

Course Information

Course Number: INTA 689
Course Title: Strategy, Risk, and Foresight in International Relations
Time: Wednesdays from 6:30 – 9:10pm ET
Location: Classroom 2
Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Professor Yuval Weber
Co-Instructor: Professor Matthew Kroenig (Atlantic Council, Georgetown University)
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Office Hours: Available in-person or video by appointment

Course Description

This course on strategy and foresight is a joint effort by the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security and Texas A&M's Bush School of Government and Foreign Service. In the wake of General Scowcroft's passing in 2020, the Scowcroft Center founded the Scowcroft Strategy School to honor his legacy as the only person to serve as national security advisor to two US presidents. Upon the founding of the Scowcroft Center, General Scowcroft directed that it distinguish itself through a dedicated focus on strategy and foresight.

The Scowcroft strategy course at the Bush School educates participants on strategy and foresight and its essential role for conducting effective foreign and defense policy. Through a combination of expert lectures, seminar discussions, readings, and participant exercises, the Scowcroft strategy course provides students the intellectual knowledge and practical skills they will need to employ strategy and foresight in their profession, whether in business, government, nonprofit, academia, etc.

The first objective of this course is to educate students about the methodology of strategy development and foresight analysis. Strategy and foresight complement one another. Wayne Gretzky once said that you have to skate to where the puck is going, not where it is currently. Similarly, strategists must understand the trends, risks, and opportunities shaping the world. By seeking to understand the forces at play in the global order and developing scenarios for what may lie ahead, strategists will be in a better position to craft a strategy to shape the world to preferred ends. We will teach you the methodology of strategy, including setting clear goals and designing major elements to achieve those goals.

The second objective of this course is for students to understand how strategy and foresight can be applied to pressing national security issues. The strategic environment has shifted over the last three decades, with the Soviet collapse giving way to a period of US primacy. In recent years, that primacy has been questioned, especially with the rise of great-power rivals. We will consider how strategy and foresight methodologies can be applied to this new era of great-power competition, as well as other challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

After taking this course, participants will better understand how to develop strategies and conduct foresight analysis. They will consider these methodologies in light of current national security issues. By the end of the course, students should feel comfortable applying the methodologies to the current global security environment.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the methodology of strategy and foresight.
- Understand how strategy and foresight can be applied to pressing national security issues.
- Apply strategy and foresight in the current global security environment.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

Bartholomew Sparrow, *The Strategist: Brent Scowcroft and the Call of National Security* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2015).

Other articles and chapters assigned will be accessed electronically through the course website. A number of items will be downloaded from the Internet using links indicated in the outline by topic.

Coursework and Grading

Grades are based on in-class participation (10%), a scenario-planning writing exercise (30%), a strategy paper (40%), and a final strategy briefing (20%).

- **In-Class Participation (10%)**
Prior to each class, students are expected to submit a 500-word reflection on the readings. Reflections do not have to exhaustively summarize the material; rather, they should demonstrate that the student is critically engaging with the required texts. The reflections should also include several questions that the student may bring up during class to spur discussion.
- **Scenario-Planning Writing Exercise (30%)**
After the week four class on foresight analysis, students will select from a list of pressing national and global security challenges. They will be asked to individually research the issue and apply the foresight methodologies discussed in the class to develop a scenario-planning paper on the subject. For example, if the issue selected is the US-China relationship, a student would be expected to develop multiple scenarios for the direction of that relationship (e.g., an imminent war, rapprochement, etc.). These scenario papers will be 1,500 words, and students will be expected to consider the conditions and decisions that could result in different scenarios and weigh the plausibility of each path. The paper will be due Week 6.
- **Strategy Paper (40%)**
Students will complete a final paper of 3,000 words outlining a strategy for navigating the issue area selected for the scenario-planning exercise. Students will be given a strategy-paper template which they will be expected to follow closely. This assignment will give students the opportunity to bridge the gap between foresight and strategy. The paper will be due Week 15.

- **Final Strategy Briefing (20%)**

Students will have ten minutes to present a three-slide briefing to the class outlining their strategy. The purpose of this exercise is to help students speak concisely and distill their core ideas in a manner that would be useful if they were briefing time-pressed senior government officials. The presentation will take place during Week 15.

Late Work Policy

- Both papers are considered late after 12:00 pm on the day of the class meeting. There will be a penalty of one letter grade per day following the due date.

Course Schedule

Please note that all readings subject to change but will be communicated to you as quickly as possible.

Week 01 | August 24 | Course Introduction and Scowcroft the Man

- Who was General Brent Scowcroft?
- What was General Scowcroft's impact on US foreign policy and the national security process?
- What lessons from General Scowcroft's life and legacy ought to shape strategists today?

Bartholomew Sparrow, *The Strategist*, Chapters 12-13, 22-27

Guest Lecturer: Matthew Kroenig

Learning objectives: The purpose of this session is to learn about the late General Brent Scowcroft: his character, his manner of thinking, and his impact on US foreign policy and later generations of strategists. The session will also delve into Scowcroft's relationship with President George H.W. Bush.

Week 02 | August 31 | The Art of Strategy: How to Develop Strategy

- What does a good strategy look like?
- What are some of the challenges to developing a good strategy?

Richard K. Betts, "Is Strategy an Illusion?" *International Security* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2000), pp. 5-50.

Hal Brands and Patrick Porter, "Why Grand Strategy Still Matters in a World of Chaos," *The National Interest* (December 2015): 1-2.

Colin Gray, "Why Strategy is Difficult," *Joint Forces Quarterly* (Summer 1999), pp. 6-12.

Nina Silove, "Beyond the Buzzword: The Three Meanings of 'Grand Strategy'," *Security Studies* 27, no. 1 (January 2018), pp. 27-57.

Guest Lecturer: Barry Pavel

Learning objectives: The purpose of this session is to discuss the nature of strategy and the methodology of strategy development.

Week 03 | September 7 | Incorporating Strategy into Your Work

- How can strategic thinking be applied to one's work?

Clementine Starling, Mark Massa, Lt Col Christopher Mulder, and Julia Siegel, *The Future of Security in Space: A Thirty-Year US Strategy*, Atlantic Council, April 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/the-future-of-security-in-space/>

Guest Lecturers: Matthew Kroenig

Learning objectives: The purpose of this session is to explain practical ways that strategy and foresight can be incorporated into day-to-day work and to discuss how to write strategies.

Week 04 | September 14 | Thinking Ahead: The What and How of Foresight

- How is good foresight analysis conducted?
- How does one develop scenarios for the future?
- How do foresight and strategy link together?

Mathew J. Burrows and Peter Engelke, *Global Foresight 2022*, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/global-foresight-2022/>

Peter Ho and Adrian Kuah, "Governing for the Future: What Governments Can Do," PRISM 5, no. 1 (October 2015), pp. 9-21.

Art Kleiner, "The Man Who Saw the Future," *Strategy + Business* 30 (Spring 2003)
Global Trends 2040: A More Contested World, National Intelligence Council, March 2021, https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/GlobalTrends_2040.pdf

Guest Lecturers: Peter Engelke

Learning objectives: Developing an effective strategy requires a sense of where the world is going, not just where it is or has been. The purpose of this session is to better understand foresight, including various methods of foresight analysis (such as scenario development), and its importance to strategic thinking.

Week 05 | September 21 | The NSC Process

- How does the national security process function in practice?
- What is the role of the national security advisor in the national security process?

Bartholomew Sparrow, *The Strategist*, Chapters 17-21

Stephen J. Hadley, *The Role and Importance of the National Security Advisor*, Scowcroft Institute of International Affairs, 2016, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/reflections-role-and-importance-national-security-advisor>

Guest Lecturers: Kirsten Fontenrose

Learning objectives: The purpose of this session is to discuss the role of the national security advisor and how the National Security Council functions.

Week 06 | September 28 | Strategy: A European Perspective

- How do Europeans approach strategy? How does it differ from the US approach?
- As a specific example, how does Sweden approach its national security strategy?

“Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy,” European Union, June 2016,

https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/EUGS_0.pdf

“The EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific,” European Union, September 2021,

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/jointcommunication_indo_pacific_en.pdf

Guest Lecturers: Hans-Christian Hagman

Learning objectives: The purpose of this session is to learn how European partners of the United States think about strategy. How does the European Union approach the world?

Weeks 7-14 are topical strategy sessions (details below) in which students will have the opportunity to understand how strategy and foresight can be applied to pressing national security issues. The following topics are notional and can be adjusted based on real-world events.

Week 07 | October 5 | Drafting a Strategy on China

- What is the strategic context of US-China relations? What are the key features of the global landscape shaping this relationship?
- What should be the goals of a US strategy toward China? Does the US currently seem to have clear goals in its competition with China?
- How should the US pursue its goals vis-à-vis China?
- What assumptions underlie the current US approach to China?

Matthew Kroenig and Jeffrey Cimmino, *Global Strategy 2021: An Allied Strategy for China*, Atlantic Council, December 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Global-Strategy-2021-An-Allied-Strategy-for-China.pdf>

Anonymous, *The Longer Telegram: Toward a New American China Strategy*, Atlantic Council, January 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/the-longer-telegram/>

Franklin D. Kramer, *Managed Competition: Meeting China’s Challenge in a Multi-Vector World*, Atlantic Council, December 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/managed-competition-meeting-chinas-challenge-in-a-multi-vector-world/>

Guest Lecturers: Frank Kramer

Learning objectives: Every year, the Scowcroft Center publishes four *Atlantic Council Strategy Papers* that propose sustainable, nonpartisan strategies for the most important challenges facing the United States and its allies. Using two China strategy papers as examples, as well as an additional paper on competition with China, students will learn how to craft and write good strategy and will have the opportunity to discuss a strategic framework for addressing China.

Week 08 | October 12 | Drafting a Strategy on Russia

- What is the strategic context of US-Russia relations? What are the key features of the global landscape shaping this relationship?
- What should be the goals of a US strategy toward Russia? Does the US currently seem to have clear goals in its competition with Russia?
- How should the US pursue its goals vis-à-vis Russia?
- What assumptions underlie the current US approach to Russia?
- How has Russia's invasion of Ukraine reshaped the context of US-Russia relations?

Barry Pavel, Peter Engelke, and Jeffrey Cimmino, "Four (Updated) Ways the War in Ukraine Might End," *New Atlanticist*, July 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/four-updated-ways-the-war-in-ukraine-might-end/>

John E. Herbst, Anders Aslund, David J. Kramer, Alexander Vershbow, and Brian Whitmore, *Global Strategy 2022: Thwarting Kremlin Aggression Today for Constructive Relations Tomorrow*, Atlantic Council, February 2022, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/atlantic-council-strategy-paper-series/thwarting-kremlin-aggression-today-for-constructive-relations-tomorrow/>

Guest Lecturers: Ambassador John Herbst and Melinda Haring

Learning objectives: Every year, the Scowcroft Center publishes four *Atlantic Council Strategy Papers* that propose sustainable, nonpartisan strategies for the most important challenges facing the United States and its allies. Using a recently released Russia paper as an example, students will continue to learn how to craft and write good strategy and will have the opportunity to discuss a strategic framework for addressing Russia.

Week 09 | October 19 | Drafting a Strategy on a Rules-Based International System

- What is the state of the rules-based international system set up after World War II? To what extent is it strained, breaking down, etc.?
- How should the US approach shaping the global order in coming years?

Ash Jain and Matthew Kroenig, *Present at the Re-Creation: A Global Strategy for Revitalizing, Adapting, and Defending a Rules-Based International System*, Atlantic Council, October 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/present-at-the-re-creation/>

Guest Lecturers: Ash Jain

Learning objectives: Every year, the Scowcroft Center publishes four *Atlantic Council Strategy Papers* that propose sustainable, nonpartisan strategies for the most important challenges facing the United States and its allies. Using a 2019 strategy on a rules-based international system as an example, students will continue to learn how to craft and write good strategy and will have the opportunity to discuss a strategic framework for shaping the global order.

Week 10 | October 26 | Cyber Strategy

- What challenges do cyber threats pose to strategists?
- How should the United States address cyber threats?

William Loomis, Virpratap Vikram Singh, Dr. Gary C. Kessler, and Dr. Xavier Bellekens, *A System of Systems: Cooperation on Maritime Cybersecurity*, Atlantic Council, October 2021,

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/cooperation-on-maritime-cybersecurity-a-system-of-systems/>

Trey Herr, William Loomis, Emma Schroeder, Stewart Scott, Simon Handler, and Tianjiu Zuo, *Broken Trust: Lessons from Sunburst*, Atlantic Council, March 2021,

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/broken-trust-lessons-from-sunburst/>

Guest Lecturers: Jay Healy

Learning objectives: The United States faces an array of emerging threats, including in the cyber domain. The purpose of this session is to discuss how strategic thinking can be applied in a cyber context.

Week 11 | November 2 | Drafting a National Security Strategy

- What goes into a National Security Strategy?
- How does one set priorities for a National Security Strategy?
- Does the National Security Strategy matter? Does it shape an administration's approach to global affairs?

National Security Strategy of the United States of America, White House, December 2017,

<https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>

Biden Administration NSS (Forthcoming)

Guest Lecturers: Hans Binnendijk

Learning objectives: At the start of a new administration, officials develop a national security strategy that offers the most comprehensive guide to an administration's framework for thinking about the world. Students will have the opportunity to think about the National Security Strategy and discuss priorities for coming years.

Week 12 | November 9 | Drafting a National Defense Strategy

- What goes into a National Defense Strategy?
- How does one set priorities for a National Defense Strategy?
- How does the National Defense Strategy relate to the National Security Strategy?

Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge, Department of Defense, 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

Biden Administration NDS (Forthcoming)

Guest Lecturers: Chris Skaluba

Learning objectives: At the start of a new administration, officials develop a National Defense Strategy to address the key defense challenges facing the United States. Through interactions with former defense officials, students will have the opportunity to think about the National Defense Strategy and discuss priorities for coming years.

Week 13 | November 16 | Conducting Foresight Analysis in a Time of Global Crisis (Case Study: COVID-19 Pandemic)

- How can foresight prove helpful in a time of crisis?
- What key trends, risks, and opportunities were accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Mathew Burrows and Peter Engelke, *What World Post-COVID-19? Three Scenarios*, Atlantic Council, July 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/what-world-post-covid-19-three-scenarios/>

Jeffrey Cimmino, Matthew Kroenig, and Barry Pavel, *Taking Stock: Where are Geopolitics Headed in the COVID-19 Era?* Atlantic Council, June 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/taking-stock-where-are-geopolitics-headed-in-the-covid-19-era/>

Guest Lecturers: Peter Engelke

Learning objectives: The Scowcroft Center's strategy and foresight work complement one another, and this was especially the case amid the COVID-19 pandemic, when the center conducted multiple foresight analyses and released a comprehensive strategy for shaping the post-pandemic world. This session will apply previous lessons about foresight to a crisis situation, and students will have the opportunity to analyze global trends and develop scenarios for the United States and the global order based on ongoing fallout from the pandemic.

Week 14 | November 30 | Conducting a Global Foresight Analysis

- What are the key trends, risks, and opportunities shaping the global order today?
- What are some scenarios for the direction of the global order in coming decades?

Mathew Burrows, *Global Risks 2035 Update: Decline or New Renaissance?* Atlantic Council, October 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/global-risks-2035-update/>

Guest Lecturers: Peter Engelke

Learning objectives: The Scowcroft Center distinguishes itself with its foresight analysis, especially its ability to consider global trends, risks, and opportunities. In this session, students will consider the trends, risks, and opportunities in the world today and collaborate on developing a global foresight analysis that considers potential futures for geopolitics and the global order.

Week 15 | December 7 | Strategy Practicum

Reading TBD

Guest Lecturers: Amanda Rothschild

Learning objectives: Students will critically engage one another as they brief their strategies. Professors will offer constructive feedback.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

“Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class

discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, you will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in proper self-care by utilizing the resources and services available from Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Students who need someone to talk to can call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Makeup Work Policy

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines. The fact that these are university-excused absences does not relieve the student of responsibility for prior notification and documentation. Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)). Please also note that "the instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)). Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code; failure to notify and/or document properly may result in an unexcused absence. Falsification of documentation is a violation of the Honor Code.

(See [Student Rule 24](#).)

- Participation in an activity that is required for a class and appears on the university authorized activity list at <https://studentactivities.tamu.edu/app/sponsauth/index>
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day. NOTE: Prior notification is NOT required.
- Injury or illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
 - Injury or illness of three or more class days: Student will provide a medical confirmation note from his or her medical provider within one week of the last date of the absence (see Student Rules 7.1.6.1)



- Injury or illness of less than three class days: Student will provide one or both of these (at instructor's discretion), within one week of the last date of the absence:
 - (i.) Texas A&M University Explanatory Statement for Absence from Class form available at <http://attendance.tamu.edu> or
 - (ii.) Confirmation of visit to a health care professional affirming date and time of visit.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.
- Other absences may be excused at the discretion of the instructor with prior notification and proper documentation. In cases where prior notification is not feasible (e.g., accident or emergency) the student must provide notification by the end of the second working day after the absence, including an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the class.
- On rare occasions, the instructor might have to miss a class due to administrative or academic responsibilities out of town. This will be exceedingly rare, but if it does occur, the instructor reserves the right to reschedule class at a time when the vast majority of students are available for the make-up class and will convey the material to students unable to attend the make-up during office hours. The instructor may also schedule a virtual class at the same time as the regular class meeting time as an alternative to rescheduling the class meeting.