

**San José State University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**POLS 190, Senior Seminar, Spring 2020**

**Course and Contact Information**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Instructor:      | Karthika Sasikumar                         |
| Office Location: | Clark 451                                  |
| Telephone:       | (408) (9241361)                            |
| Email:           | karthika.sasikumar@sjsu.edu                |
| Office Hours:    | Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 12.45-1.45 PM |
| Class Days/Time: | Fridays 9.30 AM - 12.15 PM                 |
| Classroom:       | Clark 234                                  |

**Course Format**

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Learning Management System course login website at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the Canvas messaging system to learn of any updates.

**Course Description**

Capstone course that serves as culminating experience for the political science major. Seminar class with significant participation required. Specific course topics vary each semester.

The topic of this course is nuclear weapons. After an introduction to the science behind their creation, the course will survey the history of the introduction of nuclear weapons into global strategy, the dominance of deterrence, the attempts at nonproliferation, and the current dilemmas surrounding disarmament. Those of you wishing to take the Honors option should contact me before February 1, 2020.

**Prerequisite: POLS 100W or instructor consent.**

**Course Goals**

The Political Science Program Learning Outcomes are

- **Breadth**  
Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- **Application and Disciplinary Methods**

Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

- **Communication Skills**

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

- **Citizenship**

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

### Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1. Demonstrate knowledge of key facts about the politics and technology of nuclear weapons

CLO2. Locate and evaluate primary documents and scholarly arguments

CLO3. Apply course concepts to real-world problems

CLO4. Discuss major social issues in a civil and collaborative manner

### Required Texts/Readings

#### Textbook

There is no textbook for this course. All texts can be accessed using links on the Canvas site. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if there are any hindrances to access. Full citations for the texts and videos on the syllabus are provided in a separate document on Canvas. A few videos may need payment, but this will be below \$5.

### Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

The major assignment for this course is the term paper which is approximately **5000 words (25 double-spaced pages)**, including all components such as the title page, figures, and bibliography. Students who are writing an honors thesis will turn in a paper of **approximately 7000 words**. You will be submitting an outline and a draft of this paper, so that you may incorporate feedback and revise your work to produce a final paper that represents a solid piece of research. You will also present the argument of your paper to your classmates in the last week of class. I will nominate the best paper for the Constantine Danopoulos award for the best senior seminar paper, which is a cash award of \$100.

Your participation in the simulation is mandatory. You will be given roles to play before class, and assessed both on your participation and reflection papers. 20 percent of your grade comes from class participation. You will also note that there are ten Reading Response assignments, worth 20 percent of your grade. Reading Responses are due on Canvas by 9 AM on most Fridays. Your responses will be used to guide discussion in class and foster participation. At the end of each class meeting, I will share on Canvas your participation grade

out of 2 points. In addition, you can earn extra credit by viewing/listening to any of the material listed in the AV material column in the syllabus. Specific assignments will be posted on Canvas.

**Final Examination or Evaluation**

The final examination will be held in class on May 13. It will consist of 20 short answer questions and one short essay. The midterm will have the same pattern.

**Grading Information**

- Extra credit opportunities will be announced throughout the semester via Canvas Announcements. Extra credit points are added to your total score and have the same weight as other scores. There is no limit on how many extra credit points you can earn in this course.
- If you miss the deadline for submission for an assignment, you will lose ten percent of your score for that assignment per 5 hours of lateness (pro-rated). For example, if you submit the term paper 6 hours after the deadline, and your score would have been 15 points, you will lose 1.5 point. Most assignments require submission on Canvas. If you wish to request an extension on your submission, be prepared to provide a reason and documentation.
- No late work will be accepted for Reading Responses.

**Determination of Grades**

- Grades will be determined as per the table below. The course is out of 1000 points.

| <b>CLO</b> | <b>Assignment</b>            | <b>Points</b> | <b>Due date</b> |
|------------|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 2 & 4      | Reading responses            | 200           | various         |
| 4          | Participation in class       | 200           | various         |
| 2          | Term paper outline           | 30            | February 28     |
| 2          | Term paper literature review | 40            | March 20        |
| 1          | Midterm exam                 | 150           | March 27        |
| 3          | Simulation                   | 70            | April 10        |
| 2          | Term paper draft             | 60            | April 17        |
| 4          | Research presentation        | 60            | May 8           |
| 1          | Final exam                   | 150           | May 13          |
| 2          | Term paper final submission  | 140           | May 18          |

Final letter grades are based on this scale

| <b>Grade</b> | <b>Points</b> |
|--------------|---------------|
| A plus       | Over 1000     |
| A            | 950 to 1000   |
| A minus      | 900 to 940    |
| B plus       | 850 to 890    |
| B            | 800 to 840    |
| B minus      | 750 to 790    |
| C plus       | 700 to 740    |
| C            | 650 to 690    |
| C minus      | 600 to 640    |
| D plus       | 550 to 590    |

| Grade | Points        |
|-------|---------------|
| F     | Less than 550 |

### Classroom Protocol

This is a capstone course, therefore, I expect students to take responsibility for their educational experience. While attendance is not mandatory, a substantial percentage of your grade depends on your participation in class.

While in class, I expect you to have all electronic devices powered off. The use of cellphones, laptops, or tablets is not required or allowed in class. The only exception to this is in the case of student disability or dire emergency (please consult with me).

Expect to be called on, by name, in every class. Research has shown that active participation in class is more effective than passive listening for mastering the material. In addition, debating social issues in a civil manner is one of the learning outcomes for this course. To this end, please engage with the instructor and classmates in a manner that shows you are prepared to defend your viewpoint politely and reasonably; and that you are prepared to listen to others' viewpoints. Please note that since this is a class about politics, there will (hopefully) be heated discussions. During these discussions, I may pose questions or make arguments that reflect various opinions. These questions or arguments need not be based on my personal convictions. If you are concerned about the tone or content of class discussion, please contact me outside class.

### University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

## Citations for assigned readings

### POLS 190/ Senior Seminar, Spring 2020, Course Schedule

*The schedule is subject to change with fair notice through announcements on Canvas.*

#### Course Schedule

| Date   | Topics  | Readings (those not linked here are on Canvas) | Audiovisual material (not required for class) | Assignments  |
|--------|---|--|---|--|
| Jan 31 | A. Introduction<br>B. Overview of arsenals<br>C. Nuclear technology | <a href="#">Braut-Hegghammer Nuclear 101</a>   |   | Be prepared to take a quiz in class on Nuclear 101 |

|        |   |  |  |                                     |
|--------|---|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| Feb 7  | The decision to drop the bomb   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wills, Ch. 2</li> <li>• <a href="#">Wilson</a></li> <li>• Fussell</li> <li>• Zak 325-27</li> </ul>  | <i>Fat Man and Little Boy</i> (1989)   | RR1                                 |
| Feb 14 | Deterrence  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2018 US Nuclear Posture <a href="#">Review</a> (Exec Summary)</li> <li>• Catudal 50-80</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sagan and Suri</a> 150-56</li> </ul>                            | <i>The Man Who Saved the World</i> (2014)  | RR2                                 |
| Feb 21 | Governance  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Roundtable</a> on Presidential First Use</li> <li>• <a href="#">Wellerstein</a> blog post</li> <li>• <a href="#">House Bill</a> 669 (Lieu-Markey Bill)</li> </ul> | Radiolab podcast (find on Canvas)  | RR3                                 |
| Feb 28 | Cuban missile crisis  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Schwarz</a></li> <li>• Kennedy 23-46, 65-72, 93-110</li> <li>• Blight &amp; Lang 60-85</li> </ul>   | <i>The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara</i> (2003) | RR4<br>Term paper literature review |
| Mar 6  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accidents</li> <li>2. C3I</li> </ol>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schlosser 3-7, 157-88, 220-27</li> <li>• Broderick 115-121, 126-141, 144-148</li> </ul>   | <i>Dr. Strangelove</i> (1964)  | RR5                                 |
| Mar 13 | Disarmament and arms control  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zak 289-304, 317-20</li> <li>• <a href="#">Schelling</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sagan and Waltz</a> 2010</li> </ul>   | <i>Countdown to Zero</i> (2010)  | RR6                                 |
| Mar 20 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Nonproliferation</li> <li>B. Renunciation: South Korea</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Nuclear Weapons under International Law: An Overview</a>, 4-14</li> <li>• <a href="#">Gavin</a></li> <li>• Choi and Hwang</li> </ul>                              |  | RR7<br>Term paper draft             |
| Mar 27 | MIDTERM   |  |  | Midterm                             |
| Apr 3  | No class  | Spring break   |  |                                     |
| Apr 10 | Simulation  | In class. You must be present to earn points.  |  |                                     |
| Apr 17 | Nuclear programs of China, India, and Pakistan  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cunningham and Fravel</a> 73-81, 88-92, 95-109</li> <li>• <a href="#">Narang</a> 38-59</li> </ul>   |  | RR8<br>Term paper draft             |
| Apr 24 | Nuclear programs of Israel, Iran, and North Korea   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cohen</a> Chs. 1 and 2</li> <li>• <a href="#">Mehta and Whitlark</a> 51-59</li> <li>• <a href="#">Braut-Hegghammer</a></li> </ul>                                 |  | RR9                                 |

|           |   |   |  |                                |
|-----------|---|---|--|--------------------------------|
|           |   |   |  |                                |
| May<br>1  | A. Nuclear<br>terrorism<br>B. Counter-<br>proliferation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Eaves</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Mueller</a> 126-65</li> <li>• Bunn and Sagan</li> </ul> |  | RR10                           |
| May<br>8  |   |   |  | Student presentations          |
| May<br>13 |   |   |  | Final exam 8 to 9.30 AM        |
| May<br>18 |   |   |  | Term paper final<br>submission |