



IR-PO 350.1
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND GEOPOLITICS: A SPANISH AND EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE
IES Abroad Madrid (BESS)

DESCRIPTION:

The relevance reached by International Security during the Cold War has been further increased by rapid changes in the global strategic environment ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The beginning of the 21st Century was marked by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which radically transformed our perception of security. But new factors, such as globalization, regional instability and conflicts, international terrorism, migrations, transnational crime, new trends in warfare and the growing influence of non-state actors in the national and international arena, have caused a radical evolution of the global security landscape, with the advent of new risks and threats. We need to understand all these changes to be able to tackle present and future challenges.

The aim of this course is to develop the students' awareness and understanding of the international situation, as well as to provide them with skills to research and analyze the current issues in a holistic way and to seek solutions to the dilemmas they pose for the future.

The course is made up of four modules:

- The Strategic Environment in a Globalized World.
- Challenges, Risks and Threats to International Security.
- Geopolitical Regions of Interest.
- International Organizations and Global Security.

CREDITS: 3

CONTACT HOURS: 37

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Dr. Luis Díaz-Bedia Astor

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures are designed to provide students with the required knowledge about specific issues and to allow them to engage in subsequent discussions. Students are expected to read selected texts, so that they will be prepared for the classes. They must also actively participate in class discussions. Equally important, they will need to engage in independent study to broaden their knowledge of the subject and prepare a case study presentation.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- **Midterm Exam (30%):**
The exam will be taken in class and will comprise the first two modules of the subject. It may consist of multiple choice and brief-essay questions.
- **Case Study Analysis (30%):**
The case study analyses will be dedicated to current issues related to International Security and may cover a specific country, a conflict or a circumstance that may affect several countries. Each analysis will be developed by a team of three students and will be selected by them, from the list proposed by the professor, no later than February 15. Each group will provide a short PPT presentation (around 20 minutes) for the rest of the class, with the analysis of the subject and their own recommendations, with a subsequent discussion.



- **Final Exam (30%):**

The exam will be taken in class and will comprise the third and fourth modules of the subject. It may consist of multiple choice and brief-essay questions.

- **Participation in class (10%):**

Students must have an active role in class discussions about the different subjects, showing the knowledge acquired through the readings for each session. Therefore, their participation will be assessed accordingly.

KEY DATES:

Midterm Exam: March 11.

Final Exam: May 6.

Case Study Analysis Presentations: April 22 and 24.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the course, students must be able to:

- Analyze the most relevant political and legal issues of the international system.
- Identify the state and non-state actors which may have a global or regional influence on peace, security, and stability.
- Explain the security policies and strategies of the West, as well as the situation in different regions of the World.
- Know the most important international organizations and their strategies and crisis management models.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

As a member of our class community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For this reason, attendance is mandatory for all IES Madrid classes, including course related excursions. Absences will only be justified in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. Assessed work, including exams, tests and presentations will be justified and rescheduled accordingly. Otherwise, they will be graded as 0. Please be aware that after the third unexcused absence (courses meeting twice a week) and two unexcused absences (courses meeting once a week), your final grade will decrease by five percentage points (out of 100) for each subsequent absence. For courses meeting twice a week, 7 or more absences, and for courses meeting once a week, 4 or more absences, will result in a failing grade. For more information, please refer to the Orientation Handbook.

CONTENT:

Session	Content	Required readings
Session 1 Jan 21 1035-1155	Introduction to International Security Studies	• McGlinchey, S., & Gold, D. "International Relations Theory". E-International Relations, Jan 9, 2017. https://www.e-ir.info/2017/01/09/international-relations-theory/ • Al-Rodhan, N. "The Future of International Relations: A Symbiotic Realism Theory". BBVA Open Mind. https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/the-future-of-international-relations/
Session 2 Jan 23 1035-1155	Geopolitics of the 21 st Century	• Kaplan, R. D. "Geopolitics and the New World Order". Time, March 20, 2014. https://time.com/31911/geopolitics-and-the-new-world-order/ • Sempa, F. P. "Classical Geopolitics for the 21st Century: Geopolitics, Geography and Strategic History". Real Clear Defense, August 31, 2020. https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2020/08/31/classical_geopolitics_for_the_21st_century_geopolitics_geography_and_strategic_history_575775.html

Session 3 Jan 28 1035-1155	Current Security Concepts	• Muhammad, A. and Riyanto, S. "International Security Studies: Origins, Development and Contending Approaches". Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy & International Relations, Vol. 10 No. 20 (2021). https://seer.ufrgs.br/index.php/austral/article/view/117331/66033
Session 4 Jan 30 1035-1155	International Conflict and its Management	• UN Charter: Preamble and Chapters I, VI, VII, VIII. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter • Rigerink, A. "Wars in Numbers: an empirical test of the 'new war' thesis". Security in Transition, Discussion Paper 03/2013. http://www.securityintransition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Rigterink.-New-Wars-in-Numbers.pdf
Session 5 Feb 4 1035-1155	Western security strategies	• "National Security Strategy. Sharing a Common Project". Government of Spain, 2021. https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/documents/estrategiaseguridad_baja_julio.pdf • NATO 2022 Strategic Concept. https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/ • Schreer, B. "Germany's first-ever National Security Strategy". IISS Online Analysis, 20th June 2023. https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2023/06/germanys-first-ever-national-security-strategy/
Session 6 Feb 6 1035-1155	International terrorism	• "Global Terrorism Index 2024". Institute for Economics and Peace. https://www.economicsandpeace.org/global-terrorism-index/ • "Grey Rhinos 2025: Terrorism". Italian Institute for International Political Studies, 25 Dec 2024. https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/grey-rhinos-2025-terrorism-194892 • "What is Hezbollah" Council on Foreign Relations. Last updated 29 Oct 2024. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-hezbollah • Las Heras, Paula. " Hamas in perspective: Origins and evolution". Universidad de Navarra, Global Affairs, 15 Jan 2024. https://en.unav.edu/web/global-affairs/hamas-en-perspectiva-origenes-y-evolucion
Session 7 Feb 11 1035-1155	Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction	• Mathews, Jessica T." A new nuclear arms race is beginning. It will be far more dangerous than the last one". The Guardian, 14 Nov 2024. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/14/nuclear-weapons-war-new-arms-race-russia-china-us • "What is the status of Iran's nuclear programme and the JCPOA?". UK Parliament, House of Commons Library, 4 Oct 2024. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9870/
Session 8 Feb 13 1035-1155	Fragile States and Organized Crime	• "Fragile States Index". The Fund for Peace. https://fragilestatesindex.org/global-data/ • INTERPOL. Crimes section. https://www.interpol.int/Crimes/Organized-crime

Session 9 Feb 18 1035-1155	Regional conflicts.	• “10 Conflicts to Watch in 2025”. International Crisis Group. https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/10-conflicts-watch-2025 • “Conflict Barometer 2023”. Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research. https://hiik.de/conflict-barometer/current-version/?lang=en
Session 10 Feb 20 1035-1155	Natural Resources, Energy Security and Risk Drivers	• Marino, Francesco. “What 2025 could look like for the EU energy policies”. NEU, Newsletter for the European Union, 28 December 2024. https://www.newslettereuropean.eu/what-2025-could-look-like-for-the-eu-energy-policies/ • Igin, Martina. “Why Global Food Security Matters”. EARTH.ORG, 16 Oct 2024. https://earth.org/global-food-security/
Session 11 Feb 25 1035-1155	Cyber Security and Maritime Security	• “What is Cyber Security? Definition and Best Practices”. https://www.itgovernance.co.uk/what-is-cybersecurity • Larsson, O. L. and Widen, J.J. “The European Union as a Maritime Security Provider – The Naval Diplomacy Perspective”. Taylor & Francis Online, 6 April 2023. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1057610X.2022.2058863 • Median, Natalia. “Maritime Security Strategy 2024”. Atalayar, 06/04/2024. https://www.atalayar.com/en/articulo/politics/maritime-security-strategy-2024/20240406080000198337.html
Session 12 Feb 27 1035-1155	Russia	• Kivimäki, T. “Russian Sphere of Influence: What is it? What Could It Be?” The World Financial Review, March 1, 2022. https://worldfinancialreview.com/russian-sphere-of-influence-what-is-it-what-could-it-be/ • Sabanazde, N. “Russia is using the Soviet playbook in the Global South to challenge the West – and it is working”. Chatham House, 16 May 2024. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/05/russia-using-soviet-playbook-global-south-challenge-west-and-it-working • Konstantinovskiy, Anya. “China, Russia, and Ukraine: October 2024”. Council on Foreign Relations, 4 Nov 2024. https://www.cfr.org/article/china-russia-and-ukraine-october-2024
Session 13 Mar 4 1035-1155	Middle East	• Clarke, Collin P. “A Year of War Transformed Hezbollah”. The New York Times, 27 Nov 2024. https://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/27/opinion/hezbollah-israel-lebanon-ceasefire.html • “Iran and Saudi Arabia Restore Ties”. The Iran Primer, United States Institute for Peace, June 6, 2023. https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2023/mar/10/iran-and-saudi-arabia-restore-ties • Leila Ouhri, Kate Springs, and Yaseen Rashed “2024: A year in the Middle East”. Atlantic Council, 19 Dec 2024. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/2024-a-year-in-the-middle-east/

Session 14 Mar 6 1035-1155	North Africa and the Sahel.	• “Grey Rhino 2025: The Sahel”. Italian Institute for International Political Studies, 26 Dec 2024. https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/grey-rhino-2025-the-sahel-194931 • “West Africa and the Sahel”. Security Council Report, 30 June 2024. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-07/west-africa-and-the-sahel-12.php
Session 15 Mar 11 1035-1155	MIDTERM EXAM	The midterm exam includes the chapters seen in sessions 1-11.
Session 16 Mar 13 1035-1155	Sub-Saharan Africa.	• Okoli, Maurice. “Bridging Africa’s Economic Horizons In 2025: Broader Strategic Perspectives – Analysis”. Eurasia Review, 30 Nov 2024. https://www.eurasiareview.com/30112024-bridging-africas-economic-horizons-in-2025-broader-strategic-perspectives-analysis/ • “Africa in 2025: G20 presidency and a new UK approach to Africa”. UK Parliament, House of Commons Library, 8 Jan 2025. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/africa-in-2025-g20-presidency-and-a-new-uk-approach-to-africa/ • Nantulya, Paul. “What to Expect from Africa-China Relations in 2025”. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 7 Jan 2025. https://africacenter.org/spotlight/africa-china-relations-2025/
Session 17 Mar 18 1035-1155	Indo-Pacific 1	• Borrel, Josep. “Europe’s and Indo-Pacific’s security are closely linked”. European External Action Service, 14 Nov 2024. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe-and-indo-pacific-security-are-closely-linked_en • “Scenarios: South China Sea security report”. Janes 9 Dec 2024. https://www.janes.com/osint-insights/defence-and-national-security-analysis/post/scenarios-south-china-sea-security-report • “What’s behind China-Taiwan tensions?” BBC NEWS, 14 Oct 2024. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34729538 • Howell, Edward. “Countering the China, Russia, Iran, North Korea Challenge”. Chatham House, Research Paper, 4 Dec 2024. https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/12/north-korea-and-russias-dangerous-partnership/introduction
Session 18 Mar 20 1035-1155	Indo-Pacific 2	• Kawai, Daisuke. “Japan’s Defence Budget Surge: A New Security Paradigm”. RUSI, Commentary, 2 Dec 2024. https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/japans-defence-budget-surge-new-security-paradigm • “AUKUS security partnership”. House of Lords Library. Published Monday, 19 February 2024. https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/aukus-security-partnership/ • Ladwig, Walter. “The Indo-Pacific in Indian Foreign Policy”. Royal United Services Institute, Policy Briefings, 30 April 2024. https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/policy-briefs/indo-pacific-indian-foreign-policy

Session 19 Mar 25 1035-1155	Latin America	● Venezuela: statement by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the events of 10 January 2025 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/10/venezuela-statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-events-of-10-january-2025/ ● Haiti, January 2025 Monthly Forecast, Security Council Report, 30 Dec 2024. https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2025-01/haiti-28.php ● Deputy High Commissioner updates on the human rights situation in Nicaragua. United Nations, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, 9 Dec 2024. https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements-and-speeches/2024/12/deputy-high-commissioner-updates-human-rights-situation-nicaragua
Session 20 Mar 27 1035-1155	United Nations and Peacekeeping Operations.	● United Nations Peacekeeping. https://peacekeeping.un.org/en ● Blair, R. A., & Di Salvattore, J., & Smidt, H. M. "When Do UN Peacekeeping Operations Implement Their Mandates?" American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 66, No. 3, July 2022, Pp. 664–680. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ajps.12650
Session 21 Apr 1 1035-1155	North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).	● "NATO Strategic Concept 2022". https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/ ● "Washington Summit Declaration". NATO, 10 July 2024. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227678.htm
Session 22 Apr 3 1035-1155	European Union (EU) Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).	● Solana, J. "European Foreign Policy and Its Challenges in the Current Context." BBVA OpenMind. ● https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/european-foreign-policy-and-its-challenges-in-the-current-context/ ● "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence". https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf ● "A new era for European Defence and Security". European Commission. https://commission.europa.eu/priorities-2024-2029/security-and-defence_en ● "Common security and defence policy". Fact Sheets on the European Union. European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/159/common-security-and-defence-policy
Session 23 Apr 8 1035-1155	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).	● "Fact Sheet: What is the OSCE?" OSCE, 30 May 2023. https://www.osce.org/whatistheosce/factsheet ● "31st Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council I Joint statement on Securing the OSCE's Future: Principles and Action". U.S. Mission to OSCE, Dec 2024. https://osce.usmission.gov/31st-meeting-of-the-osce-ministerial-council-i-joint-statement-on-securing-the-osces-future-principles-and-action/



Session 24 Apr 10 1035-1155	African Union and Other Regional Organizations.	● Harsh Mahaseth and Aryaman Keshav. "The Role of The African Union and Agenda 2063 in Paving the Future of Africa". Modern Diplomacy, 18 Oct 2024. https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2024/10/18/the-role-of-the-african-union-and-agenda-2063-in-paving-the-future-of-africa/ ● Umarov, T. "The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is Ineffective and Irrelevant". Carnegie Politika, July 5, 2024. https://carnegieendowment.org/russia- Eurasia/politika/2024/07/sco-summit-china-russia?lang=en
Session 25 Apr 22 1035-1155	Case study presentations	
Session 26 Apr 24 1035-1155	Case study presentations	
Session 27 Apr 29 1035-1155	Review for the Final Exam	
Session 28 May 6 1035-1155	FINAL EXAM	

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

A visit to a military museum may take place during the course.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

In addition to the required readings, other relevant documents will be recommended to the students throughout the course.

BRIEF BIO OF THE INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Luis Díaz-Bedia Astor holds a Ph.D. in Peace and International Security (UNED) and a Master's Degree in Peace, Security and Defense (IUGM).

He is a Spanish Navy Captain (in reserve status since July 2022).

After graduating from the Spanish Naval Academy, he attended the Naval Aviator Course (Strike) with the US Navy and later qualified as a Harrier II AV-8B pilot with the US Marine Corps. He is a French War College graduate and has been the Commanding Officer of three ships (an inshore patrol vessel, an offshore patrol vessel and a frigate) and the Executive Officer of another two ships (a frigate and the Navy's LHD). As a Captain, he commanded the Navy Air Wing and was requalified as a Harrier pilot. He has taken part in international operations "Iraqi Freedom", "Enduring Freedom", "Active Endeavour" and "Atalanta", as well as in the Spanish national operation "Balmis" (fight against COVID-19). He has served in the Spanish Navy Staff on several occasions and was assigned to the European Union Military Staff (Brussels) for a three-year tour.

He has been an instructor in the Tactics and Foreign Languages departments of the Spanish Naval Academy. He has taught the subject of International Security and Geopolitics at IES Abroad Madrid in 2017 and again since 2022. He is also an associate professor at the International Relations Department of Nebrija University (Madrid).

He is the author of around 30 professional publications regarding military and security issues and he has been awarded two prizes for articles published in the Spanish Navy Magazine (Revista General de Marina). An amateur photographer, he has been awarded several prizes in photo contests of the Spanish Navy, the Spanish Air Force, and the U.S. Naval Institute.