror>
- Video on Autonomous Weapons: "[AI-Enabled Killer Micro-Drones](#)" (7 minutes)
- Miles Brundage, et al. *The Malicious Use of Artificial Intelligence*. University of Oxford (February 2018). **Please read pages 16-29** ["Security-Relevant Properties of AI", "General Implications for the Threat Landscape", and "Scenarios"], skim the rest if interested
- Sam Jackson and J.M. Berger, "The Dangers of Generative AI and Extremism," CTEC/MIIS Monterey (December 2023). Online at: <https://www.middlebury.edu/institute/academics/centers-initiatives/ctec/ctec-publications/dangers-generative-ai-and-extremism>
- Mark Mazzetti and Ronen Bergman, "A Front Company and a Fake Identity: How the U.S. Came to Use Spyware It Was Trying to Kill," *NY Times* (April 2, 2023). Online at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/02/us/politics/nso-contract-us-spy.html>
- Denning, Dorothy. "Is Quantum Computing a Cybersecurity Threat?" *American Scientist*, (January 30, 2019). Online at: <https://www.americanscientist.org/article/is-quantum-computing-a-cybersecurity-threat>.
- Shore, Patrick. "How the NSA Is Moving toward a Quantum-Resilient Future." *The National Interest* (July 21, 2022). Online at: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/techland-when-great-power-competition-meets-digital-world/how-nsa-moving-toward-quantum>.
- Chapter 40: Cassandra Steer, "Outer Space," in **Security Studies**, p. 666-684
- Dana A. Goward, "Racing the Sun to Protect America," *Defense One* (May 23, 2021). Online at: <https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2021/05/racing-sun-protect-america/174162/>

### Discussion Question, Week 15

Choose one of the following questions and respond by Friday night:

15a) Describe at least 3 kinds of **recent** scientific breakthroughs or technological inventions that have had tremendous positive or negative implications for homeland, national and/or global security.

or

15b) Describe at least 3 kinds of scientific breakthroughs or technological inventions that **do not yet exist**, but that could someday have tremendous positive or negative implications for homeland, national and/or global security.

### Discussion Board Tasks

- Post an answer to this week's discussion question by Friday midnight (EDT).
- Respond to *at least 2* of your colleagues' postings for the discussion question by midnight Sunday.

OPTIONAL: Week 15 Chat Session on Zoom (Thursday morning 9:30-10:30am)

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**Final Exam Due NLT midnight on Friday, December 19, 2025**

## Grading Policies

### Graded Assignment Distribution

20% Discussion Forum Participation	25% Midterm Exam
25% Security Policy Brief	30% Final Exam

**Late Assignments:** There are specific “due date and time” requirements for assignments, including discussion forum postings. Each assignment should be submitted on or before the day/time that it is due. Unless the instructor has given approval for delayed submission, the window for postings should “close” at the end of each week as the class moves on to the next week. **Any late assignment will either not be accepted or will have its grade reduced reflecting the late submission – the minimum penalty is a ½ grade reduction for each day the assignment is submitted late.**

Final grades will be awarded according to the general policies of the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Here is the link to the graduate grading policy: <https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Grading-Policies.aspx>

All grades are weighted on a 4.0 system using the following allocation:

Grade	GPA	Point Structure	Comment
A+	4.0	97-100%	Work of the highest professional standard demonstrating independent and exemplary performance.
A	4.0	93-96.9%	Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance.
A-	3.7	90-92.9%	Very good work, carefully executed, but requiring some areas of improvement.
B+	3.3	87-89.9%	Good work, indicating careful thought and attention to the task, yet requiring several areas of improvement.
B	3.0	83-86.9%	Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not in evidence.
<b><i>Below Graduate Standard</i></b>			
B-	2.7	80-82.9%	Effort is evident, but work indicates lack of understanding of the demands of the task.
C+	2.3	77-79.9%	Poor quality work with little attention to detail and the demands of the task.
C	2.0	73-76.9%	Work of very poor quality, indicating no understanding of the depth of analysis required.
F	0.0	Below 73%	Serious neglect or evidence of cheating.

## Interaction Guidelines and Expectations

### Interaction

**Email:** You may email me at any time, and normally I will respond within 24-48 hours. **Please note that Canvas works with its own internal mail system, which means all messages are sent, stored and read within your course, not through your own external mail.** To access mail, you have to log on and go to your course, and click on the mail icon on the menu on the left side of your screen. It is recommended that you check your email at least once a day, so that you don't miss important course information.

**Of course, “life happens”** and occasionally a student may be without access to the Internet or the online course. If at any time a student must be away from the classroom or e-mail for more than a few consecutive days, the student must notify the instructor prior to their absence. In the event of an emergency, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

### Participation

*Discussion Boards:* All students are required to “visibly participate” in the online discussion board. This means you actively and positively contribute to the learning process by substantively contributing to the online discussions, writing your responses to the discussion questions and commenting on your classmates' responses. More than quantity, I am interested in the quality of your comments, as well as the degree to which your comments advance the class' understanding of the topic under discussion. Discussion is an important part of the learning process. In the online environment the discussion board is the classroom. You are expected to respond to a discussion question posted each week with a well thought-out response. If you use information other than your own experience you are required to cite your sources. Once you have responded to a discussion question, you are required to respond to a minimum of two of your peer's discussion posts. **Do not use my notes/weeks outline as a reference.** Posts such as “I agree” or “good post” will not count. I am looking for thoughtful, intelligent discussion. Please see the “Discussion Board Guidelines” section of the Assignments handout for more information about how discussion posts are graded.

*Chat Sessions:* Online chats will be held Thursday mornings, 9:30-10:30am each week during the term. Participation in these chats is recommended, **but not required**, and is not a factor in the final grade. The first chat session will be particularly important for anyone with administrative questions about the class.

Chat room guidelines:

- Please keep subject matter related to course material.
- When you are “talking” to someone in particular, please begin your statement with that person's name, followed by a colon. For example, if you wanted to ask John Smith a question, your statement would look something like: **“John:** What do you think about...?”

- Of course, no profanity. If profanity or any other type of harassment takes place, you will automatically be prohibited from entering any course related chat rooms in the future.

## Discussion Board Guidelines

You will be provided a separate grade on your Discussion Board activity each week, and the cumulative tally of these will be used to generate your overall discussion postings grade for the course (**20% of your final grade**). Unless the instructor has given approval for delayed submission, the window for postings will “close” at Sunday midnight as the class moves on to the next week. Students are encouraged to limit all postings to no more than 600 words in length.

Online class discussions, including comments, should be timely and explicitly draw on the theories and concepts from the readings and lectures. Students must apply and cite this knowledge directly in the initial response to discussion questions and in subsequent responses to other students’ postings. Each student’s discussion and response postings should be treated as mini-papers that are carefully researched and prepared. Students also may bring in related literature, examples, or experiences directly pertaining to the matter at hand. The posting grade will reflect your ability to understand and communicate ideas and concepts cogently and concisely, not characteristics such as the number of emails that you post.

### Here are posting tips as you participate in online class discussions:

First, organize your thoughts before hitting the “send” button. This is graduate school. The fact that it is online only magnifies any fuzzy, stream-of consciousness writing that comes across as a first draft with little or no thought to the actual organization of the points to be made and the support for those points. Clear, coherent, thoughtful analysis requires a roadmap. Postings are essentially mini-papers that should reflect substantive analysis based on authority. As one tool, consider what lawyers do. Lawyers apply a “FRAC” analysis: identify the facts, state the applicable rule of law, apply the facts to the rule, and reach a conclusion. For example, declaring that the Department of Homeland Security has done something wrongful requires a principled approach: What is the precise activity? What specifically is the “law” that is being broken? What does it require and does the alleged wrongful act breach the law’s terms? Do not make a reader root through a disorganized product to find the insight and analysis. Read and edit your posting before you hit “send.” Ask yourself, is this the best you can do?

Second, check your grammar. Sentence fragments and grammatical errors detract from any written product. And closely related are spelling errors. Such errors lead the reader to conclude that the writer is a sloppy one or does not truly understand the difference between words that sound the same. In some cases, poor writing habits raise doubt about the quality of the analysis and conclusions.

Third, do not view the discussion forum as an informal “chat room.” Postings should not exhibit the traits of informal text messaging (complete with text-message abbreviations or graphics such as “smiley faces”) - this is not appropriate for an academic discussion. Remember that every post is to be professional and substantive; each is, in effect, a thoughtful mini-paper.

Fourth, support personal opinions with authorities. Postings that reflect personal opinions devoid of any citation to authority are inappropriate. Personal musings are not analysis. When you write, “I think,” “I like,” and other phrases beginning with “I,” ask yourself: What is the point being made, is there

authority for this, have I cited it, am I merely repeating some ideological bent, or do I even need to use “I” in my writing?

Fifth, practice professionalism. To repeat, this is a graduate course filled with professional people. Professional courtesy rules. Students should not engage in what might be perceived as personal challenges or disparaging remarks to other students. Inflamed, personal rhetoric simply is not acceptable.

Lastly, avoid raising questions without a suggested answer. Postings that merely ask questions of the author, without more, are inappropriate. While easy enough to do, such postings do not advance the discussion, unless the questioner suggests an answer or an avenue of approach to the issue.

### **How Discussion Posts are graded**

	<b>Good</b>	<b>Sub-Par</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Language</b>	Clear, concise and proper use of language including spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Understandable, but may have minor errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.	Difficult to understand because of multiple errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
<b>Ideas</b>	Expressed ideas are clearly stated and supported by evidence	Expressed ideas are not always supported by evidence.	Expressed ideas have little or no evidence for support.
<b>Relevance</b>	Comments are relevant and important to the discussion question.	Comments are inconsistent. Parts may be relevant but other parts may seem tangential.	Comments have little or no relevance to the topic under discussion.
<b>Attachments</b>	Attachments are appropriate and useful to the focus of the discussion.	Attachments are inconsistently appropriate and useful to the focus of the discussion.	Attachments are inappropriate and not useful to the focus of the discussion.

A+ = Superior, detailed, thoughtful post, excellent responses to peers

A = good post, good responses to peers

A- = good post, poor responses to peers

B+ = sub-par post, good responses to peers

B = sub-par post, poor or no responses to peers

B- = poor post, good responses to peers

C+ = poor post, poor or no responses to peers

F = No post, no response to peers

## Grading Details

The following standards will be used for specific assignments and for discussion question posting grades based on a 4-point scale:

**A (4.0) Outstanding Performance:** Mastery of the assignment communicated very effectively. There is little room for improvement with respect to the level, scope and depth of material for which the student was expected to be knowledgeable. The presentation's content reflects excellence in research, analysis, and communication in accordance with the highest levels of graduate-level scholarship. Postings demonstrate a solid grasp of the specific topic or comment under discussion. Written responses are free of grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. The style of writing contributes to open, honest communication. The student participates in the class in accordance with all the best practices for learning. All postings are respectful of others' ideas, opinions, and feelings and assist in clarification of other participants' perspectives. Reflective statements are included that include a theoretical rationale underlying the use of specific strategies or materials.

**B (3.0) Satisfactory Performance:** Manifests a solid understanding of the assignment that is communicated well. All major points or tasks are correctly performed and fundamental comprehension of the material is demonstrated. No major errors or omissions. The level of comprehension in terms of the quality of the research and analysis displayed is clearly acceptable. Postings generally demonstrate comprehension of the specific topic or comment under discussion. Written responses are usually free of grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. The style of writing generally contributes to open, honest communication. The student participates in the class in accordance with best practices for learning. Postings generally are respectful of others' ideas, opinions, and feelings. Reflective statements contain some of the theoretical rationale underlying the use of specific strategies or materials.

**C (2.0) Marginal Performance:** Somewhat deficient. Although elements of the assignment are correctly presented, some significant elements are missing, poorly interpreted, or involve errors in fact or interpretation. The presentation may be weak or devote attention to matters that are marginal or unrelated to the assignment's subject. There is a discernable rough balance of correct and incorrect (or missing) material. The assignment reflects a limited amount of depth in recognizing significant literature and research on the subject. Postings often lack a solid grasp of the specific topic or comment under discussion. Written responses often contain obvious grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing does not contribute to open, honest communication. The postings often do not comply with established best practices for learning. Postings often do not adhere to the ground rules of respect, confidentiality, and professionalism. Few reflective statements include the theoretical rationale underlying the use of specific strategies or materials included.

**D (1.0) Unsatisfactory Performance:** Serious deficiencies. Major errors dominate the assignment or major points are missing. The assignment reveals a serious lack of understanding of the material and the content and writing is poor. Postings lack a solid grasp of the specific topic or comment under discussion. Written responses with rare exceptions contain obvious grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing does not contribute to open, honest communication. The postings generally do not comply with established best practices for learning. Postings often do not adhere to the ground rules of respect, confidentiality, and professionalism. There is little, if any, reflective statements,

including the theoretical rationale underlying the use of specific strategies or materials included. Postings are sometimes late or not made at all.

**F (0.0) Failing Performance:** Virtually all of the response is incorrect or it is simply missing either from the lack of effort or lack of comprehension of the subject. Postings lack a solid grasp of the specific topic or comment under discussion. Written responses contain obvious grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors. The style of writing does not contribute to open, honest communication. The postings do not comply with established best practices for learning. Postings do not adhere to the ground rules of respect, confidentiality, and professionalism. No reflective statements are included to present the theoretical rationale underlying the use of specific strategies or materials included. Postings are late or not made at all.

## **Expectations**

Graduate study means learning to learn from every possible source—from readings, peers, life experiences, the instructor, and research projects. The intent in any graduate course is to develop a learning community in which individuals' ideas are freely expressed and the class works together to support and challenge each others' work and ideas. The success of the learning experience in this class—and ultimately each student's grade—is critically dependent on the excellence of each student's preparation, written assignment submissions, and participation in on line discussions where each student presents ideas and considers what others have to say as part of a reasoned, thoughtful discourse.

Class discussions of issues relating to politics, security strategies, and criminology, especially as they relate to terrorism, can lead to strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a virtual college classroom, all discussion must be respectful and scholarly. Each student and his/her contributions should be treated with respect—not only taking them seriously but also challenging ideas. No student should feel left out, minimized, or otherwise discriminated against. The instructor will quickly and directly counter any discussions or comments that do not display professionalism and respect for the contributions of others. Further, anyone posting material of any kind to the discussion forums which is patently offensive, disrespectful, intended to hurt, etc. will have their overall Discussion Boards grade for this course reduced.

### **Scholarly Comments:**

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- are related to class and/or the course material
- focus on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs, and
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

### **Unacceptable Comments:**

- are personal in nature. This includes attacks on a person's ideas or political beliefs.
- use the discussion forums to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed in a scholarly way (see above).



## **Generative AI Policy**

At UMass Lowell, we prioritize academic integrity and the authentic demonstration of students' knowledge and skills. However, I also recognize it has become increasingly impossible to prevent students from using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including generative technologies and similar platforms, for completing their coursework, assignments, quizzes, exams and other forms of learning assessment in this online course. Instead of strictly prohibiting its use (and then giving students a failing grade when they violate this policy), I encourage students to use these tools appropriately, and to honestly acknowledge when they have used these tools. Examples of such acknowledgement can include a footnote in your research paper or your discussion post, or a more detailed account of what you used the tools for, and how you incorporated the information provided by artificial intelligence into your coursework. That said, please keep in mind that the goal of a graduate degree program is the development of critical thinking, problem-solving and academic writing skills without reliance on AI-generated content.

Finally, **please be sure you have reviewed the UML academic integrity policy**. Here is the link: <https://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Graduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx>

### **Other Useful University Resources:**

UML Online Calendar: <https://gps.uml.edu/calendar/>