

Identification	Subject	PSIR370, NATO and Security Studies, 6 ECTS
	Department	Political Science and Philosophy
	Program (Undergraduate, Graduate)	Undergraduate
	Term	Spring 2026
	Instructor	Simona Scotti
	Email:	
	Classroom/hours	
Prerequisites	None	
Language	English	
Compulsory/Elective	Major Elective	
Textbooks and course materials	<p>Compulsory readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sloan, S. R. (2016). Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union, and the Transatlantic Bargain. Manchester University Press. – Buzan B. Wæver O. & Wilde J. de. (1998). Security: a new framework for analysis. Lynne Rienner Pub. Relevant excerpts – Deutsch, K. W., Burrell, S. A., Kann, R. A., Lee, M., Lichterman, M., Lindgren, R. E., Loewenheim, F. L., & Van Wagenen, R. W. (1957). Political Community and the North American Area. Princeton University – Taliaferro, J. W. (2000). Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited. <i>International Security</i>, 25(3), 128–161. – Snyder, G. H. (2002). Mearsheimer’s World-Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security: A Review Essay. <i>International Security</i>, 27(1), 149–173. – Jahn, B. (2018). Liberal internationalism: historical trajectory and current prospects. <i>International Affairs</i>, 94(1), 43–61. doi:10.1093/ia/iix231 – SAROTTE, M. E. (2021). Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate. Yale University Press. Relevant excerpts https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv22fqbtq – Malek, M. (2008). NATO and the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on Different Tracks. <i>Connections</i>, 7(3), 30–51. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26323347 – Münch, P. (2021). Creating common sense: Getting NATO to Afghanistan. <i>Journal of Transatlantic Studies</i>, 19(2), 138–166. https://doi.org/10.1057/s42738-021-00067-0 	

	<p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Taleb, N. N. (2008). <i>The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable</i>. London: Random House. ISBN: 1400063515 – Official sources and archive materials
<p>Course description</p>	<p>This course examines NATO as a central actor in contemporary international security through the analytical lens of security studies. It introduces students to key concepts and theoretical approaches in security studies and applies them to the study of NATO’s origins, institutional structure, decision-making processes, and transformation since the end of the Cold War.</p> <p>Building on foundational security theories, the course explores NATO’s role in collective defense, crisis management, cooperative security, and partnership frameworks. Particular attention is devoted to NATO’s interaction with regional security environments through selected case studies, including NATO–Russia relations, the South Caucasus, the Balkans, and Afghanistan.</p> <p>The course combines theoretical perspectives with empirical analysis in order to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of NATO’s evolving role in regional and global security, as well as the challenges facing the Alliance in a changing international environment.</p>
<p>Course objectives</p>	<p>The objective of this course is to provide undergraduate students with a structured and theoretically informed understanding of NATO as a central actor in contemporary international security. The course aims to introduce core concepts from security studies and apply them to the analysis of NATO’s evolution, institutional mechanisms, strategic adaptation, and operational practices. Particular attention is devoted to NATO’s engagement in different regional security environments, with selected case studies designed to contextualize theoretical and policy debates.</p>
<p>Learning Outcomes</p>	<p>By the end of the course, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Understand and explain key concepts and theoretical approaches in security studies, including traditional and non-traditional security perspectives. – Analyze the historical foundations of NATO, including its creation, purpose, and role during the Cold War. – Examine NATO’s institutional structure, decision-making mechanisms, and the logic of collective defense and security communities. – Assess NATO’s transformation after the Cold War, including enlargement, new missions, and strategic adaptation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate NATO’s role in managing regional security challenges through case studies such as NATO–Russia relations, the South Caucasus, the Balkans, and Afghanistan. - Analyze NATO’s partnership frameworks and cooperative security initiatives, particularly in relation to non-member states. - Critically assess contemporary and emerging security challenges facing NATO and its relevance in the current international security environment. - Develop analytical skills through the application of security studies theory to real-world NATO policies and operations.
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Evaluation Criteria	Methods	Date/deadlines	Percentage (%)
	Midterm Exam	TBA	30%
	Quizzes		15%
	Presentation		15%
	Active participation		5%
	Attendance		5%
	Final Exam	TBA	30%
	Total		100

Class Policy	<p>You are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attend classes regularly as the classes are conducted in a combined lecture/seminar format where students should play an active part. - read the assigned and suggested readings before you come to class - engage actively in classroom discussions - offer thoughtful and informed classroom presentations and written work - submit all your assignments on time - follow assignments closely and carefully. <p>Students are required to comply with the attendance policy of Khazar University. Full-time students are expected to attend all classes unless they are sick or have the permission of the instructor (approved absence). A student must submit an absence request in anticipation of an absence from the course. In case he/she fails to do so, his absence will be considered unapproved. Specifically, to be eligible for taking exams, students must not miss more than 25% of class hours (unapproved absences). Otherwise, the student can take the exam only with the approval of the School Dean. Continuing unapproved absences or lack of participation may lead to withdrawal from the course.</p> <p><u>Grading schemes for the class</u></p> <p>During the semester, grades will be allocated as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 30/100% - the mid-term exam
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- 30/100% - the final exam
- 40/100% - in-class activities (participation, quiz, and PPT)

In-class activities 40/100%

Class attendance (5/100%)

- missing 2 out of 15 sessions = 5/100%
- missing 4 out of 15 sessions = 4/100%
- missing 5 out of 15 sessions = 3/100%
- missing 6 out of 15 sessions = 2/100%
- missing 7 out of 15 sessions = 1/100%

Active participation (5/100%)

You:

- are present in class not just physically, listen carefully (consciously)
- prepare before each class
- contribute to ingroup discussions
- ask (relevant) questions

Quiz (15/100%)

Students will complete five quizzes throughout the course. Each quiz will be administered in either an oral or written format, as determined by the instructor. Students will be informed in advance about the quiz format and topic(s).

Presentation (15/100%)

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- the focus of the presentation
- clarity and coherence of the content
- thoroughness of the ideas presented and the analysis
- clarity of the presentation
- effective use of facts, statistics, and details
- completion within the allotted time frame (min 15- max 20 mins)

Students must present their topics in person during class; online presentations or written submissions will not be accepted. Presentation topics should be selected by the mid-term exam and delivered in class during March. No presentations will be accepted after March 31, 2026. The presentation topic must be chosen from the course materials. Any topics outside the course materials must be approved by the instructor.

Academic misconduct

Academic honesty plays an essential part in maintaining the integrity of Khazar University. Students are expected to recognize and uphold high standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The following acts are examples of academic dishonesty and, therefore are strictly forbidden and will, if proven, be penalized:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plagiarism, - cheating, - unauthorized collaboration, - falsification, - multiple submissions. <p><u>On plagiarism</u></p> <p>Plagiarism is unethical and an offense under the University regulations. Please familiarize yourself with the regulations relating to plagiarism and cheating in examinations.</p> <p>Plagiarism is copying other people's work without proper attribution. The students committing plagiarism and the students providing materials for plagiarizing will automatically receive a zero (0) for the assignment. Students must always indicate that they used someone else's words and ideas if they have done so, by using quotation marks and mentioning the source in the text or a footnote. A bibliography must also follow after the end of your essays.</p> <p><u>Rules of Professional Conduct</u></p> <p>The students shall behave in a way to create a favorable academic and professional environment during class hours. Unauthorized discussions, use of electronic devices, and unethical behavior are strictly prohibited. Classroom behavior that seriously interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to benefit from the course program will not be tolerated. When a student's behavior in a class is so seriously disruptive as to compel immediate action, the instructor has the authority to remove a student from the class on an interim basis, pending an informal hearing on the behavior.</p>
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Tentative Schedule

Week	Date/Day (tentative)	Topics	Textbook/Assignments
1		Introduction to security studies	Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. Security: A New Framework for Analysis. Lynne Rienner, 1998. Chapters 1–2
2		Theoretical approaches to security	Taliaferro, Jeffrey W. Security Seeking under Anarchy. International Security 25, no. 3 (2000): 128–161 Jahn, Beate. “Liberal Internationalism: Historical Trajectory and Current Prospects.”

			International Affairs 94, no. 1 (2018): 43–61
3		NATO origins and the Cold War	Sloan, Stanley R. Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union, and the Transatlantic Bargain. Manchester University Press. Chapters 3-4 North Atlantic Treaty (Washington Treaty), 1949
4		NATO's institutional architecture	Materials from NATO's official website sources will be provided
5		NATO as a security community	Excerpts will be provided: Deutsch, K. W., Burrell, S. A., Kann, R. A., Lee, M., Lichterman, M., Lindgren, R. E., Loewenheim, F. L., & Van Wagenen, R. W. (1957). Political Community and the North American Area. Princeton University Press.
6		NATO after the Cold War	Sloan, Stanley R. Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union, and the Transatlantic Bargain. Manchester University Press. Chapter 6
7		NATO after 9/11	Sloan, S. R. (2016). Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union, and the Transatlantic Bargain. Manchester University Press. Chapter 7
8		Mid-term	No lecture
9		NATO and Russia	Excerpts will be provided: Sarotte, M. E. (2021). Not One Inch: America, Russia, and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate. Yale University Press.

			Putin's 2007 Munich Speech
10		NATO and South Caucasus	Malek, M. (2008). NATO and the South Caucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on Different Tracks. <i>Connections</i> , 7(3), 30–51. NATO and South Caucasian countries' official sources
11		NATO in Afghanistan	Münch, P. (2021). Creating common sense: Getting NATO to Afghanistan. <i>Journal of Transatlantic Studies</i> , 19(2), 138–166.
12		NATO and the Balkans	Edward Newman, Gëzim Visoka, NATO in Kosovo and the logic of successful security practices, <i>International Affairs</i> , Volume 100, Issue 2, March 2024, Pages 631–653
13		Emerging security threats	Sloan, S. R. (2016). <i>Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union, and the Transatlantic Bargain</i> . Manchester University Press. Chapter 9 NATO: cyber security, terrorism, COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid warfare
14		NATO's role in contemporary security	Buzan B. Wæver O. & Wilde J. de. (1998). <i>Security: a new framework for analysis</i> . Lynne Rienner Pub. Excerpts will be provided
15		Concluding discussions	
16		Final exam	