STV1212 Nuclear Weapons and International Conflict

Course content

Nuclear weapons pose an enduring challenge to international security and stability. In this class, students will examine the nuclear strategies of different nuclear weapons states, ranging from small states to the most powerful states in the international system. Students will study basic theories about how nuclear weapons affect international relations and how they may conflict between states, and why nuclear weapons states adopt different strategies. Delving inside the state, we will examine how perception and bias affects how decision-makers seek to operationalize these strategies.

This interactive class is organized around three thematic clusters:

* the effect of nuclear weapons on international politics and conflict
* nuclear strategy in theory and practice
* Strategic stability.

Students will use theoretical and empirical approaches, as well as simulations and applied analyses, in studying these issues. Students will be exposed to practitioner perspectives in analyzing how states seek to tackle the risks of a nuclear arms race in Europe. They will explore the dynamics of crisis escalation through a simulation exercise based on a nuclear crisis in northern Norway in 1995.

Learning outcome

**Knowledge**

Having completed the course, students can:

* Describe theoretical debates about how nuclear weapons influence international conflict and state behavior
* Identify basic features of nuclear postures in different states
* Explain key concepts of nuclear strategy
* Identify how perceptions and norms can affect the purpose and role of nuclear weapons in conflict

**Skills**

Having completed the course, students can:

* Apply analytic perspectives to escalation dynamics during crises
* Write and present policy recommendations individually and in teams
* Apply theoretical models to assess how state behavior is influenced by acquisition of nuclear weapons

**Competences**

Having completed the course, students can:

* Critically assess claims about how nuclear weapons affect international security
* Explain the dynamics of nuclear escalation and arms races
* Apply analytic perspectives and empirical evidence to policy debates

Admission

Students who are admitted to study programmes at UiO must each semester register which courses and exams they wish to sign up for [in Studentweb](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/registrations/course-registration/).

If you are not already enrolled as a student at UiO, please see our information about [admission requirements and procedures](http://www.uio.no/english/studies/admission/).

Teaching

9 Lectures (2 hours each) and 1 simulation exercise (4 hours).

**Compulsory activities**

* Write two response papers (500 words). The topics of the response papers will be assigned
* Comment on other students' response papers
* Prepare questions for visiting practitioners which must be submitted in Canvas beforehand
* Active participation in simulation exercise. Teachers will evaluate your participation

When the compulsory activities are approved, the result will be registered. The compulsory activity is valid the semester you complete it. If you want to retake the exam, you need to retake the compulsory activity.

[See The Faculty of Social Sciences' rules regarding compulsory tuition activities.](https://www.uio.no/english/studies/examinations/compulsory-activities/index.html)

**Absence from compulsory activities**

If you are ill or have another valid reason for being absent from compulsory activities, your absence may be approved or the compulsory activity may be postponed.

* [Report absence from or the need for a postponed deadline on a compulsory activity](https://www.uio.no/english/studies/admin/compulsory-activities/sv-absence-from-compulsory-tuition-activities.html)

Examination

Four-hour written exam.

* Answer three short questions and two longer essays

You must have passed the compulsory activities in order to sit the exam